

# Extensive Reading (ER) As a Remedial Program for Problems in EFL Reading: Benefits of ER, New Insights, and Justifications for the Use of ER in Korea\*

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## *Abstract*

*A substantial body of studies on extensive reading (ER) in L2/EFL demonstrates that ER can bring considerable gains in overall development: reading comprehension, reading rate, reading strategies, reading fluency, reading habits, vocabulary, writing, listening, grammar, speaking, and test-taking skills in both L2 and EFL settings. Based on the profound effects of extensive reading on overall L2/FL development including its affective and cognitive benefits, this paper suggests that the evidence for such effectiveness of extensive reading is so overwhelming that it would be unthinkable not to strongly support the use of extensive reading in our EFL curriculum as an efficient remedial program that can correct or counteract the wrongs of current EFL intensive-reading programs in Korea. For several substantial reasons other than these linguistic benefits, and with new insights and findings, and justifications, linguistic, affective, cultural, social, and cognitive, this paper suggests that extensive reading be developed into an educational movement rather than an educational approach to usher in a primary shift in our EFL settings. This paper aims to verify the view that extensive reading can go beyond a linguistic learning to a concern with making reading and learning itself pleasurable, meaningful, relevant, useful, inspirational, valuable, and therefore, much beneficial to EFL learners in the way that it can help them develop and grow linguistically, socio-culturally (including multi-culturally), cognitively, and emotionally as a whole person.*

*Key words: extensive reading, benefits, EFL problems in Korea, a remedial program*

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## I . ER As a Remedy for Problems of EFL Intensive-Reading Programs in Korea

While 'Communicative Language Teaching' (CLT) promotes the interactional use of language, learners' formal competence to control language structure and rules is still spurred and rewarded in Korean EFL classrooms at secondary levels, with far less attention being paid to the development of their communicative and discourse ability to think, express, present, and exchange in English their emotions and ideas functionally, creatively, reflectively, and subjectively (Eur, 2001, 211). Under the unrestrained test-score-driven context in Korea, the focus of communicative skills the CLT purports is often lost in the implementation of conventional intensive-reading programs based on standardized tests such as the Korean College Scholastic Ability Test on English. In our EFL intensive-reading programs, immediate priorities are given to grammar-translation, test-taking skill/strategies (Song, 1998; Yang, et al, 2009), rotten memories, and pre-packaged literacy practices that do not engage "learners in real communication" (Arnold & Brown, 1999, 6). And, more emphasis on what Arnold & Brown calls "the narrower field of non-learner related linguistic corpora" rather than on interactive activities (p. 6) results in giving insufficient attention to the EFL learners' subjective factors such as their needs, interests, emotions, experiences, memories, expectations, values, ideals, psychology (identification, desire, fantasy, and other emotional values.), and personal history involved in their target language learning and use. Along with other factors including the "negative backwash effects of the College Scholastic Ability Test" and "influences of peer group cohesion" (Kim, 2010), this plays a crucial role in cultivating EFL learners' demotivation and negative attitudes towards EFL learning.

Given that these factors are significant for personal involvement in language learning and use (Arnold & Brown, 1999), test-taking-skills-oriented practices in EFL intensive-reading classrooms at the secondary levels are problematic enough to impede learners' potential on linguistic, communicative, and

personal development. Although communication involves learners' personality traits, learners' self (including 'identity' and 'personality') would be missing and ignored in EFL intensive-reading classrooms in Korea, and such practices as often witnessed in the EFL classrooms as follows are found to be rarely relevant to the development of EFL learners' communicative competence: teacher-oriented teaching styles and methods, unproductive and inadequate classroom activities and tasks, form/rule/skills-oriented assessments (including quizzes), insubstantial assignments, insipid group/pair (i.e., role-play) works (including small and whole group works), inefficient classroom managements, and boring texts that lack in qualities to stimulate learners' interest. Furthermore, the quality of texts in the textbooks, in particular, is hardly attractive to both teachers and students. These all have made EFL learning experiences little meaningful and relevant to EFL learners and caused a severe decline in quality of EFL learning itself and of communication. Still worse, while the texts are severely limited only to allow for a small amount of reading per semester, EFL learners merely do what Rinvolucri (1999) calls "rehearsal activities" with those psychologically irrelevant texts in the mood of "communicative apathy" within artificial, transparent, and predictable contexts (Eur, 2001, 209).

Since learners in EFL intensive-reading classrooms are frequently overwhelmed by psychologically 'empty' acts of analyzing and dissecting short but difficult passages for conventional tests, EFL teachings as predominantly occupied by this intensive-reading approach in Korea leave little room for fluent and independent EFL readers nor their communicative *competence*. Deprived of opportunities to reflect on and voice their self, identity, and personality in classrooms, our EFL learners come to have negative attitudes towards EFL that reading activities and learning itself are not worthy of effort and time. Such a negative experience of and attitude towards EFL learning necessarily leads them into negative attitudes against EFL communication and learning itself. Indeed, the result is embarrassing: About two thirds of EFL learners in Korea turn

out to be underachievers (Eur, 2013) who are struggling desperately but helplessly repeating "an empty ritual--come to class, read the text, do the exercises, leave class, return to real life" (Day & Bamford, 1998, 4)--to get better scores on tests and to gain a "dummy-runs"-level communicative competence (Rinvoluceri, 1999, 197). Meanwhile, to quote Rinvoluceri again, "the grammar-translation teachers just quietly do their work" (197), our EFL intensive-reading programs still suffer, and this impedes EFL learners' growth, linguistic, personal, social, cultural, and emotional.

