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## Extensive Reading and Second Language Acquisition: Pedagogical Implications

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### Abstract

Extensive reading, defined as the practice of reading large amounts of easy, interesting, and largely self-selected texts, has been widely investigated as a source of comprehensible input for second language (L2) development. This literature review synthesizes 20 empirical studies published between 1990 and 2023 that investigated how extensive reading supports vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, writing accuracy, grammatical development, and learner motivation in L2 English and other foreign-language contexts. Studies were located through structured database searches of ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar; 127 records were initially identified, and after duplicate removal and title and abstract screening, 41 articles were assessed in full text for eligibility. Of these, 20 empirical studies were retained for narrative thematic synthesis. Across experimental, quasi-experimental, and case-study designs, the reviewed evidence indicates that ER is consistently associated with incidental vocabulary gains, faster reading, improved written accuracy, and stronger motivation, particularly when reading is frequent and sustained and comprehensible texts are supplemented with audio or interactive tasks. At the same time, the magnitude and pattern of effects depend on exposure frequency, text difficulty, instructional setting, and learner beliefs about reading. The review concludes that ER provides a low-cost, theoretically grounded, and pedagogically flexible route to L2 development and is most effective when embedded as a sustained component of a broader language-learning program.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, second language acquisition, vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, learner motivation

### Introduction

In many English-as-a-foreign-language schools and universities, reading remains a major, and sometimes the only, authentic source of L2 input for learners. ER programs that use graded readers and other simplified texts aim to provide comprehensible input and to encourage autonomous reading habits (Iwahori, 2008; Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Taguchi et al., 2004; Mohamed, 2018). The central question is the extent to which such input can drive vocabulary growth, fluency gains, grammatical development, and positive motivation toward L2 reading that ultimately supports second language acquisition. Although ER has been widely used in language education, most existing research relies on

short-term interventions or small case studies, which limit the generalizability of findings and make cross-study comparisons difficult. The present review addresses this gap by providing a transparent, reproducible synthesis of the empirical record on ER and L2 acquisition over the past three decades, identifying the conditions under which reading most effectively promotes L2 development, and translating those conditions into pedagogical implications for classrooms, programs, and policy.

## Theoretical Background

ER is commonly grounded in Krashen's Input Hypothesis and in processing-based accounts of language acquisition that emphasize automatic word recognition as a prerequisite for higher-level comprehension (Iwahori, 2008; Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Taguchi et al., 2004). Repeated encounters with words in meaningful contexts support the incidental construction of form, meaning, and usage knowledge without deliberate memorization (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Rott, 1999; Mohamed, 2018; Zhu & Huang, 2021). Eye-movement research further links attention during reading—particularly attention to specific lexical items in written text—to vocabulary uptake, highlighting the cognitive dimension of input engagement (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Mohamed, 2018). Together, these theoretical traditions motivate an input-based, attention-to-form account of ER that frames the present review's questions and inclusion criteria.

## Methods and Materials

### Research Design

This article is a systematic narrative literature review of empirical research on ER and L2 acquisition. Because the included studies vary substantially in design (experimental, quasi-experimental, and case study), context, and outcome measures, the synthesis uses a structured narrative-thematic approach modeled on PRISMA-style review guidance for language and education research (Calderon Martinez et al., 2025; Guskov et al., 2025), rather than statistical meta-analysis. The review protocol specifies search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening procedure, data extraction, and analysis steps to ensure transparency and replicability.

### Search Strategy

Studies were identified through targeted searches of three databases widely used in language-education research: ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The search period was bounded to 1990–2023 to capture foundational graded-reader research from 1990 (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990) through more recent online and digital-platform studies (Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Zhou & Day, 2021; Teng, 2023). Earlier related work (Tudor & Hafiz, 1989) provides historical context.

