UCUENCA

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

"Extensive Reading on EFL Students' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary

Development"

Trabajo de Titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.

Autores:

María Paula Galindo Maldonado

CI: 0106228489

Correo electrónico: paulagm19991@gmail.com

Karla Patricia Yoza Alvarez

CI: 0106630379

Correo electrónico: karla.y.a@outlook.com

Directora:

Mgt. Ana María Calle Calle

CI: 0102305562

Cuenca, Ecuador

06-septiembre-2022

UCUENCA

Resumen

En este estudio, el análisis de los efectos que tiene la lectura extensiva en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera se centra en tres aspectos: (1) comprensión lectora, (2) desarrollo del vocabulario y (3) otras habilidades de lectura. Siendo esta una síntesis de investigación, se seleccionaron veinte estudios sobre el tema con el fin de explorar e interpretar sus resultados, positivos y negativos, enfocándose en los efectos que la lectura extensiva puede tener en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los resultados indicaron que la lectura extensiva tuvo un impacto positivo en la comprensión lectora y el vocabulario. Además, su empleo también contribuyó a desarrollar la velocidad de lectura y el reconocimiento de palabras. Durante la revisión de la literatura y el análisis de datos, se encontró que existía una conexión entre la comprensión lectora, el vocabulario y otras habilidades de lectura, ya que una dependía de la otra para llevarse a cabo. Se concluye que la lectura extensiva puede verse como una herramienta útil para mejorar las habilidades de lectura de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera y también crear buenos hábitos de lectura por lo que se recomienda su uso. Se requiere mayor investigación en el contexto ecuatoriano en el área de la lectura extensiva considerando a estudiantes de diferentes edades, especialmente a alumnos de nivel primario y secundario. Finalmente, es necesario explorar la relación que tiene la lectura extensiva con otras destrezas como es la escritura.

Palabras clave: Inglés como lengua extranjera. Lectura extensiva. Comprensión lectora. Vocabulario. Efectos y destrezas lectoras.

Abstract

In this study, the analysis of the effects that extensive reading (ER) has on EFL students focuses on three aspects: (1) reading comprehension, (2) vocabulary development, and (3) other reading sub-skills. Being this a research synthesis, twenty studies about the topic were selected in order to explore and interpret their positive and negative outcomes to focus on the effects of ER on EFL students. The results indicated that extensive reading had a positive impact on reading comprehension and vocabulary. Moreover, its use also contributed to develop reading speed and word recognition. During the literature review and data analysis, it was found that there was a connection between reading comprehension, vocabulary and other reading sub-skills since one depended on the other in order to be accomplished. It is concluded that ER can be seen as a helpful tool to enhance EFL students' reading skills and to create good reading habits, so its use is recommended. Further research is required in the Ecuadorian context in the ER area, including different ages, particularly young learners. Also, other skills such as writing should be explored in relation to ER.

UCUENCA

Table of Contents

List of tables

UCUENCA

UCUENCA

Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual

María Paula Galindo Maldonado autor/a del trabajo de titulación "Extensive Reading on EFL Students' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Development", certifico que todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en la presente investigación son de exclusiva responsabilidad de su autor/a.

Cuenca, 06 de septiembre del 2022

M. Paula. G

María Paula Galindo Maldonado

C.I: 0106228489

UCUENCA

UCUENCA

Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual

Karla Patricia Yoza Alvarez autor/a del trabajo de titulación "Extensive Reading on EFL Students' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Development", certifico que todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en la presente investigación son de exclusiva responsabilidad de su autor/a.

Cuenca, 06 de septiembre del 2022

Karla Yoza A

Karla Patricia Yoza Alvarez

C.I: 0106630379

UCUENCA

Acknowledgments

Dedication

To my three pillars who believed in me even when I doubted. It would not have been possible for me to be standing where I am today without them. Their love, patience, and encouragement accompanied me during this journey. I would also like to dedicate this to my friends who stood by my side. All of them gave me the strength and courage to overcome the difficulties, so this achievement is for them.

María Paula Galindo

This research synthesis is a dedication to my family and my dog since their advice, companionship, and love had a great influence on who I am today. I would like to especially thank my mother and father because they always believed in me and in my actions. They sacrificed in order to provide me with the best education. Finally, to my friends who always were by my side no matter the difficulties even though they nagged me sometimes.

Karla Yoza Alvarez

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language involves four main skills, and reading is one of them. This skill is essential for EFL learners since it helps them to develop their creativity and gives them a new perspective of different topics. Moreover, it allows students to expand their vocabulary and enhance their communication with the target language. There are a variety of approaches that can be applied in a classroom in order to help learners to build up their reading skills and create a reading habit, and one of them is extensive reading (ER).

This approach might not be often found in the classrooms because it can be seen as time-consuming. Thus, this ambiguous conception of ER may stop teachers from actually learning what this approach is about and how the students can take advantage of it. Identifying and analyzing the different effects that ER has on EFL learners is pertinent to this research synthesis since it acknowledges the advantages that ER can offer; in that way, teachers who are searching ways to boost their EFL students' reading skills can have a clear picture of the effects. As a result, they will feel encouraged to use it in their classrooms.

Five chapters shaped the information of this research synthesis. The first chapter is related to the description of the research, and it includes the background, problem statement, rationale, research questions, and the objectives. The second chapter encompasses the theoretical framework in which important concepts are mentioned. The third chapter is related with the literature review that analyzes the empirical studies that are relevant to the research. The fourth chapter corresponds to the methodology in which the exclusion and inclusion criteria is established and different journals, databases, keywords are detailed. The fifth chapter covers the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data provided by the empirical studies in order to answer the research questions. Finally, in the sixth chapter the conclusions and recommendations are presented to help understand in a better way this work.

Chapter I

Description of the Research

1.1 Background

Benettayeb explains that traditionally reading has been seen as a passive skill since the learner is not focused on creating, but recently this perception has changed because now reading is considered to be an active skill that requires to analyze and comprehend what is read (as cited in Al-Nafisah, 2015). Al-Nafisah (2015) states that reading is a complex skill that involves different processes and requires strategies to achieve a proficiency level. But not only that, Grabe claims that reading involves a cognitive process in which students' previous knowledge takes an important role during the process (as cited in Tamrackitkun, 2010).

In the context of EFL learning, there are different approaches to boost the reading skill, and extensive reading (ER) is one of them. Grabe and Stoller describe ER as "the practice of reading large amounts of text for extended periods of time" (as cited in Huang, 2015, p. 2). Besides, Bamford and Day (1997) explain that this strategy is focused on understanding the text as a whole rather than being able to recognize the meaning of each word. One important fact is that "extensive reading should involve reading for pleasure" (Harmer, 2007, p. 99).

Extensive reading is closely related to Krashen's input theory, which explains that a language can be acquired by receiving comprehensible input moderately above the level of the learner. This theory introduces the formula "i+1" where "i" refers to the present level of the student and "1" represents the advanced input that they will receive (Namaziandost, 2019). With this being said, Bamford and Day acknowledge that ER can be considered as a helpful method to provide input to learners (as cited in Namaziandost, 2019). Krashen believes that input is a crucial factor in the acquisition of a second language during the learning process (as cited in Bailey & Fahad, 2021). In fact, based on Krashen's ideas,

extensive reading is considered very important in bilingual education (Bailey & Fahad, 2021). It becomes relevant to explore what the effects of ER in a different environment are, such as in the Ecuadorian context, where bilingual classes are not very common in public schools.

Guo explains that the language input EFL students can obtain comes mostly from the classroom (as cited in Huang, 2015). Renandya (2007) claims that even though it is difficult to recreate input inside the classroom that is similar to the conditions that L1 has, a great alternative solution will be to provide students with an important number of books and do some reading activities afterwards. In fact, Ghasemi (2011) states that tasks based on readings give students the opportunity to become more familiar and be immersed within the material. In other words, ER could be an option for providing input to students and getting them involved meaningfully with the reading texts.

Moreover, according to Aka (2019) "in extensive reading instruction, learners receive a large amount of input through reading within their linguistic abilities" (p. 2); moreover, ER can be another source of input besides the classrooms since it can be carried out not only in schools, but also out of them, as Harmer (2007) mentions.

Based on the empirical studies reviewed (Aka, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Horst, 2005; Iwahori, 2008), it is inferred that ER has positive effects on EFL students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. These areas are very important as expressed by Al'zubi (2014), "a student who reads without comprehension is not really reading" (p.28). Furthermore, comprehension and vocabulary are closely related, and as Pazhakh and Soltani (2010) explain, vocabulary enhances the comprehension of a text. As a result, extensive reading can be considered as an essential approach because it will provide learners with a significant range of vocabulary, so they will be able to expand it, and at the same time, improve their reading comprehension.