For this reason, it is both educational and ethical for EFL practitioners to help EFL intensive-reading programs get out of what Nuttall (2005) calls a "vicious circle" (127). For several substantial reasons, linguistic, affective, cultural, social, and cognitive, this paper aims to verify the view that, as Williams and Burden (1997) states, extensive reading (ER) can go beyond a linguistic learning to a concern with making EFL reading and learning itself pleasurable, meaningful, relevant, useful, inspirational, valuable, and therefore, much beneficial to EFL learners in the way that it can help them develop and grow linguistically, socio-culturally (including multi-culturally), cognitively, and emotionally as a whole person. The ultimate aim of this paper is to claim that any change derived from the use of extensive reading can be a firm springboard for more positive changes in Korean EFL education including EFL reading so that extensive reading should be developed into an educational movement rather than an educational approach. This study also aims at asserting that extensive reading can serve as a 'vaccine' that fights efficiently against the negative effects which are embedded in current form/skills/test-oriented EFL practices in Korea. As demonstrated by a significant body of research on ER in L2/EFL, extensive reading can promote EFL learners' acquisition of the target language competence, and at the same time, it can commit to their being *educated* to be a better person through "a more holistic development of our students as individuals" (Arnold & Brown, 1999, 24).

## **II. Overall Benefits of ER in L2/FL Settings**

### **A. Linguistic Benefits**

Extensive reading programs can be a right 'remedy' that relieves, prevents, cures, or even counteracts negative consequences (ineffectiveness and negative attitude to reading) of the current form/score-driven intensive-reading programmes in Korea. A substantial body of experimental studies show that extensive reading programs had considerable results in linguistic gains in terms of reading comprehension, reading rate, reading strategies, reading fluency, reading habits, vocabulary, writing, listening, grammar, speaking, and test-taking skills in both L2 and FL settings (See "Table 1"). As many researches (i.e. Day & Bamford, 1998) show the profound effects of extensive reading on overall L2/FL development, extensive reading can be "the single most effective" (Maley, 2005, 354), "the easiest" (Nuttall, 2005, 127), and the most cost-efficient way to foster significant L2/FL language development in reading, writing, vocabulary, attitude, and overall proficiency, cognitive and affective. The evidence for such effectiveness of extensive reading is so overwhelming that it will be unthinkable not to strongly support the use of extensive reading in our EFL curriculum. Indeed, since 1999, a number of empirical studies of extensive reading conducted in Korean EFL classrooms in diverse contexts have also confirmed that extensive reading can lead to measurable gains in reading, writing, vocabulary, critical thinking, and test scores while promoting confidence, motivation, and positive attitudes towards EFL reading (See "Table 1"). Like the studies of extensive reading conducted in other countries, those in Korea all also indicate that extensive reading helps EFL learners read faster, comprehend better, make a better contextual reading of unknown words and sentences, enjoy reading, gains better scores on their college entrance exam, write better and more, increase their confidence in reading of long passages, interact and cooperate with others better through reading-diary exchange and book talks, and finally develop their oral competence. Thus,

extensive reading can be an efficient remedial program that could correct or counteract the wrongs and shortcomings of current EFL intensive-reading instructions in Korea.

Table 1: Benefits of ER: An Overview of Studies in L2/EFL Contexts<sup>1)</sup>

Areas of Benefits of ER		Studies (L2/FL)	Studies in Korea
Language Skills	Overall language proficiency	Guo (2012), Lyutaya (2011), Iwahori (2008), Renandya (2007), Sheu (2003), Bell (2001), Cho & Krashen (1994), and Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	Shaffer (2012), Kang & Lee (2012), Eur (2001), and Yu (1999)
	Reading (Including reading rate & habit, reading proficiency & fluency, & reading strategies)	Chen at al (2013), Abdellah (2013), Modirkhamene & Gowrki (2011), Yamamoto (2011), Rezaee & Nourzadeh (2011), Nakanishi & Ueda (2011), Lemmer (2009), Morgado (2009), Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009), Meng (2009), Iwahori (2008), Yamashita (2008), Noshino (2007), Lee (2007), Kusangai (2004), Taguchi et al (2004), Sheu (2004), Bell (2001), Mason & Krashen (1997). Walker (1997), Masuhara et al (1996), Cho & Krashen (1994), Lai (1993a, 1993b), Elley (1991), Robb & Susser (1989), and Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	Park & Choi (2012), Kim & Lim (2012), Kim & Park (2011), Cho & Lee (2010), Lee & Eur (2009), Kim (2006), Kim & Hwang (2006), Han (2004), and Eur (2001)
	Writing	Lyutaya (2013), Mason & Krashen (1997), Lai (1993b), Tsang (1996), Hafiz & Tudor (1990), Janopoulos (1986), and Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	Min & Ham (2011) Seo (2008), Eur (2001), and Bae (1999)
	Speaking (including pronunciation)	Cho & Krashen (1994)	Min & Ham (2011)
	Listening	Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	Park & Choi (2012)
	Vocabulary (including vocabulary retention)	Chen at al (2013), Webb & Macalister (2013), Alabi & Keyvanshekouh (2012), Guo (2012), Sato (2012), Yamamoto (2011), Modirkhamene & Gowrki (2011), Rashidi & Piran (2011),	Kweon & Kim (2008), Chun et al (2012), Kim & Hwang (2006), and

