



Investigating the Impacts of a Task-Based Extensive Reading Program on Reading Ability in Thai High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the impacts of a Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER) program on the reading abilities of Thai high school students at a demonstration school in Thailand. Nine Mattayomsuksa 6 students from a Math-English program, selected through purposive sampling, participated in this TBER program. In this program, each student was required to read eight graded readers and complete task-based post-reading activities after finishing each book. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests to assess the effectiveness of the TBER program. In addition, verbal reports and semi-structured interviews were used to explore students' perceptions. The test results revealed that all students in the experimental group showed considerable improvements in their post-test scores, whereas the comparison group indicated variations in their post-test scores, with some students showing gains, others experiencing declines, and some demonstrating no change. Furthermore, the students in the experimental group reported that they perceived improvements in reading ability, vocabulary acquisition and confidence in reading

	<p>English books. Moreover, reading habits were gradually developed through this program. The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of extensive reading can be enhanced when it is integrated with task-based language teaching, with supporting evidence discussed further in this article.</p> <p>Keywords: task-based extensive reading, extensive reading, reading ability, task-based language teaching, EFL high school students</p>
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Introduction

Of the four language skills, reading is one of the crucial components in language acquisition. It provides sufficient exposure to the target language supporting language development (Grabe, 2009; Krashen, 2004; Nation, 2009). Since language development depends heavily on sufficient language input, reading benefits learners in that it increases chances to encounter new vocabulary, sentence structures, and language patterns (Krashen, 2004). Therefore, many English language teachers and educators place a high priority on designing and integrating reading activities into their lessons. This approach can be commonly seen in English language coursebooks, which often begin each chapter with a reading passage, requiring students to read before moving forward to the following sections (Tomlinson, 2011). Relying solely on coursebooks, however, tends to hinder students language proficiency development due to the limited input students are exposed to (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). One primary approach to reading instruction is a strategy-based methodology, consisting of introducing a repertoire of reading techniques and strategies for students to apply to predetermined texts, followed by comprehension questions and other reading-related activities. This teaching procedure often repeats itself through the entirety of the coursebook. Thus, it can be implied that, with an overreliance of coursebooks, students' exposure to the diverse linguistic input needed to master the target language could be limited.

When considering the case of Thailand, the issue of low English proficiency among students has been discussed for decades. EF Education First (2024) has recently issued a report investigating the level of English proficiency of test takers from different countries around the world. The results indicate that Thailand is currently ranked no. 106 out of 116 countries, with an average score of 415. This is well below the global average score of 477. Furthermore, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has also published a report based on test score data from 2023 to

2024. The data set includes data from five countries in the South East Asian ASEAN region: Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippine and Thailand. Focusing on the reading section, it is reported that Thailand ranks lowest among these countries in the General Test, with an average band score of 4.8, and second to last in the Academic Test, with an average band score of 6.2 (IELTS, n.d.). Thus, these disappointing results have raised concerns about current pedagogical practices and whether ELT practitioners in Thailand are on the right path to developing students' reading abilities.

To deal with the limitations of conventional L2 reading instruction, significant attention has been paid to Extensive Reading (ER) as a potential method for developing language proficiency. ER focuses on the concept "learning to read" by encouraging students to engage with a large volume of easy and enjoyable texts. By doing so, it gives students the substantial language input necessary for their language growth (Day & Bamford, 2002; Nation & Waring, 2019). Extensive research on ER has reported its positive effects on various aspects of language proficiency, including writing, vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and reading motivation (Day, 2004).

Although it is clear that ER offers numerous benefits for language learning, it may not provide a fully comprehensive language learning experience when used in isolation. According to Nation's (1996) framework of the four strands, a well-balanced language course should incorporate meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. When comparing ER with the four strands, the stages of linguistic analysis and language production are often missing, leading to a lack of opportunities for students to practice analyzing and producing the target language. In addition, since ER is a long-term approach, students seeking immediate results may find it less satisfying (Green, 2005). Therefore, to enhance its effectiveness, the integration of ER with other language teaching methods is encouraged.