Al Nafisah (2015) mentions that there are other linguistic areas connected to reading; for instance, some of them are developing writing skills and enhancing students' grammar. Moreover, students' attitudes towards this strategy are also presented. But not only that, according to Iwahori (2008), "ER has real-world purposes in reading" (p. 71), which means that besides enjoying the reading process, students can increase their knowledge. At the same time, the manner in which students are exposed to English while implementing extensive reading allows them to enhance their reading performance (Iwahori, 2008).

On the other hand, it is essential to mention that the results of the empirical studies reviewed are not consistent. Even though the majority of them present positive effects and improvement on EFL students' reading (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018), others present little or no improvement (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Fernández de Morgado, 2009). Different factors and limitations might be the reason for this inconsistency. Bamford and Day (1997) explain that there are several intervening variables that can influence extensive reading results. However, we have not considered all of these variables, only the ones that are relevant for the purpose of this research synthesis such as materials.

Moreover, Ono et al. come up with some guidance at the moment of implementing this approach. For them, it is important that if students do not like the reading material, they should simply stop reading it; or if they encounter words that are difficult to recognize, it is better to skip them (as cited in Iwahori, 2008).

It is indispensable to have in mind the relevance of reading, as Krashen mentions, "reading is responsible for much of our competence in reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and advanced grammatical competence" (as cited in Huang, 2015, p.3). Besides, Ghasemi explains that literary texts are advantageous for EFL students since they give them the opportunity to become stronger and greater readers (2011).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Over the last few decades, some studies regarding ER and its effects have been conducted (Aka, 2019; Alzubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008). However, based on our preliminary research about the effects of this strategy, there has been a lack of empirical studies using extensive reading on Ecuadorian EFL classes, and there was even scarce information regarding extensive reading in some journals around Latin America (e.g. *Profile Journal, Ikala Medellín Journal*), except for some articles like it is the case of Campana et al. (2019) which was found in the *European Scientific Journal* and focused on the effects of ER on Ecuadorian university students' vocabulary. There may be several reasons why not many empirical studies have not been conducted in Ecuadorian classrooms, but it can be inferred that ER is not applied because reading is not prioritized, or the strategy is not very well-known.

Moreover, as students of the English major, in our practicum time, we have been observing numerous classes of different levels since we were freshman, and ER was not applied in any of them. Furthermore, the amount of time dedicated to reading activities was scarce in elementary and high schools.

There seems not to be a reading culture in Ecuador which affects the general population and particularly students' performance in this skill. The low results of the PISA exam demonstrate this situation. The test evaluates 15-year-olds students on important subjects, and reading competence is one of them. The *Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa* (2018) showed that PISA's general report results indicate that "Ecuador's average in reading is 409, which places it at level 2, the minimum level of skills" (p. 43).

Considering that reading in the first language is already a problem, it can be inferred that reading in a second language might be one as well. This can be reflected in a study conducted by Jaramillo et al. (2019) with 1300 high school students around the three regions of Ecuador, and the purpose was to find out the reading habits of the EFL students. The

findings indicated that most of the participants read only because they had to complete different tasks or activities, but a very little percentage (5.3 %) read for pleasure. In other words, most of these Ecuadorian students did not read extensively.

Everything exposed above influences EFL students' reading abilities, and it shows that learners need support in this skill, which should be taken into account because that is essential when learning English. For this reason, the ER approach could be considered to enhance EFL students' reading abilities. Therefore, based on what was mentioned above, it is essential to exhibit the effects of extensive reading on EFL students, so teachers can get familiar with this approach and the effects it has on students' reading skills.

1.3 Justification

According to Singkum and Chinwonno (2021), extensive reading trains students to read and stop them from being passive readers to being part of an abundant reading environment so that they take an active part in the process. Richards and Schmidt explain that ER "is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (as cited in Endris, 2018, p.2).

Extensive reading has been considered as a useful approach, and different studies have been conducted in different circumstances to show the effects that ER has on EFL students' reading abilities, such as reading comprehension and vocabulary development (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010). Also, as mentioned before, there have been difficulties developing Ecuadorian reading skills in general; in other words, students struggled with reading in their first language (Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa, 2018) as well as in English (Jaramillo et al. 2019). As Jaramillo et al. (2019) mention, the importance of EFL reading lies in its capacity of improving different abilities. Alsaif and Masrai (2019) conclude that "extensive reading in

foreign language can lead to the enhancement of language learners' skills very greatly"
(p.44).

In Ecuadorian EFL classrooms, there is the need to enhance the reading habit of students and improve their reading skills. Thus, this research synthesis is significant because it proposes to identify and analyze the effects of extensive reading on EFL students' reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and other reading subskills in order to provide an overview that can help teachers to better understand the influence that the application of this approach has on students' reading skills. Based on the gains that ER has on the studies mentioned before (Aka, 2019; Alzubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008), it can be said that this approach can be used to magnify the reading comprehension and vocabulary development of EFL learners. Therefore, the exploration of this topic is significant for our context because in that way, Ecuadorian EFL teachers can decide whether to implement ER in their classes to develop a reading habit and boost their students' reading abilities.

1.4 Research Questions:

1. What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL students' reading comprehension?

2. What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL student's vocabulary development?

3. What are the effects of extensive reading on other reading sub-skills?

1.5 General Objective:

To analyze the effects of ER on EFL students' reading skills and vocabulary development.

Specific Objectives:

To identify the effects of extensive reading on reading comprehension.

To describe the effects of extensive reading on vocabulary development.

To describe the effects of ER on other reading sub-skills.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the concepts, characteristics, and distinct elements regarding reading will be discussed. The theoretical framework will include the following key concepts: EFL reading, definition of extensive and intensive reading, their characteristics and differences. Krashen's input theory will also be considered within the extensive reading section.

2.1 EFL Reading

According to Chen and Chen (2015) the learner had an active role during the reading process in which the material provided hints that allowed the student to understand the text. In addition, Alfassi and Zhang explained that reading was a fundamental comprehensive process that allowed learners to connect with the society and acquire information at the same time (as cited in Shang, 2010).

Also, Harmer (2007) claimed that reading could help in the process of language learning and as students kept reading, they enhanced the skill which could be advantageous for developing students' vocabulary, spelling, and writing. This matched with Jaramillo et al.'s (2019) idea which stated that EFL reading was a crucial process that provided learners the opportunity to get familiar with new cultures and at the same time improved different abilities such as vocabulary and spelling, which resulted in a better language performance. That was the reason why the creation of adequate EFL reading habits was advantageous for the enhancement of the different English language skills.

2.2 Extensive Reading (ER)

Kelly mentioned that in the context of teaching foreign languages, the origin of the term extensive reading was first used by Harold Palmer whose perspective was that learners

read in a big amount with the purpose of gaining knowledge and for fun as well (as cited in Day, 2015). In order to enjoy reading, Harmer (2007) pointed out that "[t]his [was] enhanced if students [hsd] a chance to choose what they want[ed] to read, if they [were] encouraged to read by the teacher, and if some opportunity [was] given for them to share their reading experiences" (p. 99).

Traditionally, as it has been explained, there were some terms associated with extensive reading which included "reading a great deal, reading quickly, and real-world experiences" (Day, 2015, p. 294). Adding to that, Nation and Waring (2019) explained that ER happened when students read silently, and the authors emphasized that the reason for doing so was because the amount of content read was important, and reading out loud prevented students from achieving that. Besides, the action was done independently since learners had their own rhythm. The material was something essential which must have been selected according to the level of each student so that they could understand most part of it.

2.3 Krashen's Input Theory

Krashen's input theory focused on comprehensible input which could enhance language learning by following a process that allowed the students to move from one level (i) to the next (i+1); due to "contextual information", it was possible to understand input that included content that belonged to a more advanced level (as cited in Liu, 2015, p.141).

Nation and Waring (2019) explained the following:

Reading necessarily involves comprehension and so learners should be gaining comprehensible input and be focused on understanding what they read. They should read lots of material because the amount of comprehensible input they get will directly

determine how much vocabulary they learn, how well their reading fluency develops, and how much other aspects of language knowledge develop (p. 3).

This means that extensive reading is deeply involved in the language learning process, and closely related to the comprehensible input which allows to construct language knowledge as it is the case of developing vocabulary and comprehension as well.

