

EFFECTIVENESS OF EXTENDED READING ACTIVITIES DURING ELT CLASSES IN THE POINT OF PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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Abstract: As language learning became one of the most vital issues in this global village, there are abundant of ways, methods and approaches to make the learning process easier for learners. One of the best ways to improve your language is either to live with natives or to read extensively (Nuttall, 168). Over the years, reading extensively has been strongly appreciated and highly recommended by a great many ELT/EFL teachers.

Key words: ELT/EFL, language learning, learning curriculums.

Introduction

Many practitioners are applying the approach in their class as the results and conclusions of previous works are so ambitious in this field. Without any hesitation we can admit the utmost contribution of extended reading activities to the whole language learning process, as it is already part of nearly all curriculums. However, it is good to give an ear to learners as well to find out how they feel whenever there are a bunch of chapters to read. Thus, this study investigated English Language Teaching depart students' perceptions and opinions about the aforementioned approach. The survey results provided some insightful conclusions that effects extended reading activity selections in the future.

Literature review

Strengths, weaknesses and importance of reading extensively in Language Teaching classes have been hot topic of discussions in many researches and studies for a long period of time. Even though the earliest studies date back to 1990s in this field, they are not matching the Globalization and the Technology Era anymore.

One of the onset literatures in the methodology of integrating extended reading activities in language learning curriculums is by Christopher Green (2007). He struggled to understand why people overlook the language shaping aspects of the books they read in another languages. Green deeply examines that reading process is not only type of leisure activities. Whenever we read in the focused language we not only get new notions about the world around us, but also improve our grammar competence, vocabulary base and other cultural views (Christopher Green, 2007). A key limitation of this research is that it does not address to the students' perceptions at all.

Another very handy and analytical study carried out by Nadezda Vojtková in 2015 could highlight a number of benefits of extended reading activities in EFL classes as well as understanding students' feedbacks. Nadezda proposed that students feel more in need of rewarding and encouragement to read after classes. It is a big challenge for school attenders to find motivation to read for hours after school whenever their teacher does not evaluate or reward them. In fact, most of

the language teachers do not have clear plans and SMART goals before applying the approach in the class: when to start, when to finish, how to reward, how to motivate, which book to give, how to scaffold them to choose literature etcetera are the main items which are not wholly considered enough (Nadezda Vojtkova, 2010). She offered some applicable lesson plans for upper-intermediate and intermediate level students.

In 2015 several professors and doctors of Ishik University in Turkey: Ibrahim Nishanchi, Fatima Saadi, Niyam Said done a careful examination about learners' expectations and suggested their own graded schedule for English Language Teaching classes in correlation with extended reading. Their study indicates that extended readings in class serves students to "learn reading by reading" (Mason,1980), as well as understanding importance of autonomy in language learning process (Ibrahim, Fatima and Said, 2015). They strongly focused on helping students to pin down to their minds the conception of individuality and independence by giving them more freedom when to read, what to read and how to read. Their conclusions seem to be reasonable enough in psychological, cultural and other methodology views. However, as the all participants were the first year ELT students at university with Turkish language which is strikingly dissimilar in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary range, word formation and many other ways , the variability of the results may be changeable in another nationality or different cultural background participants

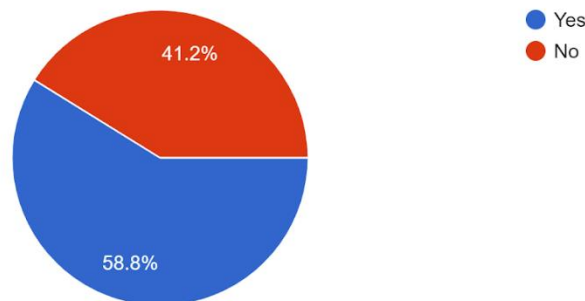
In contradiction with Ibrahim, Fatima and Said (2015) there is another author's, Figen Tezdiker's (2007) strong arguments in his Master's thesis in the same topic. Unlike Ibrahim, Fatima and Said (2015), he mostly referred to teachers' feedbacks and points in giving independence in all aspects. Teachers mostly feel uncomfortable with cheating, abundance of new and unknown words, so they prefer limiting independence and scaffolding them (Figen Tezdiker, 2007).