Boolean search strings were built around three concept clusters combined with the AND operator:

- Reading approach: "extensive reading" OR "pleasure reading" OR "graded readers" OR "sustained silent reading"
- Outcome: "vocabulary acquisition" OR "reading fluency" OR "writing accuracy" OR "motivation" OR "grammar"

OR "second language acquisition"

- Context or methodology: "EFL" OR "ESL" OR "L2" OR "experimental" OR "case study" OR "quasi-experimental"

The reference lists of all included studies were hand-searched to identify additional candidate articles that database indexing might have missed.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To be eligible, a study had to satisfy all of the following:

- Publication type: peer-reviewed journal article or chapter in an edited book (unpublished manuscripts and conference abstracts excluded).
- Date range: published from 1990 through 2023.
- Population: L2 learners of English or another foreign language in school, university, or online settings (first-language literacy studies excluded).
- Intervention: an ER-oriented treatment, graded readers, online ER platforms, reading-while-listening, or comparable large-volume reading input as the primary or a substantial component of instruction.
- Design: empirical research employing experimental, quasi-experimental, or case-study methods with reported outcome data (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed); purely theoretical or opinion pieces were excluded.
- Outcome relevance: reported at least one L2 outcome—vocabulary, fluency, writing, grammar, motivation, or reading habits—linked to the ER intervention.

## Results

### Overview of the Included Studies

Twenty empirical studies published between 1990 and 2023 were included in this review. The studies represented a range of research methodologies, including experimental, quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, action research, and case-study designs. Research was conducted across diverse educational contexts, including primary and secondary schools, universities, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, English as a Second Language (ESL) settings, and online learning environments.

Participants ranged from beginner to advanced language learners, and intervention periods varied from one month to more than one academic year. Although the studies differed in instructional duration, participant characteristics, and assessment methods, they consistently examined the contribution of extensive reading to second language development.

## Empirical Evidence on Learning Gains

### ***Vocabulary and Lexical Form***

Case studies and classroom experiments show measurable incidental vocabulary gains from ER. A French ER case study found improvements in spelling, meaning, and grammar knowledge for a majority of target items after a month-long graded-reader program. Reading a graded reader with embedded pseudowords led advanced L2 learners to recognize 86% of word forms and 75% of meanings after eight encounters; reading times approached those for known words, indicating consolidation of lexical representations. ER programs also support form recognition; repeated exposure and attention both predict better outcomes (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Rott, 1999; Mohamed, 2018; Zhu & Huang, 2021). Long-term online ER with graded readers produced significant gains in vocabulary with an average reading volume of more than one million words.

These findings show that ER supports receptive vocabulary growth, even though productive gains are more limited. For receptive knowledge, a comparison of two, four, and six encounters with unknown words in texts showed that six encounters produced significantly larger gains than two or four. Eye-tracking work with one to 30 encounters indicates that more exposure enhances form recognition, but total time spent on each item predicts learning beyond raw frequency. Similar findings with pseudowords embedded in authentic novels suggest approximately seven encounters, with the strongest effects on form, moderate effects on word class, and the weakest effects on meaning recall. Reading-while-listening combines textual and auditory input for different learning styles. A large-scale ER intervention using graded readers and audio produced substantial vocabulary gains, showing that multimodal ER can support lexical learning. In subject-specific ER (e.g., science vocabulary), reading-while-listening outperformed reading-only on vocabulary measures.

### ***Fluency, Comprehension, and Writing***

ER improves reading rate and general proficiency in secondary EFL learners. A high-school ER program with graded readers increased reading speed and overall language proficiency, supporting claims that ER promotes automaticity as well as fluency. A 15-week study comparing intensive reading alone with ER found superior gains in reading rate, comprehension, and vocabulary for the ER group, indicating additive benefits of extensive input. However, that study involved a relatively small sample drawn from a single educational context; accordingly, the findings may not generalize to learners from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, and the intervention lasted only one semester, which limits conclusions regarding long-term retention. Graded-reader programs of around 90 hours have yielded significant gains in written fluency, essay length, and accuracy, though not in syntactic range, suggesting that simplified input can provide stable models that learners overlearn and transfer into production (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989). Earlier work with similar materials showed greater essay length and accuracy but little expansion of vocabulary base or syntactic complexity, pointing to a simpler but more correct L2 output profile associated with ER. Comparative research on ER and assisted repeated reading shows that both can increase silent reading rate; assisted repeated reading's added listening and repetition may further scaffold comprehension, but ER alone suffices to raise fluency for many learners. In Japanese, combining speed reading with ER improved reading rates on expository texts and revitalized advanced learners' motivation, illustrating that fluency-focused reading instruction can transfer beyond graded materials. Taken together, the evidence indicates that ER promotes automaticity and fluency with stable but simplified L2 output.