1) For more detailed annotated bibliography of works on extensive reading in L2/EFL settings by the year of 2000, see Jacob, G., Renandya, W., & Bamford, J. (1999, 2000).

		Poulshock (2010), Brown et al (2008), Lee (2007), Pigada & Schmitt (2006), Horst (2005), Nation & Wang (1999), Huckin & Coady (1999), Coady (1997), Cho & Krashen (1994), Lai (1993b), Hafiz & Tudor (1990), and Pitts, White, & Krashen (1989)	Lee (1999)
	Grammar	Alqdi & Alqadi (2013) and Mason (2003)	
<b>Affective Dimensions</b>	Motivation (intrinsic & extrinsic)	Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok (2013); Judge (2011), Poulshock (2010), Nishono (2007), Takase (2007 & 2003), and Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	Jeon (2012), Park & Choi (2012), Kim & Chung (2012), Cho & Lee (2010), and Eur (2001)
	Attitude (including self-directed learning)	Morgado (2009), Silva (2009), Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009), Asraf & Ahmad (2003), Cho & Krashen (1994), Robb & Susser (1989), and Elley & Mangubhai (1981)	
	Self-Esteem (including emotional maturity)	Davis (1995; confidence)	Eur (2001)
	Therapeutic effects	None	
<b>Cognition</b>	Cognitive development	Rezaee & Nourzadeh (2011)	
<b>Cultural &amp; Multicultural Aspects</b>	Cultural, intercultural, & multicultural competence (including awareness, information/ knowledge, & skills)	None	
<b>Tests</b>	Test-taking skills	Nakanishi & Ueda (2011) and Renandya, Rajan, & Jabos (1999)	Shin (2000) & Williams (2009)
<b>Others</b>	Remedial effects	Lituanas et al (2001) & Poulshock (2010)	
	Impacts on other areas (i.e. Arts & science, etc) Creativity & Fluency Critical thinking	Safaeia & Bulca (2013: creative practices)	Min & Ham (2011) and Kim (2006)

### **B. Cognitive & Affective Benefits of ER As a Change Agent: New Insights**

When Day (2009) states that "Good things happen when learners engage in extensive reading," he may not mean to limit "Good things" solely to language development or affective dimensions such as motivation and attitude, for gaining communicative competence involves more than a mere linguistic gaining and positive attitudes toward reading. Given that communication involves at least both producers (speakers; authors) and receivers (listeners; audience), both of whom are spiritual and physical human beings 'alive' within particular contexts, psychological, cultural, and socio-political, EFL communicative competence involves at once "individual personality traits" residing in both parties--the intrinsic factors such as anxiety, fear, self-esteem, ideas, values, feelings, desires, dreams, needs, knowledge, interests, and so on (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Communicative competence also involves "the adoption of new social and cultural behavior" and ways of being another social person (William and Burden, 1997, 115) as relevant to different sets of interpretive assumptions and norms of an interpretive target-culture community (Carter, 1997, 112-113). Relying on Sfar's "participation" metaphor as "a complement to . . . *acquisition* metaphor," Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) view second language learning as "a struggle of concrete socially constituted and always situated beings to participate in the symbolically mediated lifeworld . . . of another culture" (156). The point here is that developing EFL communicative competence relies on EFL learners' personal and sociocultural development as much as on their language proficiency. Hence, EFL learners' learning of the target language as well as their being in tune with their subjectivity (i.e., needs, interests, ideals, desires, identity, emotions, fantasies, memories, experiences, history, fears, personality, and the like) as involved in the target language learning and use are both invaluable for enabling them to improve their overall language and communicative competence.