Even though the integration of ER with teaching methods sounds possible in terms of developing students' language proficiency, a small number of studies have, until recently, been conducted to investigate the effects of doing so, especially in classroom contexts. Green (2005) and Chen (2018) conducted research to examine the effectiveness of ER integrated with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), also known as Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER). TBLT has emerged as an ideal complement to ER, as both approaches share a focus on student-centered learning, incidental learning, and meaning-focused activities. Moreover, TBER aligns well with Nation's four strands by balancing input, output, and language-focused practice. Therefore, to contribute further to the field of ER, this study employs a mixed method research design aimed at exploring the effectiveness

of Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER) by answering the following research questions: (1) To what extent do students improve their reading ability after participating in a task-based reading program? (2) What are students' perceptions of task-based Extensive Reading?

Literature Review

The Benefits of Extensive Reading (ER)

Extensive Reading (ER) is a teaching approach in ESL/EFL designed to engage students in reading English texts for enjoyment. According to Day (2018), ER emphasizes reading a large volume of easy material for general understanding, information, and pleasure. The core principle of ER is student autonomy in selecting reading materials that match their proficiency level. In essence, ER is about "learning to read", focusing on fostering a love for reading and improving language skills through extensive practice (Day & Bamford, 2002; Day et al., 1998).

A great number of studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of ER. Yamashita (2004) revealed that positive reading attitudes in both L1 and L2 contributed to enhanced ER performance among students. Liu (2017) further demonstrated that ER improved reading habits and motivation in Taiwanese students despite exam pressures. When it comes to the issue concerning how ER improves students' language proficiency, several researchers have reported that students' vocabulary knowledge can be expended through ER (Alsaif & Masrai, 2020; Iwata, 2020; McQuillan, 2020). This is because it provides further opportunities to repeatedly encounter words in diverse contexts, which is crucial for vocabulary acquisition. Another benefit of ER is an improvement in reading speed. Many studies have revealed that students who participated in ER-based programs demonstrated development in their reading ability (Aka, 2019; Bui & Macalister, 2021; Mardiana & Hidayat, 2019; Mo, 2021). The reason for this is that reading a significant volume of easy material, which requires a lower cognitive load, allows students to read more fluently. Furthermore, several studies have explored the impact of ER on English standardized test performance. Mason (2017) and Mason & Krashen (2017) revealed that students who engaged in ER showed significant improvements in their TOEIC scores, with potential increases of up to 200 points by reading for just one hour daily.

Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER)

Extensive Reading (ER) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) share common features that support language acquisition. However, there has been little research on the effectiveness of this integration in language development until recently. Green's (2005) study was the very first that introduced the concept of TBER with his study titled, "Integrating Extensive Reading in the Task-Based Curriculum." He explained that even though ER is beneficial in providing students with broad language exposure and facilitating the acquisition of a target language naturally, there are some limitations when it is implemented in isolation. Green's major concern is that ER itself depends heavily on sufficient time to assure that students receive enough input. Given the nature of ER, students may lack a clear sense of purpose and attainable reading goals. Therefore, setting specific short-term objectives through tasks during the reading process may be needed to help track students' progress and monitor the development of their reading abilities.

Some researchers argue that ER's effectiveness is enhanced when combined with tasks. Khonamri and Roostae (2014) examined the impact of form-focused and meaning-focused tasks on the development of lexical collocations among Iranian EFL students. Both groups read extensively, but one group completed form-focused tasks, while the other engaged in meaning-focused tasks. Both groups showed improvement in lexical knowledge, although no significant difference was found between the task types.