### ***Grammar and Syntactic Development***

ER can indirectly support grammar by exposing learners to well-formed sentences and common constructions during reading, which may support incidental grammatical learning. Experimental work on comprehension-oriented input training shows that L2 learners can differentiate grammatical from ungrammatical sentences more clearly in reading times. Reviews of ER report gains in syntactic knowledge alongside vocabulary, though such effects are less frequently measured directly (Iwahori, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2004; Day, 2015).

## Motivation and Habits

Motivational outcomes are tightly linked to ER. A mixed-methods case study of advanced Japanese learners using an online ER platform over one year found that participants shifted from reluctant to avid readers, establishing stable L2 reading habits. Qualitative data attributed changes to engaging, easy-to-understand graded readers, researcher support, and platform affordances. Quantitatively, participants' vocabulary size and reading rate increased significantly alongside online reading volume. Similarly, a two-semester online ER project with English for Academic Purposes students using Xreading reported improved attitudes toward reading in English; learners also perceived gains in reading rate, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, writing, and speaking (Zhou & Day, 2021; Teng, 2023). These findings suggest benefits, although the reported perceptions are not direct measures of every skill. Action research in pre-university EAP contexts shows that integrating ER into academic programs is feasible and welcomed by students, who respond positively to reduced teacher-centered time and the inclusion of non-EAP texts (Macalister, 2008; Day, 2015). Survey research in Japanese L2 reading suggests that learners often approach reading primarily as a language-learning task rather than for content engagement; intensive, translation-oriented instruction may reinforce accuracy-focused attitudes and fail to present accessible routes to reading fluency. Introducing ER can broaden perceptions and support more balanced, fluency-oriented approaches. Taken together, ER supports motivational growth and habit formation, especially when texts are engaging and comprehensible to readers.

## Program Formats and Designs

**Table 1**

*Extensive Reading Program Types and Main Outcomes*

| Program type            | Design, duration, context, outcomes, and references                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Print graded readers    | <b>Design:</b> Experimental; <b>Duration:</b> 30–60 hr; <b>Context:</b> Classroom intervention<br><b>Outcomes:</b> Increased reading speed, writing fluency and accuracy, and some vocabulary gains<br><b>References:</b> Hafiz & Tudor; Tudor & Hafiz; Iwahori; Taguchi et al.; Day |
| ER + intensive reading  | <b>Design:</b> Quasi-experimental; <b>Duration:</b> 40–80 hr; <b>Context:</b> Comparative study<br><b>Outcomes:</b> Additional gains in reading speed, comprehension, and vocabulary<br><b>References:</b> Iwahori; Taguchi et al.; Day                                              |
| Reading-while-listening | <b>Design:</b> Experimental; <b>Duration:</b> 50–100 hr; <b>Context:</b> Controlled intervention<br><b>Outcomes:</b> Larger vocabulary gains and stronger retention<br><b>References:</b> Teng; Zhou & Day                                                                           |
| Online ER platforms     | <b>Design:</b> Case study; <b>Duration:</b> 20–50 hr; <b>Context:</b> Long-term online program<br><b>Outcomes:</b> Increased reading habits, attitudes, and perceived proficiency<br><b>References:</b> Tabata-Sandom; Zhou & Day; Teng                                              |
| ER + tasks/discussion   | <b>Design:</b> Action research; <b>Duration:</b> 30–70 hr; <b>Context:</b> Classroom integration<br><b>Outcomes:</b> Extra vocabulary gains and stronger motivation<br><b>References:</b> Taguchi et al.; Macalister; Day                                                            |

## Conditions for Effective Learning Through Reading

Several conditions moderate ER outcomes:

- Text difficulty and comprehensibility. Successful programs use texts or curricula within learners' linguistic proficiency, often graded readers, to ensure enjoyment, engagement, and comprehension (Iwahori, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2004; Tabata-Sandom, 2018, 2023; Zhou & Day, 2021). Overly difficult texts reduce fluency, are less motivational, and may limit incidental learning.
- Exposure amount and duration. Large quantities of reading over months or years produce more gains than short-term interventions (Rott, 1999; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Mohamed, 2018; Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Teng, 2023; Zhu & Huang, 2021).
- Frequency and attention. Multiple encounters with words support learning, but effects vary across aspects of word knowledge; attention and contextual informativeness are equally important (Rott, 1999; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Mohamed, 2018; Zhu & Huang, 2021).