2.4 Intensive Reading (IR)

Maipoka and Soontornwipast (2021) claimed that intensive reading (IR) was the employment of "written text" in order to enhance the reading comprehension skill of students (p.152). As Koay indicated, intensive reading was an approach in which students had to read a short text word by word deeply and consciously. In the same way, Mart explained that using the IR approach required the teacher to function as a controller since vocabulary and grammar could be carefully analyzed in order to achieve a full understanding of the text (as cited in Cárdenas, 2020). Furthermore, intensive reading was also known as "narrow reading" since it required students to read and scan a variety of texts with a similar or different topic as Brown mentioned (as cited in Cárdenas, 2020, p.72).

Anderson explained that intensive reading focused on teaching and learning reading tactics helpful for students as well as target vocabulary (as cited in Maipoka & Soontornwipast, 2021). Brown established that in intensive reading, a key detail was to provide more opportunities for students in order to familiarize them with the texts so their comprehension would be improved (as cited in Cárdenas, 2020).

2.5 Characteristics of Extensive Reading

Nation and Waring (2019) described extensive reading features, and they showed what the teacher and student objectives were while applying this approach. The first characteristic was "[r]ead at the right level" (p.4). This meant that students could comprehend the text even though there were a few unknown words. The second one was "[r]ead with comprehension" (p.4) which required students to not use the dictionary often. This improved students' motivation and vocabulary learning. The third one was "[r]ead a lot" (p.4) where students read a massive number of words in less time, which was related to the comprehensible input that had a direct impact on language learning and how students developed their reading skill. The fourth one was "[r]ead independently" (p.4), which as we previously mentioned allowed students to read at their own pace and right level. The last one was "[r]ead silently" (p.4) where students read quietly. This was faster than reading out loud.

2.6 Characteristics of Intensive Reading

Intensive reading's main characteristic involved a teacher-focused approach. Thus, the teacher was the one who was in charge of every step of the reading process. What is more, students were not able to choose the material to read (Neisi et al., 2019). Something essential was that intensive reading focused on analyzing and translating texts in order to establish detailed meanings (Park et al., 2018). Paran claimed that intensive reading involved students comprehending a text by dividing it into parts and not as a whole (as cited in Cárdenas, 2020).

Palmer explained the following main characteristics of intensive reading:

1. IR was slow and deliberate. Students read each line using a dictionary.
2. IR was a classroom-based reading approach.
3. IR allowed developing reading skills.

4. Students had more knowledge in language without depending on practicing the skill.

5. It was mainly used when the material requires concentration and attention by the students (as cited in Khazaal, 2019).

Macleod said that the material for intensive reading could be short, chosen by the teacher, and the aims and tasks for the text could be specific and known by the students (as cited in Khazaal, 2019).

2.7 Extensive Reading vs Intensive Reading

As Camicciottoli and Walker indicated, ER allowed students to have an improvement in their reading fluency and become better readers (as cited in Mart, 2015). In contrast, the purpose of intensive reading was to help students to have an immeasurable knowledge of the language and use it properly (Mart, 2015). Khazaal (2019) explained that intensive reading was considered as a mainstay of educational reading programs since it focused on helping students understand specific information.

Paran claimed that when extensive and intensive reading was applied in a classroom, explicit and implicit learning of the language through reading would happen (as cited in Mart, 2015). Moreover, Rashidi and Piran (2011) suggested that extensive reading had a superior outcome when it is practiced by students with an intermediate or advanced level of English, while intensive reading was more helpful with lower-level learners. Powell explained that since extensive reading let students select their own material, the improvement was significant, and they felt motivated to read, compared to the students that used intensive reading (as cited in Park, 2020).

Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009) claimed that ER was by far superior to IR at the moment of upgrading reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary gain, and academic

vocabulary gain. Since the level of the reading material of the students who use ER was suitable for them, the benefits of this approach were multiple.

Chapter III

Literature Review

In this part of the chapter, a review of the literature will be carried out in order to analyze and identify previous existing information regarding extensive reading (ER) and how this relates to the EFL students' reading skills and subskills. This segment is divided into the following parts: ER as an approach for EFL learners, EFL reading and ER in the Ecuadorian context, ER on EFL students' reading comprehension, and ER on EFL students' vocabulary development.

3.1. Extensive Reading as an Approach for EFL learners

Different authors chose the term *approach* when talking about Extensive Reading, and they explained that ER helped students to improve their reading skills through considerable exposure while they enjoyed the process at the same time (Aka, 2019; Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Boutorwick et al., 2019; Campana et al., 2019; Huang, 2015; Iwahori, 2008; Jaramillo et al., 2019; Kargar, 2012; Mayorga, 2021; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021).

Huang (2015) explained that even though reading was a difficult skill to develop, it conveyed certain benefits when EFL students read extensively because it "helped to enhance the process of the learners' language acquisition" (p. 2). Furthermore, Alsaif and Masrai (2019) commented that ER was more than an entertaining process in which EFL students have fun while reading what they like, but the most important thing was that the outcomes of implementing ER were reflected on the way students improve their "language skills and general knowledge" (p.44). This meant that ER is not only an approach associated with

improving the reading skill, but it was also helpful at the moment of learning the language in general because it entailed other skills and abilities.

Over the last years, ER was researched among many authors, whose findings may vary a little. For instance, a study carried out by Huang (2015) showed that even though students' attitudes towards ER were positive, it did not motivate them to read extensively because it was time-consuming, and teachers agreed with this. Nevertheless, other studies (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021) exposed that the implementation of ER brought positive effects for reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, attitudes, etc. Thus, despite requiring considerable effort, time, and energy, this approach seemed worth it because the results were reflected in students' improvement.

For instance, Aka (2019) conducted a one-year ER program (ERP) to research whether ER was beneficial for high school EFL Japanese students. There was a control (205) and an experimental group (200). The control group was part of traditional grammar classes in 2014, and the experimental group started the ER program in 2015. Through the application of a pre- and post-test that measured "grammar and vocabulary knowledge, as well as reading proficiency" (p.8), the results showed that the experimental group improved their "language knowledge and reading abilities" (p.1), outperforming the control group.

Similar results were found in Iwahori's (2008) study, where 33 high school students participated in a 7-week ERP. They had wide access to graded readers and comics, so they could pick something they were interested in. Students' reading rate was measured through a pre-test and post-test, and the results indicated that students' overall competence and reading rate were boosted.

Likewise, Al-Nafisah (2015) claimed that ER had benefits in reading as well as language proficiency, which supports the findings of the previous studies that revealed that the scope of this approach went beyond a specific skill and rather encompassed general important areas of language.

3.2 EFL reading and ER in the Ecuadorian context

Jaramillo et al. (2019) has affirmed that Ecuadorian English students did not have a complete understanding of the text they had to read during their classes due to a poor development of the reading skill. This led to an insufficiency in their reading performance during the process of being EFL learners. Although this Ecuadorian study did not address extensive reading, it showed a relevant start to the development of reading skills in the country.

In the Ecuadorian context, there was a gap regarding ER, which guided us to the research of Jaramillo et al. (2019). In this study the participants were from the four regions of the country as well as from different levels (eighth, ninth, tenth year of school). Questionnaires for the participants, interviews to the people in charge of the institutions and observations were used. During 6 months, information to observe the effects of a continuous reading activity in the Ecuadorian context was collected.

During the research, students created their own material, designed and created reading corners where they could feel safe and comfortable at the moment of reading. They also started a campaign to collect more reading material, either physical or digital. As a result, teachers mentioned that the reading corners allowed them to plan more reading activities for the students.

After in-depth research, one of the few Ecuadorian studies that addressed ER was the research carried out by Campana et al. (2019). Their research was developed in the Universidad Tecnológica Indoamérica of Ambato with 48 first-level students. After the reading process, closed-ended questionnaires were used in order to measure the vocabulary knowledge of the students. However, the results showed that students were not interested and lacked motivation in reading even when they had the option of choosing the material. Even though the participants did not show interest in reading, 43% of them increased their vocabulary significantly, and the rest of the students acquired new vocabulary with a lower proficiency level.

On the other hand, in the digital repository of the Ecuadorian ESPOL University, there was a Master's thesis that focused on the impact of ER on Ecuadorian learners' attitudes towards L2 reading (Cisneros, 2010). The study included ten university students who attended six weekly meetings in which they received instructions and were taught some reading strategies to make the process easier. During the sessions, students shared experiences and gave summaries of what they read. A reading comprehension test showed that students improved that ability, and through interviews, participants affirmed that they could learn more vocabulary when reading. In Cisneros' (2010) study, participants did feel motivated to read in English, which was not the case of Campana et al's. (2019) research in which "[s]tudents [were] not interested enough in the reading material they use[d] in classes and because of that, there [was] a lack of enjoyment and motivation while reading" (p.71). Thus, it seemed that materials played an important role in students' motivation which was boosted when the material was interesting for them and was at their appropriate level.