Furthermore, Chen (2018) developed an ER program that integrated task-based learning to enhance L2 language development, motivation, and reading habits among 48 undergraduate students in Taiwan. These students participated in a 16-week course and were assigned to read one teacher-selected book and four self-selected books. Upon completing each book, they were required to carry out tasks that required both comprehension and production. For each task, students needed to work in pairs, small groups, and even individually. Data was collected through focus group interviews, classroom observations, and reading journals. The findings showed that students perceived improvements in language skills, problem-solving abilities, and higher-order thinking. In addition, the motivation from completing tasks gave students a sense of achievement, encouraged independent reading and fostered good reading habits.

Additionally, TBER has also been shown to develop writing skills. Zarei (2017) conducted an experiment to investigate the effects of ER tasks on the writing accuracy of Iranian students, who were divided into three groups: two experimental groups and one control group. The experimental

groups were required to read graded readers and complete either written or oral summary tasks. The control group, on the other hand, received traditional instruction. A post-test was administered to gauge their improvement in writing ability. The results showed that both experimental groups outperformed the control group, with significant improvements noted in the oral summary group.

Despite favorable reports on TBER, several limitations remain. First, most studies on TBER have focused on university settings, where students typically have more experience in English language learning than those from secondary schools. This leaves gaps in understanding how these findings apply to other educational contexts. Furthermore, several studies have relied exclusively on either quantitative or qualitative research designs. Thus, a mixed-methods approach could combine the strengths of both, providing a more comprehensive understanding and allowing for data triangulation.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study employed a mixed-method research design to address the following two research questions:

- (1) To what extent do students improve their reading ability after participating in a task-based extensive reading program?
- (2) What are students' perceptions of task-based extensive reading?

To gather robust data, an equivalent comparison group design was utilized.

Research Participants

The participants in this study were 18 mixed-ability EFL high school students aged 17-18. The experimental group comprised of 9 mixed-ability students from the Math-English program, consisting of 5 males and 4 females. The comparison group were carefully selected using a pair-matching technique, matching 9 students from the Science-Math and Science-Math-AI program whose pre-test scores were approximately equivalent to those of the experimental group. All participants were informed about the structure and procedures of the program and provided their informed consent.

The Program's Reading Materials

All 9 students in the experimental group were required to engage with graded readers. In this study, Pearson Longman Penguin Readers were utilized due to their accessibility within the school's library. The readers were

categorized into six levels, comprising a total of 123 books. The specific distinctions between each level are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Levels of Graded Readers

Level	Number of headwords	Students' proficiency level	Books available
Level 1	300	Beginner	12
Level 2	600	Elementary	20
Level 3	1,200	Pre-intermediate	38
Level 4	1,700	Intermediate	30
Level 5	2,300	Upper-intermediate	13
Level 6	3,000	Advanced	10

From the available book resources, students were not required to read across all levels of difficulty. Instead, they were also guided by the following criteria for book selection:

1. "Pick a book that interests you."
2. "Pick a book that matches with your level."
3. "Pick a book that you can stay with comfortably."
4. "Consider the length so that you can finish it within the given time."

In addition to these criteria, students were provided with some additional tips. For example, students were asked to read the first page of the book, and if they encountered more than five difficult words, they were advised to select a different book. In addition, since the first four sessions of the TBER program required students to read and complete tasks collaboratively with a partner, they were allowed to discuss and agree on which to read together.

The Program Procedure

The students participated in three main stages. Stage 1 was a preparation week aimed at familiarizing them with the principles of Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER). During this stage, students were introduced to the concepts of ER and TBER. They also reflected on their past experiences in traditional reading classes by sharing their reading habits

and discussing these with their peers. The teacher highlighted the potential benefits students would gain from their full engagement in the TBER program. Additionally, students were briefed on the program's timeline and objectives, including the number of books they were expected to read by the final week. After that, a range of effective reading strategies, including utilizing background knowledge, establishing a purpose, making predictions, skimming, scanning, and identifying cohesive devices, were introduced and briefly practiced with guidance from the teacher. Furthermore, the teacher illustrated optimal reading practices through the method of reading and thinking aloud, demonstrating the application of these strategies during the reading process. Following the teacher's modeling, metacognitive assessment and personal goal checklists were introduced. These tools were essential given that ER requires students to take significant responsibility for self-regulation and book selection (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022). Consequently, a personal goal-setting tool was crucial in facilitating this self-directed process.