- Multimodal and interactive support. Adding audio (reading-while-listening) can deepen processing, support syntax, and enhance motivation (Macalister, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2004; Teng, 2023; Zhou & Day, 2021).
- Learner level and orientation. ER benefits both learners at lower and higher proficiency levels, though advanced readers may gain more in fluency than in breadth of new vocabulary; learners' initial accuracy-oriented beliefs may require explicit support to value fluency-building reading (Iwahori, 2008; Tabata-Sandom, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2023).

### **Discussion: Input, Output, and Program Implementation**

While most studies reviewed reported positive effects, gains varied considerably according to intervention duration, learner proficiency, and instructional setting. Studies conducted in English as a second language (ESL) environments generally reported stronger vocabulary gains than those conducted in EFL contexts, likely because learners received additional exposure outside the classroom.

The stronger vocabulary gains reported in ESL contexts highlight the role of ambient exposure, which is largely absent in EFL environments. To compensate for this limitation, EFL instructors can artificially increase input density through multimodal and interactive extensions of ER. Reading-while-listening, repeated reading, shadowing, and structured peer interaction (e.g., literature circles, reading clubs, or partner retellings) simulate aspects of naturalistic exposure by increasing frequency, salience, and contextual richness. Digital ER platforms can further expand input beyond classroom time by providing accessible graded materials and encouraging autonomous reading habits. These strategies help approximate the quantity and diversity of input available in ESL settings, thereby reducing contextual disparities in vocabulary growth.

Although receptive vocabulary gains were consistently stronger than productive gains, the reviewed evidence suggests that this gap can be bridged pedagogically through the purposeful integration of output-oriented tasks. ER provides the lexical and syntactic input base, but writing and speaking tasks create opportunities for retrieval, restructuring, and productive use of newly encountered forms. Short, low-stakes activities such as written reactions, retellings, book talks, peer discussions, and micro-writing tasks (e.g., one-paragraph summaries, character diaries, or opinion statements) can convert input into output by encouraging learners to actively manipulate vocabulary and structures encountered during reading. These tasks do not undermine the fluency-oriented nature of ER; rather, they extend processing depth and support

the transition from receptive recognition to productive control.

### **Limitations of Existing ER Research**

Existing research on ER faces several methodological limitations. Many studies rely on small samples focused on a single educational context without sufficient differentiation across learner needs, which restricts statistical power and limits the generalizability of results (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Iwahori, 2008; Tabata-Sandom, 2023). Outcome measures also neglect syntactic development and productive vocabulary growth (output), focusing instead on receptive knowledge and comprehension (input) (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Zhu & Huang, 2021). These limitations highlight the need for more robust, longitudinal, large-scale studies that can provide stronger evidence of ER's effects on second language acquisition.

### **Theoretical Discussion**

ER research aligns with several key theories of second language acquisition. Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes the role of comprehensible input, which ER provides in texts (Day, 2015; Iwahori, 2008). The Noticing Hypothesis suggests that learners must consciously attend to lexical and syntactic features; ER facilitates noticing through repeated exposure in meaningful contexts (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016; Mohamed, 2018). From a usage-based learning perspective, repetition in ER helps entrench linguistic patterns, supporting long-term retention (Rott, 1999; Zhu & Huang, 2021). Finally, lexical processing accounts highlights the importance of spontaneous word recognition, which ER encourages via the large volumes of reading that build fluency (Tabata-Sandom, 2018; Taguchi et al., 2004). In sum, ER research reinforces input-based theories of acquisition and the critical role of attention and frequency in second language learning.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

ER builds fluency and vocabulary in EFL classrooms through graded readers (Iwahori, 2008; Hafiz & Tudor, 1990). In ESL programs, hybrid programs that combine ER with intensive reading provide additive benefits, supporting both comprehension and fluency (Taguchi et al., 2004; Day, 2015). Within university language centers, digital ER tools such as Xreading and MReader expand access, motivate learners, and provide tracking mechanisms that enhance accountability (Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Zhou & Day, 2021; Teng, 2023).