Another study that was developed in the Ecuadorian context is Mayorga's (2021), which tackled the implementation of ER through the point of view of some teachers from a

language institute of Ambato. The teachers were part of a digital survey that addressed the concept of ER, its benefits, knowledge of new words and how they connect the meaning of the words with the context of the text. Besides, they attended an online workshop in which they received training about ER. The outcomes showed that teachers considered that ER had many advantages when referring to vocabulary acquisition since it provided the necessary input, and that they were willing to apply ER in their classes to improve students' motivation for reading as well as for the development of vocabulary.

Ultimately, Sánchez and Gavilánez (2017) carried out a five-month study with 26 Ecuadorian university students to recognize the influence of ER on learners' attitudes. During the ERP, students used a course book to develop reading strategies and extra activities such as book reports. After the five months, a questionnaire was applied and the results indicated that learners' attitude towards ER were positive and that in the process some students felt they became more independent and improved in some areas such as comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar.

3.3 Extensive Reading on EFL students' reading comprehension

Alzu'bi (2014) mentioned that there was a serious problem with students when reading a passage because instead of grasping the meaning of it as a whole, students focused on each sentence and as a result, they tried to understand each word by using dictionaries. All of this could disrupt the students' reading process and comprehension as well. According to Endris (2018), comprehension made reading relevant and purposeful and in order to achieve that, ER should be part of students' learning journey because it allowed them to immerse themselves basing on their linguistic level and gave them the opportunity to do it in a low-anxiety environment.

Focusing on empirical studies, few of them (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Fernández de Morgado, 2009) showed minimal or no significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after implementing ER. However, other researchers (Alzu'bi, 2014; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012; Namaziandost et al., 2019) obtained positive results in this aspect. As an example, Alzu'bi (2014) conducted a study with 41 EFL university students and applied a test before and after implementing ER. The results pointed out that ER can be a helpful tool to enhance reading comprehension and other language abilities, such as vocabulary and grammar.

Endris (2018) carried out a pilot study that served as a reference to the second one. There were 92 EFL eighth graders who were divided equally into a control and experimental group. Students took a reading comprehension pre-test and a reading attitude survey. After conducting the extensive reading program for six weeks with the experimental group, the researcher applied the post-test and also another reading attitude survey and an attitude questionnaire to both groups. In the post-test, there was not much difference between the control and experimental group regarding comprehension, but the experimental group's attitudes toward the ERP were positive.

The second study had almost the same procedure, but the program lasted for 12 weeks. Also, it included some motivating and reading activities. After applying the post-test, the findings of the second study revealed that the experimental group surpassed the control group, which indicates that the implementation of extra activities made the extensive reading program more efficient and helped students to improve their reading comprehension and attitudes as well (Endris, 2018).

In the same way, Al -Nafisah (2015) researched the effects that extensive reading had on 54 EFL university students' reading comprehension. Twenty-seven students were part of

the experimental group and the rest belonged to the control group, which was instructed traditionally. For collecting the information, two reading comprehension tests were applied to both groups before and after the program. The results of the post-tests showed that the experimental group surpassed the control group. This supported the claim that ER could be a successful reading approach to improve reading comprehension.

Namaziandost et al. (2019) demonstrated similar results related to reading comprehension. During 3 months, the participants took 2 tests, one to measure their proficiency level and one to measure their reading comprehension. They were divided into two groups, "i + 1" (27) where they had to read stories beyond their level and "i - 1" (27) which had to read stories below their level. Consequently, the participants were able to select the material of their interest from the institute library. At the end, the participants took a post-test to observe the results of the procedure. The outcomes indicated that the group, who read stories beyond their level, were motivated to understand and comprehend the text. It also showed a significant improvement in the reading speed of the participants.

Finally, similar results were found in Kargar's (2012) study where 40 participants, who were majoring in English and had failed a reading comprehension course, were enrolled in a 10-week ERP. Students were assigned to a control and experimental group equally, and they took a reading proficiency test to assure that there was not an important difference in their level. There was also a comprehension pre-test, so at the end the results could be compared. The control group was part of traditional reading classes while the experimental group had access to 35 graded readers, and they had to pick 10 according to the difficulty level, and one storybook was read each week. There were some extra activities after reading the stories such as having discussions, comprehension questions, and writing tasks. After applying a post-test at the end of the ERP, the results revealed that the experimental group

did better than the control group because their comprehension and reading proficiency improved.

3.4 Extensive Reading on EFL students' vocabulary development

Binhomran and Altalhab (2021) explained that vocabulary was a crucial component for EFL learners in order to have a high language proficiency. Without a reasonable amount of vocabulary, students would have a difficult time mastering the four skills of English. Pigada and Smith claimed that acquiring vocabulary unintentionally could be less likely to happen than in an intentional manner, but it could occur when there were several encounters with the vocabulary in a text (as cited in Aka, 2019).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that extensive reading could be a suitable approach for students to expand their vocabulary while practicing reading (Aka, 2019; Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Boutorwick et al., 2019; Namaziandost et al., 2019; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021; Soltani, 2011). As mentioned before, Aka's (2019) study was related to ER in reading comprehension of EFL students, but it also showed an effect on vocabulary development. The results exposed that participants' knowledge of vocabulary was enhanced after a one-year course of ER.

In addition, Alsaif and Masrai (2019) established relevant results related to vocabulary development in their study. An undergraduate student was put under a pre- and post-test to recognize his level of knowledge in vocabulary, which was C1 at the beginning of the study. During eight weeks, the participant read fiction and non-fiction books of his preference by using electronic devices. The results showed the participant's vocabulary increased around 15% compared to the knowledge he had before the study, which shows the

positive effect that ER has over students' vocabulary development. This meant that being exposed to extensive reading could expand the number of words that a learner has.

In the same line, Pazhakh and Soltani (2010) demonstrated the effects of ER on vocabulary development. Eighty EFL students from six language institutes were selected to participate. After a proficiency test, the 40 participants were divided randomly into an experimental (20) and a control group (20). During ten weeks, both groups received the same instructions for the reading process, but students from the experimental group read one story for two weeks, and after that, they had to write a summary using words learned during the reading. The outcomes showed that the experimental group had a significant improvement connected to new vocabulary knowledge compared to the control group in both upper and lower-level groups.

Alzu'bi (2014), Namaziandost et al. (2019), and Singkum and Chinwonnob (2021) exhibited homogenous results regarding vocabulary. In the case of Alzu'bi (2014), after a pre- and post- test during an ER program, forty-one EFL university students who were familiarized already with ER increased their word recognition as well as a gain in their vocabulary due to the regular contact of students with the vocabulary during 3 semesters.

Similarly, Singkum and Chinwonnob (2021) carried out a study composed of fifty-one students who took a compulsory English course. After ten weeks of implementing an ER approach, with multiple tasks and readings with material selected by the participants, their vocabulary understanding increased. In the same way, Namaziandost et al. (2019) also revealed the improvement of vocabulary and grammar in their participants. Regarding the latter, Nation mentioned, "when learners read, they not only learnt new words and enriched their known ones, but they could also improve their syntactic knowledge" (as cited in Soltani, 2011, p. 162).

Boutorwick et al. (2019) developed a 12-week study in which there were two groups: "ER -only" which meant that the participants just had to read the materials, and "ER -plus" in which the participants had to read the material and then participate in a Say-it activity. The methodologies to measure their vocabulary knowledge were a self-report test, word association test, and a post-test interview. The results showed that the "ER -plus" group had a better improvement than the "ER -only" group. This leads us to the conclusion that extra activities, such as the short discussion in this case, helped students to have a deeper understanding of the new words learned during the reading process while interacting with their classmates.

Finally, Soltani (2011) carried out a 10-week program, and through the application of a proficiency test, selected 40 upper-intermediate and 40 lower-intermediate learners who were divided into experimental and control groups each one. The groups received similar reading instruction, but the experimental groups were given five short stories, and one story was read every two weeks as part of an ERP. Summaries and paragraphs to check on new words were done by the experimental groups, and at the end all groups took a post-test, which revealed that students in the experimental group surpassed those in the control group because their vocabulary was enhanced significantly. In addition, Soltani (2011) also mentioned that ER could help students to develop their spelling.

Reflecting on the previous information, it could be inferred that the effectiveness of an ER program relied on an essential factor which is the time allocation (Aka, 2019; Endris, 2018). This is completely understandable since ER focused on reading extensively for long periods of time; however, as some studies showed (Boutorwick et al., 2019; Cisneros, 2010; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Soltani, 2011), extra activities may play an important role as well.