For this reason, a mere exposure to massive quantities of texts, which extensive reading advocates as a guiding principle, may not be sufficient. Although "quantity" is always quoted by many scholars as one of "watchwords" that guide principles of extensive reading (for example, Davis, 1995, 129; Nuttall, 2005, 128; and Renandya, 2007, 135), it is not always a maxim, for the quality of interactions between texts and readers that can promote both personal and social development of learners also plays a crucial role in defining their engagement with the target language and the degree of the target language learning. In this regard, the quality rather than quantity needs to be added as another motto that embodies a principle of extensive reading. Materials of such "quality" interactions between texts and readers are suitable for motivating and promoting learners' development in diverse levels, linguistic as well as personal, cultural, social, psychological (emotional), and cognitive. For example, although EFL learners gain the target language development and "topical and world knowledge that can further facilitate reading comprehension" (Harris & Sipay, 1990, 533; qtd. in Day & Bamford, 1998, 18) from the extensive reading of expository texts, reading extensively only informational (expository) texts for relatively a long period could cause a down-spiraling effect, making extensive reading boring and even a drudgery in the end; readers' initial excitement and motivation of gaining and accumulating knowledge and information tend to decline, and then, there comes their loss, if not a complete loss, of interest and desire to read more and gain more information and knowledge from informational texts. The target language, information, 'topical and world knowledge,' cognitive development including comprehension skills, and critical thinking skills EFL learners have gained from the extensive reading of massive quantities of expository texts may not be sufficient enough to hold their interest in a continuous reading of other expository texts. It is apparent that comprehension of a large amount of information and knowledge alone cannot patronize avid readers. Indeed, something is missing there that is essential for inspiring a steadfast act of reading and reading more

expository texts.

It is the appeal of content in and of itself that matters to the learners' reading a book and that motivates them to keep reading more and be willing to overcome language barriers. That is, what can spark and keep at bay EFL readers' interest and desire to keep reading does not always rely on the linguistic development unless it is accompanied with the process of its being correlated, interconnected, and intertwined with their inner growth--their deeper, innate needs as human beings. But, while relevant to the learners' intellectual interests and concerns, the extensive reading of massive quantities of informational texts may be insufficient to satisfy their deep, innate needs as human beings (Eur, 2001)--the needs of awakening and growing their inner self (subjectivity, identity, values, beliefs, desires, fantasies, feelings, dreams, ideals, strengths, needs, creativity, memories, experiences, etc.; Moskowitz, 1999, 178). In Lindstromberg's language, learners would learn a foreign language better "if their experience in it is as full of meaning and as rich in images as possible. . . . The greater the connection [with the learners' own world of experience], the better the learning" (xi, qtd. in Rinvolutri, 1999, 197). With such emotional literacy, EFL learning would be rewarding, and such positive affective experience in the reading process could promote the learners' involvement as well as their development in EFL reading and communicative competence.

The quality of interactions between texts and readers in extensive-reading programs is also determined by the quality of an in-depth experience of texts. For this reason, merely 'comprehensible' input through 'easy' books may not be sufficient; rather, comprehensible input from the texts that run the risk of trivializing the content for the sake of highlighting basic language and communicative skills must be supplemented by meaningful input from the authentic materials deeper in the content that touches upon non-trivial areas of human experiences. As indicated by Nation and Wang (1999), not considering the quality of writing would be "a grave omission" in the study of effects of extensive reading on EFL learning

(378). For example, when EFL learners have the vocabulary size necessary to process authentic children's literature (so-called 'real books' written for native speakers of English) and select the "*i minus 1*" level of texts for an extensive-reading program, they are likely to gain "the greater incidental vocabulary learning" (Webb & Macalister, 2013, 315) and have more positive attitudes to EFL reading and read more than those who do the extensive reading through easy books (i.e., 'graded readers' and other texts such as 'reading scheme books' or 'easy readers'). Adapted and simplified versions of literary classics, biographies, informational books, and so on, and targeted more at specific language features and skills/strategies, graded readers alone would not be sufficient both to get learners to the vocabulary size necessary to process authentic children's literature (Webb & Macalister, 2013, 314) and to provoke quality emotional and intellectual interactions between texts and readers. In this regard, as already supported by several researches on the benefits of using authentic materials in EFL (Guo, 2012, 197-198), extensive reading through authentic texts can have a greater appeal for EFL learners, for the authentic texts at the *i minus 1* level would be "texts that are both authentic and appropriately simple" (Day & Bamford 1998, 58). Rather, contrary to Webb & Macalister (2013), while extensively reading authentic literary texts at the "i-1" level, EFL learners feel "enjoyment 'beyond a mere comprehension of information'" from "complexities and subtleties" that graded readers hardly offer (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012, 1184). Extensive reading through authentic "language learner literature" (Day & Bamford, 1998, Ch. 7) other than graded readers that "pay less attention to the essence of writing: communication with an audience" (Day & Bamford, 1998, 58) also can help practitioners bring to EFL classrooms what Stevick calls "a concern for 'deeper aims,' for 'pursuing new 'life goals,' not just for reaching certain 'language goals'" (qtd. in Arnold & Brown, 1999, 3). Several practitioners and scholars in Korea (For example, Yu, 1999, Bae, 1999, Eur, 2001) have already indicated one of the most significant benefits of extensive reading through language learner literature (including children's literature and

literature for youth) as its being tuned with learners' deeper, innate needs of awakening and growing their 'self' (subjectivity, identity, personality, dreams, values, experiences, memories, hopes, desires, fantasies, creativity, imagination, and feelings), which is precisely what the "life goals" mean to promote.