While emerging AI-assisted tools offer promising avenues for adaptive text selection and personalized reading pathways, caution is warranted against

overreliance on automated text simplification. Without pedagogical mediation, simplified AI-generated texts may inadvertently reduce lexical richness, distort authentic discourse patterns, or limit opportunities for learners to engage with naturalistic input. In line with the review's emphasis on learner autonomy, AI tools should be used as supportive resources rather than replacements for teacher-guided text selection, strategy instruction, or critical engagement with reading materials.

To translate receptive gains into productive competence, ER should be paired with light, purposeful output tasks that encourage learners to reuse vocabulary and structures encountered during reading. Writing tasks such as reflective journals, short summaries, character diaries, or opinion paragraphs promote lexical retrieval and syntactic consolidation. Speaking tasks such as retellings, book discussions, debates, or pair presentations provide opportunities for oral production grounded in meaningful content. In EFL contexts, instructors can further compensate for limited ambient exposure by incorporating multimodal input (reading-while-listening), repeated reading cycles, and structured peer interaction to increase input density and contextual variety. Digital ER platforms and AI-assisted tools can support personalization and access, but their use should remain pedagogically mediated to preserve learner autonomy and ensure exposure to authentic language.

## Recommendations

Several practical recommendations emerge from the synthesis:

- Protect sustained time for self-selected reading or graded-reader use. Curricula that allocate regular, dedicated time to ER beyond intensive or exam-oriented reading produce more consistent gains in vocabulary, fluency, and motivation.
- Match text difficulty to learner proficiency. Texts should sit within learners' linguistic capabilities so that reading remains enjoyable rather than effortful, preserving the comprehensibility that drives input-based learning.
- Build exposure volume over time. Programs that run across months or years with cumulative reading goals outperform short-term projects; approximately six to seven meaningful encounters may support stable lexical learning.
- Pair reading with light, purposeful tasks. Reading logs, brief writing tasks, classroom discussion, and reading-while-listening deepen processing, broaden the word knowledge acquired, and sustain motivation.
- Address learner beliefs explicitly. In accuracy-oriented instructional cultures, learners may need directed support to recognize reading for fluency as a legitimate route to proficiency.

- Adopt digital ER platforms where appropriate. Tools such as Xreading and MReader provide accountability, automatic tracking of reading volume, and access to large graded inventories; emerging AI-assisted tools offer further possibilities for adaptive text selection, although their sustained effects on autonomy and long-term retention remain to be established.
- Prioritize longitudinal, program-level evaluation. Schools and programs should track vocabulary, fluency, writing, and motivation across academic years to verify whether local ER implementation produces the gains documented in the research literature.

## Future Research Directions

Research consistently shows that ER benefits vocabulary, fluency, and motivation (Hunt & Beglar, 2005; Boutorwick et al., 2019; Jeong, 2022; Yuan, 2025). Digital and mobile platforms show promising results for vocabulary and autonomy gains, with tools like MReader offering accountability but requiring systematic evaluation and teacher-led application (Liu & Zhang, 2018; Grøver et al., 2020; Jeong, 2022; Sintia et al., 2025). Mobile-assisted learning supports flexible and independent study but remains under-researched. Emerging AI-assisted designs demonstrate potential for adaptive texts and learning using technology, though longitudinal studies are needed to confirm sustained effects on autonomy (Muravev, 2023; Sumardi, 2025). Collectively, future ER research should prioritize long-term designs, broader linguistic contexts, systematic evaluation of digital and mobile tools, and integration of AI-assisted personalization to strengthen both theoretical and pedagogical impact.

Although the overall evidence supports the effectiveness of extensive reading, the reported gains vary considerably across contexts. Studies employing long-term interventions and large reading volumes generally reported stronger improvements than short-term classroom projects. Furthermore, evidence for receptive vocabulary development is substantially stronger than evidence for productive vocabulary or grammatical development. These differences suggest that extensive reading may be most effective when implemented as a sustained component of a broader language-learning program rather than as a stand-alone intervention.