UCUENCA

Throughout this literature review, various studies (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021) have been considered to explore the implementation of ER and the effects it might conveyd on EFL students' reading skills and abilities. The results were positive since students' reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and other areas such as grammar were enhanced after an ER program. Even though there were effective results in the Ecuadorian context regarding ER, the number of studies is still scarce. And because of the positive results obtained in different studies, Ecuadorian teachers could consider using ER more frequently to help EFL learners enhance their reading skills.

Chapter IV

Methodology

According to Norris and Ortega (2006), a research synthesis "pursues systematic understandings of the state of knowledge that has accumulated about a given problem across primary research studies" (p. XI). This research synthesis conducted a bibliographical research to analyze the reported effects of ER on EFL students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

The criteria for selecting the studies were based on the following aspects. The articles were empirical in order to have results based on real contexts that allowed to form a clear image of the effects that extensive reading had on students. Moreover, the articles selected focused on the EFL environment, since it was important to analyze the effects that ER had in this context. Besides that, the empirical studies from 2000 until now were included because the application of this approach had been investigated over the last decades and considering all those results was significant for the research. The following six keywords were used for this study: EFL, extensive reading, reading abilities, comprehension, vocabulary, and effects.

In addition, data was collected from the following online databases: Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, and ERIC. Some of the journals that were revised included the following: *Reading in a Foreign Language, Language Teaching Research, International Journal of Education, Literacy Studies, International Journal of Research in English Education, Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, and Arab World English Journal* which provided useful information for the research synthesis. Nevertheless, due to the lack of empirical studies in the Ecuadorian context further research was necessary, so new databases such as ESPOL repository and new journals like the *European Scientific Journal*, which were not part of our preliminary research, were taken into account as the process of this research

synthesis moved forward. Finally, the different articles selected were classified according to different criteria to meet the established objectives.

Chapter V

Data Analysis

In this part of the research synthesis, the reported effects of the 20 empirical studies that were selected will be analyzed according to the research questions that were presented in chapter I. However, as a way to simplify important aspects of the studies, a table was created to present a general view of those studies.

Table 1

Primary ER Studies for the Research Synthesis

Focus of the study	Authors	N° of studies
Reading comprehension	Aka (2019); Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009); Al-Nafisah (2015); Endris (2018); Fernández de Morgado (2009); Kargar (2012); Namaziandost et al. (2019); Singkum & Chinwonnob (2021)	8
Vocabulary development	*Aka (2019); *Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009); Alsaif & Masrai (2019); Alzu'bi (2014); Boutorwick et al. (2014); Campana et al. (2010); Pazhakh & Soltani (2010); Soltani (2011)	8
Learners' attitudes/motivation and other sub skills	Cisneros (2010); Huang (2015); Iwahori (2008); *Namaziandost et al. (2019); Sánchez & Gavilánez (2017); *Singkum & Chinwonnob (2021)	6
Others	Jaramillo et al. (2019); Mayorga (2021)	2

N= 20
Note. The articles with an asterisk are repeated throughout the categories because they address more than one topic.

The purpose of table 1 is to give an overview of the studies that were analyzed in the literature review, which will contribute to the data analysis. The studies were grouped based on three main categories which are relevant to our research synthesis. Besides, it is important to mention that some studies are repeated throughout the categories, since they addressed

comprehension and vocabulary at the same time. Even though the last category includes relevant information, it is not closely related to the research questions.

Table 2

Research Methods of the Studies

Research design	N° of studies	Percentage
Quantitative	9	45%
Qualitative	2	10%
Mixed-methods	9	45%

N= 20

Table 2 displays the methods that were implemented in the 20 studies selected for this research synthesis. The least commonly used method was the qualitative, representing only the 10% of the studies. However, the most used methods were the quantitative and mixed ones, each with the same percentage (45%). According to Creswell, quantitative research can help to measure variables to obtain numerical data (as cited in Khaldi, 2017). Since the focus of different studies was to expose the effects of ER, whether positive or negative, through different instruments, this method certainly helped to achieve this.

Nevertheless, a quantitative approach may not be enough when a clear understanding of the effects of ER is required. Mertens (2019) explains that a quantitative study can gain profundity by using qualitative methods. For this reason, Patton claimed that "the use of mixed methods can provide breadth, depth, and numerical data that can give a more complete picture of the phenomena under study" (as cited in Mertens, 2019, Qualitative section). Therefore, the implementation of both approaches was significant for obtaining information regarding ER and its effects on EFL learners. More than that, it also allowed us to identify important effects on students' perceptions, which can be a relevant topic.

Table 3

Data Collection Instruments

Instrument	N° of studies	Percentage
Pre-tests and post-tests	13	65%
Others (interviews, surveys, observations, etc.)	7	35%

N= 20

Table 3 shows the variety of instruments used in the 20 studies in order to collect data. Pre- and post-test were used in most of the studies; in fact, 13 studies employed them (65%). They were used to measure the knowledge of students before the study and to see the effect that ER had on participants' reading skill. As Antwi and Hamza (2015) mentioned, quantitative research tries to prove a hypothesis by making use of empirical data. This type of data can be obtained by applying pre and post-tests to the participants. On the other hand, the other types of instruments used were interviews, surveys, and observations, which were applied only in 7 studies (35%). The instruments mentioned before were used to collect data regarding the following aspects: perceptions, attitudes and motivation. As Atieno (2009) indicated, in order to understand in a deeper way how the participants feel in specific situations and what they experience, the qualitative method should be used. As it was shown in table 3 the majority of studies considered a mixed method because researchers want to obtain information about participants' reading proficiency as well as perceptions when applying ER.

Table 4

Location of Primary Studies for the Research Synthesis

Continent	Country	N° of studies	Percentage
	Japan	2	
	Saudi Arabia (Western)	3	

Asia	Jordan (Western)	1	60%
	Thailand	1	
	Iran	4	
	Taiwan	1	
Africa	Ethiopia	1	5%
America	Ecuador	5	25%
	Venezuela	1	5%
Oceania	New Zealand	1	5%

N= 20

Table 4 represents the location that the studies took place in. The data obtained showed that numerous studies were conducted in Asia, being Iran (4) and Saudi Arabia (3) the predominant countries that stood out within the number of studies. Japan (2) was the country that followed them and finally Jordan, Thailand, and Taiwan where one study was conducted in each country, respectively.

The studies that took place in Asia constituted a significant percentage (60%) where 12 studies out of 20 that contributed to our research synthesis were carried out. According to Chang (2011), English has an important role in Asian countries since it allows communication across the world.

Below Asia, the continents that follow in the number of studies are Africa (1), America (6), and Oceania (5). Ecuador is the country that stands out in America with a number of 5 studies; however, according to what was analyzed in the literature review, those studies were not completely related or contributed to our research topic, so a scarcity of studies researching and focusing on the effects of ER on reading comprehension and vocabulary is once again emphasized.

Therefore, there is a need to conduct more research studies in Ecuador using ER to show the effects of this approach in order to provide a broader perspective in the Ecuadorian EFL educational field.

UCUENCA

Table 5

Participants' Age

Group	Age range	N° of studies	Percentage
Children	5-11	0	0%
Teenagers	12-16	6	30%
Adults	17-27	14	70%

N= 20

Table 5 summarizes the information obtained regarding participants' age. Adults represent the majority of participants, with a total of 14 studies out of 20. Following them, there are teenagers (6) and none of the studies considered children as participants. Nakanishi (2014) mentions that "[e]xtensive reading might be more beneficial for late learners, who tend to learn language explicitly drawing on their analytical skills, than for early learners, who presumably still enjoy their ability to learn language in an implicit manner" (p. 21). This may explain why most of the studies were conducted with older participants since ER is an approach focused on improving the reading skill and, as Nakanishi (2014) explains, reading comprehension is better in adults which can facilitate their reading process and make it easier compared to children.

The next part of this analysis will be centered on the three research questions:

RQ1: *What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL students' reading comprehension?*

RQ2: *What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL students' vocabulary development?*

RQ3: *What are the effects of extensive reading on other reading sub-skills?*

The third question will be integrated within the analysis of the first and second research question.

First research question:

What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL students' reading comprehension?

The following table synthesized the effects, whether positive or negative, that the implementation of ER has on reading comprehension.