The quality of emotional and intellectual interactions between texts and readers can be epitomized in what Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow"--the mental state in which a reader is completely absorbed in the process of reading with a feeling of energized focus and enjoyment. This "flow experience--the losing of oneself in the activity" (Allington; qtd. in Day and Bamford, 1998, 30), which is often witnessed in extensive reading through both narrative and expository texts, can represent an ultimate mental experience in harnessing the emotions in the service of EFL learning in Korea who have rare opportunities to experience it in their intensive-reading classrooms. In flow, their negative emotional factors (e.g., anxiety, fear, uneasiness, self-doubt, and inhibition) that impede their learning are contained, and instead, it provokes various positive emotions and gratification and "allow[s] for the discharge of negative emotional blocks in a natural and inconspicuous way" (Hansen, 1999, 217). Particularly, the "aesthetic stimulation" in flow as derived from extensive reading of narrative texts can also act as a powerful stimulus to the learners' own reflective thinking, imagination, and emotions, which will, in turn, make it "possible to encode memories with emotion" and "to stimulate the need for communication" (Hansen, 1999, 219). Like an analyst, flow-experience also can elicit from struggling learners more expressions of opinions, actions and reactions, and feelings for "more mature and fruitful group discussion" (Maley and Moulding, 1985, 135) in a psychologically safer and more fun environment than a conventional grammar-translation-skills-exercises-oriented classrooms. Indeed, the flow experiences EFL learners have in the activity of extensive reading would be a most "powerful incentive to continue one's involvement with reading, and to make reading a part of one's life" (Day & Bamford, 1998, 30). The positive outcome, affective and cognitive, from the learners' positive

experience (including their flow experiences) of reading in an ER program strongly supports the use of ER in our EFL curriculum in Korea (see also Cho & Lee, 2010).

**Motivation, Attitude, & Confidence:**

1. I was **interested** in the course because it [an ER material] was **fun**. It was different from dull textbooks with artificially constructed stories. (Motivation)
2. When I studied the collection of questions for the entrance examination, I couldn't enjoy the content because I suffered from an obsession to get the right answers. But I can **enjoy these books without any burden at all**. (Attitude)
3. In spite of my poor English score, it was **fun and wonderful** to read English books. (Motivation & attitude)
4. At first, I was afraid of reading the books. I didn't have any confidence about my English ability. However, easy, **interesting**, and short story structures made me more **confident**. (Confidence, attitude, & motivation)
5. I've become **interested** in English and I have **self-confidence** about my English ability, so when I encounter difficult English sentences, I'm **motivated** to understand them. (Motivation, attitude, & confidence)
6. **I lost track of time in the middle of reading**. I couldn't put down the books. During my reading, I was very **proud of myself when I felt the moods of pleasure and sadness**. (Motivation & attitude)
7. I could **enjoy the stories** because there were no time limitations like tests and no need to write the right answers like the assignments from the private institutes. (Motivation)
8. It was the first time that I **found English so interesting**. (Motivation and attitude)
9. I was so accustomed to reading in English that **I came to have courage** to read magazines or newspapers. (Confidence)
10. There are a lot of **impressive** and **moving expressions**. I

want to learn them by heart forever. (Motivation and attitude)

11. It's **more interesting** than I could imagine. **From cover to cover, I could not put the book down.** (Motivation & attitude)

#### **Positive Reading Habit and Fluency:**

1. Reading in English was boring and difficult because I felt English hard. But **my heart swelled with joy** after I finished reading the [ER] books packed with small letters. I was apt to be nervous when I read [books] in English, but I **can read easily** when I read them like books written in my mother tongue. (Motivation & attitude; fluent reading)
2. The contents were **so interesting** that **I read them faster.** (Motivation & reading rate)
3. I read books **enthusiastically** as a way of enduring the boring grammar classes. (Reading habit & attitude)
4. [Graded] Readers gave me time to 'small the roses'--taking a reading break whenever I felt sleepy after lunch. . . . when I was tired of reading textbooks and answering questions, I took out the books and read stories. They **kept me awake**, so I could concentrate on my studies more easily. (Relief, motivation, & reading habit)
5. Because of **lovely words** and phrases I have **clung myself to this book** for several days. (Motivation & reading habit)
6. I read this book all day long; I was **unable to take my eyes off it.** (Attitude & reading habit)
7. When I was **immersed in the books**, I didn't know what I didn't know. (Reading habit)

#### **Memory, Self-Reflection, and Emotional Comfort:**

1. The new reading method, "extensive reading," and the reading diary were very novel to me, and I had **a valuable chance to reflect and organize my thoughts.** (Self reflection)

2. Interesting parts or sentences were **memorized naturally**.  
(Memory)
3. I read the books **comfortably**, for they are different from the tests or assignment from the private institutes.  
(Motivation & emotional comfort) (Quoted, rearranged, and partially modified from Eur, 2001, 216-217)