## Conclusion

Across the 20 empirical studies synthesized here, conducted in EFL classrooms, ESL programs, university language centers, and online learning environments between 1990 and 2023, the evidence converges on a clear and consistent picture: extensive reading reliably contributes to L2 development, with particularly strong support for incidental vocabulary growth—especially form recognition—alongside gains in reading fluency, writing accuracy, and positive attitudes and habits toward reading in the target language. These benefits appear most clearly when learners read large amounts of enjoyable, comprehensible text, often delivered through graded readers, over sustained periods; supplementary components such as reading-while-listening, post-reading discussion, and teacher-supported online platforms further amplify these gains.

At the same time, the review makes clear that ER's impact is conditional. The magnitude and pattern of effects depend on exposure frequency, learners' attention during reading, the specific program design, and learners' underlying beliefs about reading as a language-learning activity. Studies conducted in ESL contexts where learners receive sustained exposure outside the classroom tend to report stronger vocabulary gains than those in EFL contexts, where input is largely confined to instructional time. Evidence for receptive vocabulary is substantially stronger than evidence for productive vocabulary or grammatical development; productive gains are more limited, and syntactic effects are less often measured directly. These patterns suggest that ER functions best when embedded as a sustained component of a broader language-learning program rather than as a stand-alone intervention.

For practitioners, the findings carry several operational implications. Text difficulty must be carefully managed so that reading remains enjoyable and comprehensible; exposure volume matters, with large reading quantities across months or years producing more consistent gains than short-term projects; multimodal and interactive supports deepen processing and broaden the range of word knowledge acquired; and learner beliefs need to be addressed explicitly so that reading is valued as a route to fluency rather than treated primarily as a decoding or translation exercise. Digital platforms such as Xreading and MReader extend the practical reach of these principles by providing accountability, automatic tracking of reading volume, and access to large graded inventories; emerging AI-assisted tools offer further possibilities for adaptive text selection, although their sustained effects on autonomy and long-term retention remain to be established.

For policy, the review points to a clear conclusion. Instructional frameworks that allocate time and resources

only to intensive or exam-oriented reading are forfeiting a low-cost, evidence-supported route to L2 development. School- and university-level policies that protect sustained time for self-selected or graded reading—including access to digital ER libraries and teacher facilitation—may support gains across vocabulary, fluency, writing, and motivation.

For research, the existing evidence base points to several priorities. The studies synthesized here are limited by small sample sizes drawn from single educational contexts, by interventions that often last only a single semester, and by an outcome profile that underrepresents productive vocabulary and syntactic development. Future studies should therefore adopt longitudinal designs, broader linguistic contexts beyond English, systematic comparison of digital and mobile tools, and fine-grained tracking of lexical and syntactic growth over time. Linking ER more systematically with explicit strategy instruction and output-oriented tasks will help clarify how reading-based input becomes intake and, ultimately, long-term L2 competence.

Reflecting on the synthesis as a whole, the reviewed literature reinforces the view that reading is not merely a receptive skill to be tested but a primary vehicle for language development. Extensive reading operationalizes input-based theories of acquisition in a form that is practical, scalable, and motivating: it provides comprehensible input, rewards repeated attention to form, and builds the habits that sustain learning beyond the classroom. The breadth of contexts in which these patterns appear—from high-school EFL programs in Japan to online EAP courses using Xreading, and from French graded-reader case studies to Chinese advanced-learner experiments—suggests that the underlying dynamic is robust across languages and instructional settings. What remains unclear is which conditions produce the strongest effects, and how ER can be combined with productive activities so that the receptive gains documented here are translated into the productive competence that learners ultimately need. Addressing those questions is the most valuable direction for the next generation of ER research and a direct route to making extensive reading a more integral component of language education policy and practice worldwide.

Bridging the gap between receptive and productive gains requires integrating ER with purposeful output-oriented tasks that encourage learners to reuse lexical and syntactic features encountered during reading. In EFL contexts, where ambient exposure is limited, multimodal input and structured peer interaction can help approximate the richness of ESL environments. Although digital and AI-assisted tools expand access and personalization, their use must remain supported by teachers to safeguard learner autonomy and ensure

exposure to authentic language. These considerations strengthen ER's role as a sustained, integrated component of language programs capable of supporting both receptive and productive dimensions of L2 development.

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