The latest publication by I-Chen Chen (2018) in the focused topic indicates that students must be reading extensively both in teacher-determined and student-centered way, in which the discussed approach will be potentially achieved. Having been totally agreed with Davis (1995), (students should be provided with enough motivation, encouraging, time, suitable materials), I-Chen Chen highlights strengths, weaknesses and efficiency of extended reading activities as well as offering his graded teaching methodology for task-based reading activities.

Methodology

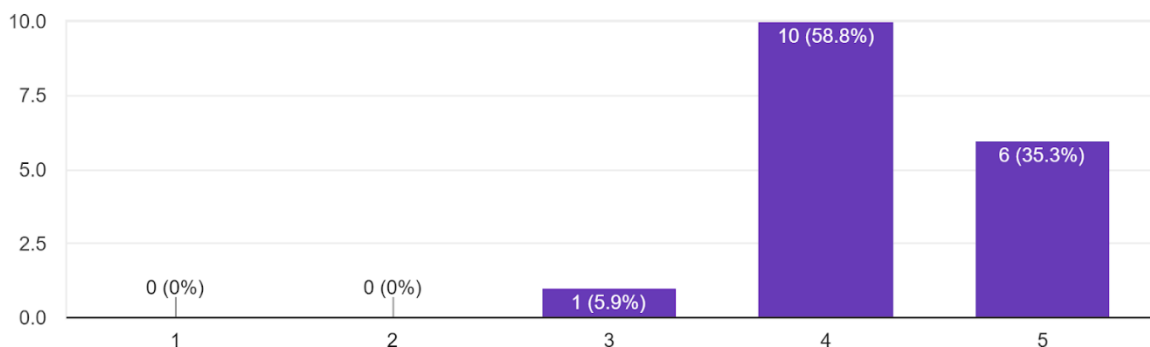
Overall, 10 questions were asked from 17 participants who are all English Language and Teaching department students at Hacettepe university in order to find out their satisfaction, expectations and perceptions about extended reading activities if they had ever experienced it in their language learning process. Generally, 15 female and 2 male students who are variable in age groups (mainly, 20-25 year olds) were asked questions about their own language learning experience. Approximately 60 percent of the ELT students who answered the survey questions had from 5 to 10 years of learning experience while 23 percentages were engaging in English classes for 2-5 years. Only 3 students, which means 17 percent of them had been learning English for more than ten years. Survey designing process was somehow complicated in order to not to make it challenging to find answer to the research question.

4. Have you ever been given any book to read wholly by ELT teacher?
17 responses



In the first part of the data collection participants were asked about whether they had ever experienced extended reading activity in their language learning or not. 58.8 % of the responders claimed that they had engaged in that approach while learning language while the remaining 41.2 % answered “no”. Based on the provided information we can see that not all participants are well aware of extended reading.

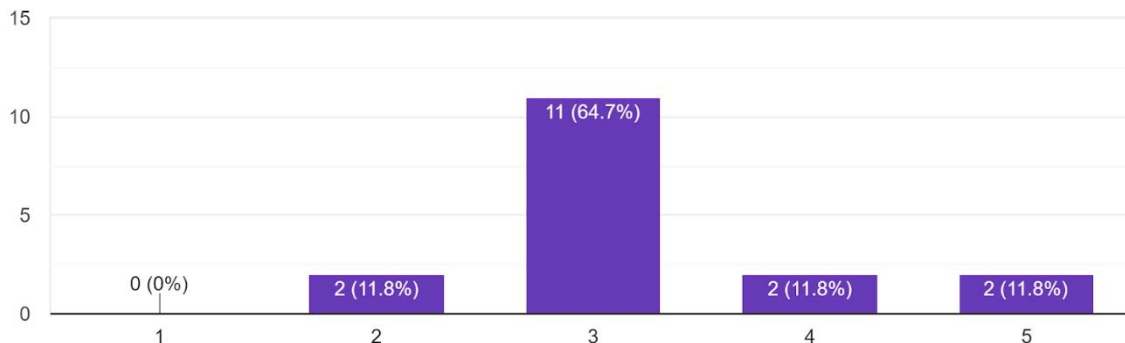
5. How is your attitude towards reading fiction books during English classes?
17 responses