### **C. Other Significant Benefits of ER**

#### **1. Learner Autonomy**

Extensive reading can also bring out other significant benefits not only by stimulating intrinsic forms of a 'self-enhancement' motivation but also by allowing learners to develop a sense of 'autonomy' and 'self-trust' through their self-regulating readings. In extensive-reading programs, while the teacher serves as a facilitator, a guider, a counsellor, or a role model who serves to create an autonomous learning environment, the learner exercises learner autonomy by being allowed to take charge of his/her own learning regarding what materials to read, how and how much/long/many to read, and where/when to read or stops reading (Judge, 2011, 174) while complying with his/her "perceived needs and aspirations" (Aoki, 1999, 144). Indeed, as a self-access & self-regulating learning, success of extensive-reading programs solely depends on individual learners who are willing to accept their own full responsibility for reading extensively as much as the quality of texts that they choose as relevant and meaningful to their needs and interests. As Day & Bamford (1998) indicates, autonomy is the hallmark of extensive reading programs (27). While setting, pursuing, monitoring, and finally evaluating (e.g., through a reading diary/log) a personal goal of the target number of pages and books at learners' own pace is motivational to them (Ono, et al, 2004, 15), this learner autonomy extensive reading promotes could take a special sense in our EFL context. It is because EFL learners are rarely accustomed to it in Korean EFL settings because all classroom activities (including planning, tasks, testings, and assignments) are predominantly teacher-centered,

leaving no room for the learners' own voice and self-directing as well as independent learning.

As preconditioned by good learner strategies, cognitive & metacognitive strategies (including self-reflection), and attitude (including self-esteem and self-trust) and intrinsic motivation (Thanasoulas, 2000, 5-8), the learner autonomy is found by many scholars of autonomy in language learning to influence positively the target language learning and proficiency (Dafei, 2007; Khaki, 2013). As already indicated by the findings of the learner autonomy in language learning, the EFL learners' new experience of self-directing learning via extensive-reading programs, with teachers' adequate guidance, is quite likely to lead them to be more enthusiastic, energetic, and responsible for their reading, which is a rare scene in our EFL classrooms (Eur, 2001). It is also likely that the learner autonomy helps the EFL learners develop their own reading and learning strategies by being better aware of not only their own individual reading style and self-value but also "the real nature of their problems" (Aoki, 1999, 147), while capitalizing on their strengths, "reconsider[ing] and refashion[ing] approaches and procedures for optimal learning," and correcting their weakness in reading (Thanasoulas, 2000, 11). In Korean EFL contexts in which EFL learners' self-esteem suffers, promoting their right to and their feeling of self-regulating learning can be an efficient way of transforming them from a passive object of their teacher's instruction into an independent subject who takes control over his/her own learning, and this experience and internal sense of being autonomous will, in turn, serve to foster positive changes in their attitude toward EFL learning. Quoting Dickinson (1995), Day and Bamford (1998) also indicate the correlation of autonomy and language learning by stating that "learners taking responsibility for and being able to control their own learning helps them succeed in their second language learning" (27).

## **2. Creativity**

Developing learners' creativity can also be a strong impetus for the use of extensive reading in our EFL settings as creativity



considered as important in their personal and social life is also significant for their EFL learning. According to Ottó (1998), learners with a higher level of creativity have more opportunity to be successful second language learners, for meaningful interactions and strategic competence--key concepts of communicative competence--require them to count on a contextual and contingent understanding and use of the target language, a creative ability to "identify more appropriate and more fruitful solutions" to all types of tasks and problems, linguistic, cognitive, contextual, contingent, and spontaneous, they face when they are engaged in a foreign language learning and use (Ottó, 1998, 771; for creativity in relation to problem-solving capacities, see Tarone & Broner, 2001). This creativity in a foreign language learning is encouraged more in writing and speaking (1) as these practices often happen by unforeseen causes, being subject to chance or unseen effects in "different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes," and in different manners (Celce-Murcia, Dórnyci, & Thurrell, 1997, 149; qtd. in Ottó 1998, 763) and (2) as they "often require critical, analytical, and self-expressive abilities, as well as a sense of self-discovery" (Wang, 2012, 40). In this regard, while extensive practice of reading is found to foster creativity (Wang, 2012), ER through literature in particular can provide abundant resources par excellence for EFL learners' creativity to flourish through "fresh and unexpected uses of language" in terms of word choice, sentence pattern, and ideas (issues, beliefs, thoughts, values, perspectives, and so forth) (Lazar, 1993, 15).

Indeed, numerous examples of creative use of language in literature position EFL learners not as a passive consumer of language features and meanings, but as an active participant who is invited to be actively and creatively engaged in explicating and understanding the ways in which specific language uses beyond transparent and transactional usages form an efficient communicative impact in a particular context (Carter & McCarthy, 2004). In exerting creative approaches to a decoding of various meanings from the literary use of language, they can become better aware of pragmatic functions of creative language.