Table 6

Effects of ER on Students' Reading Comprehension

Author	Effects in reading comprehension	Number of studies	Percentage
Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009)	Minimal/No significant improvement	2	25%
Fernández de Morgado (2009)	Minimal/No significant improvement		
Aka (2019)	Positive	6	75%
Al-Nafisah (2015)	Positive		
Alzu'bi (2014)	Positive		
Endris (2018)	Positive		
Kargar (2012)	Positive		
Namaziandost et al. (2019)	Positive		

N= 8

From the studies that focused on reading comprehension, six of them (75%) showed positive effects in comprehension at the moment of implementing ER. During the ERP, the learners were able to enhance their reading comprehension, and other important aspects such as attitudes and motivation towards reading. Even though in the studies conducted by Fernández de Morgado (2009) and Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009) the outcomes were not convincing when it came to reading comprehension, there were positive results in student's perceptions, motivation, and attitudes since they felt improvement after the ERP. For this reason, Fernández de Morgado (2009) emphasized that even though there was not a powerful

impact of ER in comprehension, it was still valuable because of its effects on motivation, which can be a key element in the language learning process.

Furthermore, in most studies (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012) students' improvement in reading comprehension was notably influenced by the materials they were exposed to. Al'zubi (2014) and Endris (2018) explain that materials have an important role because when they are at the students' right level, and there is a variety of interesting themes and genres, they encourage learners to read. More than that, along with extensive reading, they could also facilitate an important component of reading fluency, which is reading speed (Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008).

This part of the analysis is closely related to the third research question which focuses on other sub skills, which in this case is reading fluency, specifically reading speed.

Alzu'bi (2014) claims that "comprehension will become valueless if reading efficiency does not take into account reading speed, which is usually measured in the number of words read per minute" (p.28). Similarly, Sakurai (2015) mentions that while applying ER, reading comprehension and speed are closely related because they can influence each other's improvement. In agreement, Iwahori (2008) explains that "as students are assigned to read a large number of comprehensive materials, speed becomes important as it facilitates the enjoyment and comprehension of materials" (p.70). Nutall and Stanovich describe that reading slowly may have a negative effect on motivation since the attempt to understand a passage is bigger and results tedious which stops students from reading more and at the same time does not allow them to enhance their comprehension of what is read (as cited in Beglar et al., 2011). This means that reading speed can be a key motivating factor for students to enjoy what they read, which creates a tight connection with their reading comprehension.

In the same line, in the study of Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009), despite the fact that there were no clear effects on reading comprehension, which could be attributed to the focus

of the study that compared the effectiveness between intensive and extensive reading, ER somehow surpassed IR since it helped students to enhance their reading fluency and speed. As Grabe and Stoller explained, "one of the most effective ways of promoting reading fluency ... is extensive reading, both in and out of the classroom" (as cited in Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009, p. 394). Similarly, the reading process was enjoyable since students had the chance to choose between 150 graded readers of different genres, allowing them to read at their level and get engaged in the story, which facilitated word recognition and reading fluency, respectively. This matches with Harmer's (2007) and Nation and Waring's (2019) ideas that having the option to choose what to read and right levels make the reading process more entertaining and pleasant because they understand what they read, which can have multiple benefits as those mentioned previously.

According to Nation and Waring (2019), reading fluency and other abilities are controlled by the total of comprehensible input that students receive which is in harmony with Krashen's input theory where "acquisition happens when learners receive understandable messages in the target language, that is, understandable input" (as cited in Patrick, 2019, p.4) which in this case would be reading input. Regarding the latter, the reading hypothesis states that "comprehensible input in the form of reading also stimulates language acquisition" (as cited in Alatis, 1992, p.410). In the same vein, the majority of studies selected for this research synthesis showed that students developed their reading comprehension and vocabulary development after being exposed to an ERP, meaning that students read large amounts of texts for long periods of time.

For instance, in Namaziandost et al's. (2019) study, there were two groups of students in which Krashen's input theory i+1 was tested. The "i + 1" group read stories beyond their level and the "i - 1" group read stories below their level. At the end, the outcomes were that the "i + 1" group improved motivation and reading comprehension. Even though there was

only one study that focused explicitly on the i+1 hypothesis, the results were positive. In other studies (Al-Nafisah, 2015; Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012) students used graded readers according to their level, and as stated by Aka (2019), EFL students "can start reading materials in a foreign language by themselves without the teachers' support if the input is relatively easy to grasp" (p. 14). Therefore, it seems that whether we use material at the students' level or beyond their level, there will be positive results. However, it can be implied that a further step would be to read beyond one's level which is in consonance with what Namaziandost et al. (2019) claim, where i+1 seems to be the next move for improving the learner's language level of competence, particularly reading comprehension.

In addition, an important element related to reading comprehension is decoding. Namaziandost et al. (2019) mentioned that decoding a text becomes an important aspect as students process information to extract the meaning and message from a text. At the same time, Adams explained that the decoding process contributes to comprehension and reading fluency. It is important to point out that the effectiveness of the decoding process relies on word recognition (as cited in Beglar et al., 2011). Regarding the latter, word recognition is an important process which is closely related to vocabulary development, so it will be addressed together with the second and third research question.

Second research question:

What are the reported effects of extensive reading on EFL students' vocabulary development?

Table 7

Effects of implementing ER on students' vocabulary development

Study#	Author	Effects	Percentage
1	Aka (2019)	Positive	
2	Al-Homoud & Schmitt	Positive	

	(2009)		
3	Alsaif & Masrai (2019)	Positive	
4	Alzu'bi (2014)	Positive	
5	Boutorwick et al. (2019)	Positive	
6	Campana et al. (2010)	Positive	100%
7	Namaziandost et al. (2019)	Positive	
8	Pazhakh & Soltani (2010)	Positive	
9	Singkum & Chinwonnob (2021)	Positive	
10	Soltani (2011)	Positive	

N= 10

Table 7 displays a total of ten studies that focused on vocabulary development. All of them have a positive result (100%) when referring to the enhancement of vocabulary when applying ER. It is important to clarify that even though the participants of Campana et al.'s (2010) study have a positive result with the application of ER, the improvement of vocabulary was not as significant as the other studies due to a lack of motivation and interest to read from the learners. The mentioned improvement in vocabulary knowledge can be the result of repetition, which helps students to construct a deeper and precise comprehension of the words' meaning in context and how to use them properly (Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010). This can lead as well to develop word recognition, as Boutorwick et al. 's (2019) outcomes demonstrated. Participants recognized the meaning of unfamiliar words by inferring and taking into consideration the context. Spelling is also related to this section according to some results (Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Soltani, 2011) as well as grammar (Aka, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014) which are considered as fundamental parts of the writing skill as Weir indicated (as cited in Aryadoust, 2010). Taking into account that, the already mentioned sub-skills will not be considered for the analysis since they go beyond the purpose of this research synthesis.

Pigada and Schmitt expressed that encountering a word many times in a story allows students to deduce its meaning, considering the context where it appears (as cited in Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010). The act of running into a word multiple times can also be defined as incidental vocabulary. Mayorga (2021) explained that incidental vocabulary is gaining knowledge of new words in an unintentional way. In the same line, Alsaif and Masrai (2019) based on their study indicated that ER is an adequate approach in which incidental vocabulary can occur due to the amount of text that learners read. This lines up with Krashen's input theory, where students are able to understand advanced or new words through the context details of the text, and this leads to the enhancement of their vocabulary.

At the same time, Alzu'bi (2014), Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009), Pazhakh and Soltani (2010), and Alsaif and Masrai's (2019) results in relation to vocabulary acquisition and word recognition match with Krashen's input theory since the participants of these studies were able to interpret the meaning of words in context due to the use of an ER program. As Day and Branford explained, "it is extensive reading which is believed to further the progress of rapid and automatic word shape recognition" (as cited in Alsaif & Masrai, 2019, p. 5). In fact, reading speed influences word recognition since learners' reading speed improves when they are able to recognize a word and understand it (Aka, 2019).

On the other hand, Aka (2019) claimed that, based on her study outcomes, learners' sight vocabulary improved. Words that are identified and comprehend when they are alone or not in context are known as sight vocabulary (Laufer & Aviad-Levitzky, 2017). Even though this is the only study among the eleven that shows and talks about sight vocabulary, it can be relevant due to its relationship with vocabulary development as Pigada and Schmitt mentioned (as cited in Aka, 2019, p. 2).

Besides that, as it was mentioned before, Krashen's input theory (i+1) can be seen in Namaziandost et al's. (2019) research. In this case, the results in vocabulary development

were positive, indicating that providing material above the level of the participants helped them to increase their vocabulary. Another effect of ER during this study was the motivation of the participants at the end of the program. This also matches with some studies' (Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Huang, 2015; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021) results which also show how ER improves motivation, attitudes and perceptions towards reading due to the fact that the participants were able to choose the texts or stories and understand new words with or without context.