In the second part of data collection process participants were asked about their attitudes towards reading fiction books during English classes extendedly. 58.8% of the responders believe that after class readings are handy enough to improve the language skills, whereas 35.3% claim it is too useful. Only one person is undecided about its importance. The information from the survey helped to shape the notion that even though the most students were not given a whole book to read in the focused language, their attitudes are positive.

6. It is much better if a teacher chooses a book to read for a whole class.

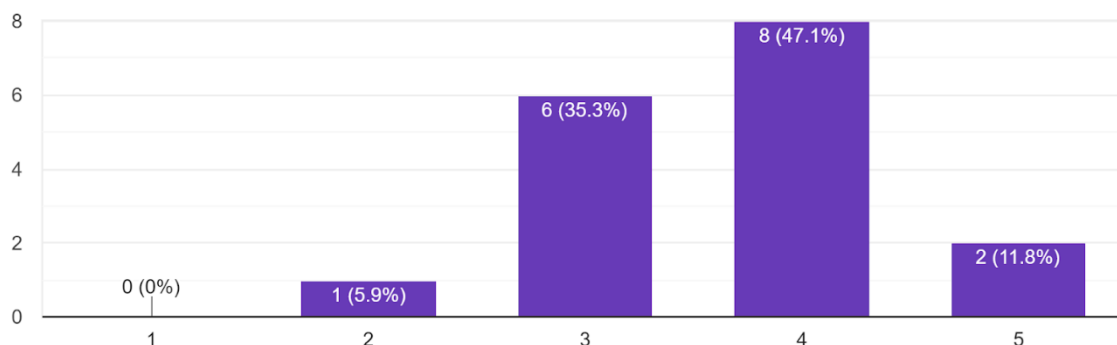
17 responses



In the next survey question which was about participants' preferences about choosing book, most students could not agree or disagree, namely 64.7%. Shares of the students who disagree, agree and strongly agree with the survey statement about the reading process should be teacher-determined are the same with the percentage of 11.8. Having been informed about the results of the question, it is clear that if the teacher chooses the book to read students do not have resistance.

7. It is much better if students choose books on their own.

17 responses

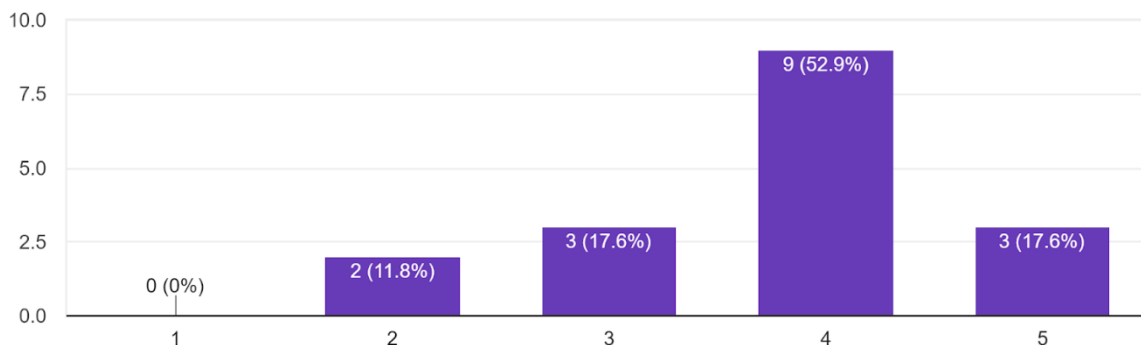


As the continuation of the previous question, students were asked about how they feel choosing books to read in EFL classes on their own. 47.1% of the respondents preferred self-chosen books to read extendedly, while 35.3% mentioned no preference at all. About 12% strongly agreed with the survey statement, while only a person (5.9%) wants the teacher to be in a main position while

choosing books. From the results, it can be inferred that students feel more need to be autonomous and carry out extended reading activities in a self-determined way.