This awareness may not be confined to a syntactic or a semantic level; rather, creativity embedded in this awareness positively affects language learning strategies, especially what Oxford (1990) terms "compensation," "metacognitive," and "affective" strategies. For creativity can help learners to select individual or combined strategies in the way that they can work best together to solve the tasks/problems. And, as Eur(2001) indicates, this capacity can be applied to other contexts where a creative and contextual construction of meaning is necessary for understanding implicit messages and ideas in these various texts as follows: narratives, editorials, opinions, defense statements in court, playful conversation, jokes, jibes, political slogans or comments, riddles, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, overstatement, and other literary devices), symbolic expressions, allusions, signs, connotative essays, advertisements, letters, and so on (217).

In addition, when EFL learners are empowered to have this capacity, it is also likely to be in service of their expansion of communicative competence because, as Carter (1999) indicates, even ordinary English language use always stretches beyond the basic utilitarian use of English into "creative processes" (213) "to achieve different communicative purposes"(Lazar, 1993, 100). Since such linguistic "creativity is a **frequent** . . . feature of everyday language use" and "a **common** practice to share pleasure and convergence in and through language (Carter, 1999, 201; bold original), conventional EFL learning based on materials filled with language features "transparent and transactional and devoid of richness, cultural reference and creativity" (Carter, 1997, 166) can hardly guarantee the development of EFL learners' authentic communicative competence. This capacity is also transferable to EFL learners' creative play with English language when they are engaged in a communication in English because it guides them to not only discover how creative language functions in a particular discourse but also retrieve that function in an actual speech act (Eur, 2001, 218). Fostering creativity through extensive reading, thus, can be a strong intrinsic motivation to EFL learners in Korea where rote memorization is

prevailing. When they are allowed to create meanings they discover, construct, or like rather than merely "practising the language without a real content, purpose, outcome or even a product" (Fehér, 2007), they would feel more motivated to participate in EFL learning.

### **3. A Safe & Cooperative Learning Community & Personal Growth**

Facilitating and maintaining a safe classroom environment also takes a special meaning in our EFL intensive-reading classrooms where critical remarks from teachers and adults, severe peer pressures from overheated competitions, and lack of respect and care for others are frequently witnessed. In this regard, one of the most significant contributions of extensive reading would be a safer learning community such as a reading club/community, in which a meaningful communication instead of critical remarks and words of ridicule can be made between the learners in a fun, safe, and cooperative circumstance when they exchange each other meanings and information they have gained from their readings and when they recommend (or not recommend) some books they have already read to each other. In extensive-reading programs, reading same titles often builds up "a climate of acceptance" among learners, which serves to promote "an environment of mutual support and care" (Arnold & Brown, 1999, 12). Under this "noncompetitive, non-judgmental community of readers" (Day & Bamford, 1998, 26), learners feel more likely to be motivated to read and share more books in English. Thus, extensive reading shares its benefits with what humanistic approaches to EFL aim at: "reducing . . . anxiety, increasing motivation, facilitating the development of positive attitude toward learning and language learning, promoting self-esteem, as well as supporting different learning styles" (Crandall, 1999, 233). Such a fun, safe, and cooperative classroom environment as a resource for learners' pleasure and information can be further spurred as extensive reading offers various themes, issues, thoughts, ideas, values, emotions, knowledge in diverse discourses that are relevant and meaningful to the

learners' deeper, innate needs.

#### **4. Benefits to Other Subject Areas and Test-Taking Skills**

Extensive reading is also found to bring out other significant benefits to EFL learners such as a sense of feeling relief from their worries (through gaining self-satisfaction), a socio-cognitive development through cooperative learning (i.e., through the exchange of their reading diary), emotional maturity (through being involved in meaning-centered and self-reflective activities through ER activities), and finally an awareness of their self by acting out their "inner mind" through the texts culturally, creatively, and affectively (a remedial and therapeutic effect) (Eur, 2001, 220). As demonstrated by researchers such as Nakanishi & Ueda (2011), and Renandya, Rajan, & Jabos (1999), not surprisingly, these benefits EFL learners have gained from extensive reading are transferable and contribute to other fields including "nonfiction readings" (Abdellah, 2013), test-taking skills, critical thinking, and creative practices (Min & Ham, 2011, Safaeia & Bulca, 2013). Extensive reading can help them to maintain their attitudes toward learning and reading in a more very positive and responsible manner than before so that improvements in all subject areas can be reasonably expected and made. Thus, extensive reading goes beyond both a mere linguistic learning or a positive change in reading attitudes into a positive change in learners' life as a whole.