All the results addressed previously help us respond to the third question, which focuses on other reading sub skills. The outcomes of the articles revised showed an overlap between vocabulary development, reading comprehension and other sub skills since there is a close relationship between them. Based on the analysis, there is a dependency between having a vast vocabulary and comprehending a text deeply. As Pazhakh and Soltani (2010) indicated, having a wide vocabulary allows the comprehension of a text. In the same line, Kameli and Baki (2013) explained that EFL learners would be capable of catching the meaning of a text once their vocabulary knowledge is expanded. This supports the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension found in this research synthesis, where both help and complement each other.

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The main focus of this research synthesis was to identify the effects of extensive reading on EFL students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. The results of most studies exposed that the implementation of ER conveys positive effects of EFL learners (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Alsaif & Masrai, 2019; Alzu'bi, 2014; Boutorwick et al., 2014; Campana et al., 2010; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012; Mayorga, 2021; Namaziandost et al., 2019; Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010; Soltani, 2011; Singkum & Chinwonnob, 2021). Few studies (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Fernández de Morgado, 2009) did not show notable improvements. Moreover, an important outcome of this research is the fact that there was a scarcity of studies regarding ER on reading abilities in Ecuador and South America in general. For this reason, some of the studies that were taken into account were not fully related to the research questions (Cisneros, 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2019; Sánchez & Gavilánez, 2017). However, they were considered for this research as they were carried out in Ecuador and exposed helpful information regarding students' reading habits, attitudes, and motivation, which are factors that seem to influence students' exposure to ER. After conducting the data analysis, it can be said that ER is an effective approach to enhance students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

Three research questions shaped the data collection, and regarding the first one which focuses specifically on reading comprehension, it was observed that ER certainly had positive effects on EFL learners. Extensive reading provided learners the necessary input to immerse themselves in the language by reading great amounts of books for long periods of time, which helped them to boost not only their reading comprehension but also other aspects such as motivation, word recognition, and reading speed (Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Al'zubi,

2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008; Kargar, 2012; Namaziandost et al., 2019). These two latter points are intertwined with the third research question that focuses on other reading sub skills. An important feature that was outstanding at the moment of enhancing reading comprehension was the materials that were taken into consideration (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018). In the studies, the materials were at the students' level and included a wide range of themes that students were interested in. This contributed to catching the interest of the students and engaging them in an enjoyable reading process, which resulted in different benefits in motivation, word recognition, and reading speed. Regarding the latter, reading speed allows students to savor the different texts they read and has a big influence in comprehension because the effort to understand a passage is slight, so it makes the reading process flow without interruptions. Besides, it is enjoyable, and as a result it is understood in a better way (Al'zubi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Iwahori, 2008).

The results matched with Krashen's input theory since the reading input to which students were exposed facilitated the acquisition of reading skills and sub skills. The i+1 theory is not fully accepted due to the fact that only one study implemented it, explicitly (Namaziandost et al., 2019); however, it is seen as a further alternative to enhance comprehension.

Moreover, one final component associated with reading comprehension and speed is decoding, which helps students to gather and understand the information faster (Namaziandost et al., 2019). At the same time, decoding is interlaced with word recognition which becomes an important factor in vocabulary development. For this reason, the first and second research questions were intertwined with the third one because through the analysis of the different studies, it was possible to see that during an ERP reading comprehension and vocabulary development are somehow fettered during the reading process because in order to

fully understand a text, the vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role. Due to this, the results show that the reading skills and sub skills might be overlapped sometimes.

Therefore, the second research question is related to the development of vocabulary at the moment of applying ER in a classroom. Ten studies (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Fernández de Morgado, 2009; Aka, 2019; Al-Nafisah, 2015; Alzu'bi, 2014; Endris, 2018; Kargar, 2012; Namaziandost et al., 2019) whose purpose was to explore ER and vocabulary had a positive result.

During the analysis, it was found that since extensive reading consists of reading a comprehensible amount of text, the repetition of words is what helps students to understand and know the meaning of a word deeply in context which is known as word recognition (Boutorwick et al., 2019).

In the same vein, it was found that ER boosts the development of sight vocabulary, which has a similarity with word recognition. However, with sight vocabulary students are able to understand the word when it does not have a context (Laufer & Aviad-Levitzky, 2017). Being able to catch the meaning of a word with and without context also improves the speed in which students read. As it was previously mentioned, reading speed is a sub skill of reading (Aka, 2019). Due to that, the first, second and third questions are closely related since in order to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary development, word recognition, vocabulary sight, and reading speed must be practiced and enhanced.

In the same line with reading comprehension, Krashen's input theory (i+1) has a beneficial result when we talk about the expansion of vocabulary. As it was shown, students are able to add new words to their vocabulary when they read texts that are one level above their knowledge (Namaziandost et al., 2019). However, during the analysis only one study made use of this theory, which does not allow us to generalize the positive outcomes that Krashen's input theory can have while being applied with ER.

UCUENCA

6.2 Recommendations

Taking into account the diversity of results after analyzing the 20 studies selected for this research synthesis there are some aspects that need to be taken into consideration for further research. Since there is a lack of studies in Latin America about the effect that ER can have in EFL students, we consider that more studies must be conducted in order to observe the outcome of this approach in an environment where the habit of reading is not as developed as in other countries as it was investigated during this research. This leads us to an important recommendation which is to research how ER can work in the Ecuadorian context and the practical implications in pedagogy. As it was shown in table 4, only 5 studies were found about the use of ER in Ecuador, and through the analysis of the effects that this approach has on EFL students, several positive results were found, as it was previously mentioned. Because of this, it would be a plausible option to implement ER in the Ecuadorian EFL classrooms, not only to improve students' reading comprehension or vocabulary, but also to create a reading habit that will eventually help students in other academic areas.

In the same line, future research studies should include more young learners. As it was mentioned, the majority of studies with a 70% were conducted with participants with a range of 17-27 years old while teenagers between 12 and 16 years old were participants of only 30% of the studies, leaving children as an excluded age to apply ER. Even though it was explained that usually ER is an appropriate approach for older people, the effects that it has on younger learners should be studied in order to provide relevant information to adapt ER and be able to use it properly with students of this age. On the other hand, exhaustive research should be conducted in order to discover the reason why ER is more adequate for adults instead of children. This is closely related with the number of studies that involved university students as participants for the application of ER in their classroom.

The tendency of using a mixed methodology, which consists of a qualitative and quantitative collection of the data, was found in 9 of the 20 studies considered for this research synthesis. For this reason, it would be relevant to have a deeper view with the use of qualitative research in order to understand widely and from another angle the perceptions and attitudes of EFL students about the use of ER while being in the classroom as well as the teachers' one. This will help us understand better how they perceive the use of this approach as a new way to plant the habit of reading in students.

It would also be relevant to investigate deeply the effect of ER in other skills such as writing. The fact that ER will also expose students to different grammar structures, may help them improve the use of these grammar structures when they write. In other words, this can either have a positive effect on EFL students at the moment of practicing their writing skill due to the major exposure to English grammar structures that they have while reading different texts. Other aspects of writing such as organization can be researched after implementing ER. The effects of ER on writing skills should be definitely studied.

References

Aka, N. (2019). Reading performance of Japanese high school learners following a one-year extensive reading program. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 31*(1), 1–18. https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/collection/col_10125_68081

Alatis, J. E. (Ed.). (1992). *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics (GURT) 1991: Linguistics and Language Pedagogy: The State of the Art.* Georgetown University Press

Al-Homoud, F., & Schmitt, N. (2009). Extensive reading in a challenging environment: A comparison of extensive and intensive reading approaches in Saudi Arabia. *Language Teaching Research, 13*(4), 383–401. doi: 10.1177/1362168809341508

Al-Nafisah, K. (2015). The effectiveness of an extensive reading program in developing Saudi EFL university students' reading comprehension. *Arab World English Journal, 8*(1), 98–19. https://dx.doi.org/*10.24093/awej/vol6no2.8*

Alsaif, A., & Masrai, A. (2019). Extensive reading and incidental vocabulary acquisition: The case of a predominant language classroom input. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 7*(2), 39–45. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.7n.2p.39

Alzu'bi, M. A. (2014). The effects of an extensive reading program on improving English as foreign language proficiency in university level education. *English Language Teaching, 7*(1), 28–35. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n1p28

Antwi, S. K., & Hamza, K. (2015). Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in business research: A philosophical reflection. *European Journal of Business and Management,* 7(3), 217-225. https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/view/19543