8. Students should be assessed on what they have read during extended reading

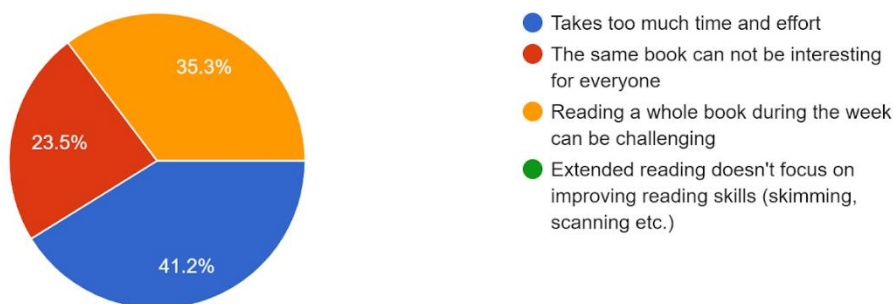
17 responses



The next question of the survey was designed to find out students' notion of evaluation process after they have read the book chosen. Large group of people (52.9%) agreed with being assessed, whereas the amount of people who are undecided are the same with the amount of the students who strongly agree with the question statement, 17.6% respectively. Based on the information, it is apparent that the language learners want their knowledge got from the books to be checked by the teachers.

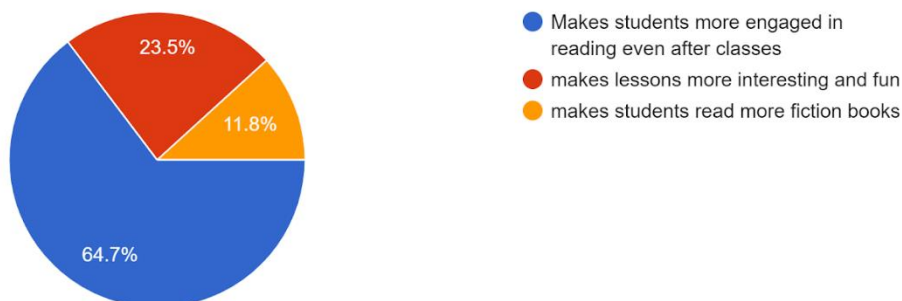
9. What can be the weaknesses of using extended reading in ELT classes?

17 responses



In order to find out the weaknesses of extended reading in the view of ELT students, they were given a multiple choice question. The data revealed that 41.2% of the answers were about time consumption of the extended reading activities and it can take much effort, while another large group with 35.3% perceived extended reading as challenging. Obviously, 23.5% are worried that the same book can not be interesting for everyone.

10. What can be strength of using task-based extended reading in Language Teaching classes?
17 responses



As a strength of task-based extended reading in Language Teaching curriculums, almost two thirds of the participants mentioned that it can be useful to be more engaged in reading activities, while the 23.5 of the respondents believe that this kind of activities make lessons joyful and enjoyable. Only 11.8% considered that it helps students to read more fiction books. Based on the aforementioned shares it is clear that students expect to be more engaged in reading activities after the classroom in the focused language

Discussion and conclusion

The study showed that almost all students who experienced extended reading at some point of their language learning process are in positive attitude towards the approach as well as, as prospective teachers they plan to utilize task-based graded method of extended reading in their future career as a EFL teacher. As I-Chen Chen (2018) suggested that using both teacher-determined and student-centered ways of choosing literature are acceptable and efficient in pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced level students, analysis of the current research also concludes the same. Even though students are given total autonomy, they do not feel too much irresponsible. The aforementioned statement is in contradiction with Figen Tezdiker's (2007) claims about irresponsibility, cheating and difficulty in information management.

Moreover, the results also indicated that female students are apt to have positive attitudes and perceptions towards reading after classes. As Jamie Ballard (2018) concluded in his master's thesis, women tend to read and enjoy fictions more than men. The vast majority of the participants who are students of English Language Teaching department are eager to use extended reading approach in their future careers.

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