### **III. Conclusion: A Paradigm Shift As Ushered in by ER As an Educational Movement**

The studies cited above serve as a compelling foundation to claim that extensive reading would be a beneficial component of our EFL programs at all levels. Pedagogical applications have been well founded in many EFL classrooms, and extensive reading will penetrate well into intensive-reading practices which are mostly embedded in Korean EFL context. Hence, extensive reading needs to be an integral part of our EFL reading

programs from early age. Children certainly read for pleasure, and they read to understand meaning. While children read language learner's literature and other informational books from early age, they will encounter new cultures, ideas, and perspectives including different character behaviors in target-language contexts, and even with little sufficient language knowledge, such reading experience will provide them with cognitively challenged processes, linguistic, cognitive, affective, and cultural. As already indicated by Cho (2007), children who are exposed to extensive reading are found to develop positive attitudes towards English reading and show good gains in the target language. While intensive language practices carried on to understand specific language uses cause learners' declining enthusiasm in learning English, the benefits of extensive reading will alleviate current problems in such intensive-reading practices (Cho 2007). That is, the favorable experience that children have from extensive reading will act as the motivation to read even when they have read to understand specific functions of languages or search for themes and information in EFL books.

At secondary levels, EFL intensive reading turns into a mechanic process of translating, memorizing, and studying line-by-line of language and content. Students read for the purpose of school exams or the College Scholastic Ability Test, so the ranges of topic, discourse, and language practices are bounded within the area of exam components. As Alderson and Urquhart (1984) indicate, "[s]uch a pedagogic practice" "of focusing on the language of a text" "may very well be counterproductive as a *reading* lesson" (246; qtd. in Shaffer, 2012) because reading texts in English means, not "dealing with strings of words" (Rinvoluceri, 1998, 195), but processing language to discover and construct meanings, ideas, information, knowledge, values, perspectives, and so on that are in tuned with readers' needs, interests, and life. Before students realize EFL reading has its own reward, unfavorable experience during their secondary school hinders them from appreciating EFL reading. However, extensive reading will promote not only the target language learning but also continuity of EFL reading. Making reading

itself pleasurable, meaningful, relevant, useful, inspirational, valuable, and, therefore, much beneficial to EFL learners at the secondary levels, extensive reading can help them develop and grow *linguistically, socio-culturally* (including *multi-culturally*), *cognitively*, and *emotionally* as a whole person. Thus, extensive reading promotes not only their acquisition of the target language competence but also their being *educated* to be a better person through the medium of English language who becomes mature enough to be more energetic and responsible for their own EFL learning.

Since extensive reading can promote the EFL learners' more holistic personal growth, this personal growth should be at the heart of EFL education in Korea, for EFL learners of holistic development would become more responsible not only for their own learning but also for others'. There is no denial that extensive reading can provide a good basis for learners' personal development, and this will, in turn, promote their transactional and interactive acts in EFL classrooms, "a kind of "culture" which is created out of the communal interactions among course participants" (Bailey, 1996, 261; qtd. in Arnold & Brown, 1999, 19). The critical period for EFL learners to develop as a person must be filled with extensive reading. Since most Korean students, even the elementary school children, are given and guided with fixed route of learning, there is less room for them to develop as a whole person. While understanding their own emotions or skills to understand others are suppressed by their academic works, extensive reading will help them discover how to better understand others, and enhance their personal skills to interact with others in the classrooms. Thus, extensive reading fits to a growing concern for humanistic approaches in EFL that stretches beyond "mere language instruction" into "ways to enrich language learning by incorporating aspects of the affective dimension of the learner," focusing more on language learners' "own experience as a resource" to help them to develop and grow as a whole person (Arnold & Brown, 1999, 5-7).

For these reasons and justifications for the use of ER in our EFL curriculum, this study suggests that extensive reading

should not remain merely as "an instructional approach" (Bamford & Day, 2004, xiii); rather, it should be an *educational movement* that can usher in a paradigm shift in Korean EFL education--a series of organized activities and efforts to promote positive changes in Korean EFL education. Thus, based firmly on the significant benefits of extensive reading many scholars and practitioners in Korea and other countries have strongly supported, this study wants to assert that extensive reading should be implemented in a regular English curriculum in both primary and secondary levels because it could generate positive changes in the current Korean EFL reading programs as dominated by intensive-reading approaches. While intensive reading provides specific guidance and skills for the language learning, extensive reading can promote self-regulating and self-discovery actions where learners take control of all the things that are happening in the texts they are reading. Once readers expand and gain their understanding of the content from their free personal interactions, intensive-reading programs can act as the binder where readers can confirm, clarify and re-direct their understanding to receive more guided language learning. The educators and curriculum designers, thus, should know that extensive reading needs to be merged as a blended program in the curriculum (added reading curriculum) where schools can use extensive reading as a binding or a joint program to assist overall EFL communicative competence development.

In conclusion, the use of extensive reading in our EFL setting will bring about a primary shift, the shift that will lead to positive changes in it: a shift from transmission of linguistic knowledge to an experiential & self-directing approach, from form-based learning to meaning-oriented acquisition, from language acquisition to language socialization (Kramersch), from artificial/superficial language activities/tasks to subjective and contextual discourse acts, from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation, from product-oriented skills to process-oriented learning, from individual learning to cooperative learning, from conventional testing to authentic assessment, from teacher-as-controller to teacher-as-guider/facilitator/role-model,

and finally, from controlled teaching to heuristic, holistic, and even therapeutic learning (Eur, 2001, 221).



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