Aryadoust, V. (2010). Investigating writing sub-skills in testing English as a foreign language: A structural equation modeling study. *The Electronic Journal for English*

as a Second Language, 13(4), 1-20. http://www.tesl-

ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume13/ej52/ej52a9/

Atieno, O. (2009). An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative

research paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 13*, 13-18.

https://scientiasocialis.lt/pec/files/pdf/Atieno_Vol.13.pdf

Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (1997). Extensive reading: What is it? Why bother? *JALT Journal*.

https://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/extensive.html

Bailey, F., & Fahad, A. K. (2021). Krashen revisited: Case study of the role of input,

motivation and identity in second language learning. *Arab World English Journal,

12*(2), 540–550. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no2.36

Beglar, D., Hunt, A., & Kite, Y. (2011). The effect of pleasure reading on Japanese university

EFL learners' reading rates. *Language Learning, 62*(3), 665–703. doi:10.1111/j.1467-

9922.2011.00651.x

Binhomran, K., & Altalhab, S. (2021b). The impact of implementing augmented reality to

enhance the vocabulary of young EFL learners. *The JALT CALL Journal, 17*(1), 23–

44. https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v17n1.304

Boutorwick, T. J., Macalister, J., & Elgort, I. (2019). Two approaches to extensive reading

and their effects on L2 vocabulary development. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 31*,

150–172. https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/423

Campana, D., Cardenas, M., Guadalupe, L., Bravo, M., & Urena, D. (2019). The effect of

extensive reading on vocabulary knowledge of first level university students.

European Scientific Journal, 15(13), 57–73. 10.19044/esj.2019.v15n13p57

Cárdenas, I. (2020). Enhancing reading comprehension through an intensive reading

approach. *HOW*, *27*, 69–82. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.1.518

UCUENCA

Chang, B. M. (2011). The roles of English language education in Asian context. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 15*(1), 191-206. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ939947.pdf

Chen, K., & Chen, S. (2015). The use of EFL reading strategies among high school students in Taiwan. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal, 15*(2), 156-166. https://readingmatrix.com/files/13-m0137054.pdf

Cisneros, K. A. (2010). *Impact of extensive reading on Ecuadorian learners' attitudes toward L2 reading: A qualitative research study* [Master's Thesis, Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral - ESPOL and Centro de Estudios de Lenguas Extranjeras – CELEX]. Repositorio DSPACE ESPOL. http://www.dspace.espol.edu.ec/xmlui/handle/123456789/34253?locale-attribute=en

Day, R. R. (2015). Extending extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 27*(2), 294–301. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1078441.pdf

Endris, A. (2018). Effects of extensive reading on EFL learners' reading comprehension and attitudes. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, *3*(4), 1–11. http://ijreeonline.com/article-1-113-en.html

Fernández de Morgado, N. (2009). Extensive reading: Students' performance and perception. *The Reading Matrix, 9*(1), 31–43. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253319496_Extensive_Reading_Students'_Performance_and_Perception

Ghasemi, P. (2011). Teaching the short story to improve L2 reading and writing skills: approaches and strategies. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, *4*(18), 265. http://www.openaccesslibrary.org/images/0418_Parvin_Ghasemi.pdf

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English* (2nd ed). Pearson Education Limited.

Huang, Y. (2015). Why don't they do it? A study on the implementation of extensive reading

    in Taiwan. *Cogent Education, 2*(1), 1–13.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2015.1099187

Horst, M. (2005). Learning L2 vocabulary through extensive reading: A measurement study.

    The Canadian Modern Language Review, *61*(3), 355–382.

    https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.3.355

Iwahori, Y. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL.

    Reading in a foreign language, 20, 70-91.

Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa. (2018). *Educación en Ecuador: Resultados de*

    PISA para el desarrollo. https://www.evaluacion.gob.ec/wp-

    content/uploads/downloads/2018/12/CIE_InformeGeneralPISA18_20181123.pdf

Jaramillo, M., Vargas, A., Cabrera, P., Vivanco, L., & Zuniga, A. (2019). Improving EFL

    reading habits in adolescent students from public high schools in Ecuador.

    International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 18(10), 191-

    202. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.18.10.12

Kameli, S., & Baki, R. (2013). The impact of vocabulary knowledge level on EFL reading

    comprehension. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*,

    2(1), 85–89. https://doi.org/10.7575/ijalel.v.2n.1p.85

Kargar, A.A. (2012) The efficiency of extensive reading project (ERP) in an Iranian EFL

    context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2*(1), 165-169.

    https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.2.1.165-169

Khaldi, K. (2017). Quantitative, qualitative or mixed research: Which research paradigm to

    use? *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, *7*(2), 15-15. doi:

    10.5901/jesr.2017.v7n2p15

Khazaal, E. (2019). Impact of intensive reading strategy on English for specific purposes college students' in developing vocabulary. *Arab World English Journal*, *10*(2), 181–195. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no2.15

Laufer, B., & Aviad-Levitzky, T. (2017). What type of vocabulary knowledge predicts reading comprehension: Word meaning recall or word meaning recognition? *Modern Language Journal, 101*(4), 729–741.

Liu, D. (2015). A critical review of Krashen's input hypothesis: Three major arguments. *Journal of Education and Human Development December, 4*(4), 139-146. http://dx.doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v4n4a16

Maipoka, S., & Soontornwipast, K. (2021). Effects of intensive and extensive reading instruction on Thai Primary Students' English Reading Ability. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 14*(1), 146-175.

Mart, C. T. (2015). Combining extensive and intensive reading to reinforce language learning. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World, 5*(4), 85–90.

Mayorga, V. C. (2021). *Extensive reading for the development of incidental vocabulary* [Master 's thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador] Repositorio PUCESA.

Mertens, D. M. (2019). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. Sage publications.

Nakanishi, T. (2014). A meta-analysis of extensive reading research. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(1), 6–37. doi:10.1002/tesq.157

Namaziandost, E., Nasri, M., & Ziafar, M. (2019). Comparing the impacts of various inputs(I + 1 & I-1) on pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation: the case of Ahvazi learners. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-019-0079-1

Nation, I.S.P., & Waring, R. (2019). *Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language.* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809256

Neisi, L., Hajijalili, M., & Namaziandost, E. (2019). The impact of using inverted classrooms on promoting extensive versus intensive reading comprehension among Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *9*(12), 1513. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0912.07

Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Synthesizing research on language learning and teaching (Vol. 13)*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Park, A. Y. (2020). A comparison of the impact of extensive and intensive reading approaches on the reading attitudes of secondary EFL learners. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *10*(2), 337–358. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2020.10.2.6

Park, A. Y., Isaacs, T., & Woodfield, H. (2018). A comparison of the effects of extensive and intensive reading approaches on the vocabulary development of Korean secondary EFL learners. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *9*(1), 113–134. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2017-0025

Patrick, R. (2019). Comprehensible input and Krashen's theory. *Journal of Classics Teaching, 20*(39), 37–44. doi:10.1017/s2058631019000060

Pazhakh, A., & Soltani, R. (2010). The effect of extensive reading on vocabulary development in EFL learners in Dehdasht Language Institute. *Practice and Theory in Systems of Education, 5*(4), 387–398. http://eduscience.fw.hu/1411PazhakhSoltani-COPY.pdf

Rashidi, N., & Piran, M. (2011). The Effect of extensive and intensive reading on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary size and depth. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.2.471-482

UCUENCA

Renandya, W. A. (2007). The power of extensive reading. *RELC Journal*, *38*(2), 133–149. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688207079578

Sakurai, N. (2015). The influence of translation on reading amount, proficiency, and speed in extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 27*(1), 96-112. https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/66702/27_1_10125_66702_sakurai.pdf

Sánchez, X. A., & Gavilánez, L. F. (2017). Learners' attitudes toward extensive reading in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. *Revista Publicando, 4*(12), 259-268. https://revistapublicando.org/revista/index.php/crv/article/view/657/pdf_465

Shang, H. F. (2010). Reading strategy use, self-efficacy and EFL reading comprehension. *Asian EFL Journal*, *12*(2), 18-42. https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/main-editions-new/reading-strategy-use-self-efficacy-and-efl-reading-comprehension/

Singkum, R., & Chinwonnob, A. (2021). Implementing EFL extensive reading for Thai vocational students. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 14*(1), 208–239. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1284572.pdf

Soltani, R. (2011). Extensive reading: A stimulant to improve vocabulary knowledge. *Studies in Literature and Language, 2*(3), 161-167. doi: 10.3968/j.sll.1923156320110203.018

Tamrackitkun, K. (2010). *Extensive reading: An empirical study of its effects on EFL Thai students' reading comprehension, reading fluency and attitudes*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Salford] http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/11924/