Stage 2 was a task completion. This 8-week stage involved students reading both in and out of class. Prior to starting, students set reading goals using the metacognitive assessment and personal goal checklist from Stage 1, which the teacher reviewed for feasibility and necessary revisions. Students were expected to: 1) read for at least 15-20 minutes before the first period each day, or before or after completing assigned tasks; 2) read outside of class according to their availability; and 3) commit to a daily page or chapter goal for out-of-class reading. Initially, the whole class selected a book to read collectively, in accordance with recommendations for using a class reader in the early stages of ER. As the program advanced, students had more flexibility in book selection. After completing each book, students engaged in post-reading tasks, working collaboratively on oral reports and discussions. The teacher provided support as needed. For monitoring students' reading progress both in and out of class, daily morning assemblies during homeroom periods were used to check whether they were following the plans they had set before starting their reading. Each student was asked to report their progress according to their plan. If a student was not on track or seemed likely to fall behind, they were encouraged to make some minor revisions to their plans to make it more manageable. More importantly, the teacher played a key role in motivating them to stay on track and continue reading.

Tasks in this program were specifically chosen from Bamford and Day's (2004) post-reading activities and tailored to Ellis's (2003) criteria, including:

1. Interactive elements among readers
2. Production-based unfocused tasks
3. Real-world relevance
4. Applicability across different graded readers

5. Incorporation of students' personal experiences

The 8-week TBER (Task-Based Extensive Reading) reading program was structured according to a framework proposed by Ellis (2003). Each lesson followed three main phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task, with activities designed to align with these stages (Table 2).

Table 2

Outline of the 8-Week Reading Program

Book	Type of Book	Task
1	Class reader (9)	Team competition
2	Small group reader (5/4)	Plot pyramid
3	Small group reader (3/3/3)	Book club
4	Pair reader (2/2/2/3)	Character by the letter
5	Individual reader	Gifts
6	Individual reader	A different ending
7	Individual reader	Poster presentation
8	Individual reader	The best and worst of books

Students were required to provide a verbal report to reflect on their performance after they completed each post-reading task. This process allowed them to evaluate their progress and strategize for the next reading. Additionally, the revision of reading goals under the teacher's guidance, was an important component of this stage.

Stage 3 involved post-intervention procedures. At this stage, both groups completed a post-test administered one week after the intervention. This was carried out under identical exam conditions using different versions of the PET reading section. Following the test, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the experimental group during focus group sessions to gather students' perceptions after participating in the 8-week task sequence. The data collected from these interviews were subsequently analyzed and interpreted to extract insights from the findings.

Source of data

Pre- and Post-test

Students' reading ability was measured by means of a reading test taken from the Cambridge B1 Preliminary English Test (PET). In the reading section, there were six parts with 32 questions in total.

Verbal Report

A verbal report was conducted individually by students immediately after each task was completed. This method allowed students to articulate their thought processes right after engaging with the language (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 222). In this study, students were asked to self-report in four key areas: (1) their experience during the activity, (2) their favorite aspect of the task, (3) the aspects they found disappointing, and (4) areas they wished to improve on. These reflections were recorded using either an audio recording device or a video recorder.

Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview

To explore students' reading habits and perceptions of improvement, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the program. This format allowed for more in-depth and flexible responses compared to a structured interview (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 185). Students were divided into two groups for focus group interviews, enabling richer discussion. The interview questions were developed, reviewed by experts for improvement, and revised accordingly. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, member checking was implemented by returning the obtained data to the research participants to confirm the accuracy of the data.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

In this study, the Cambridge PET reading section was used as a quantitative research instrument to assess students' improvement in reading ability. This test is officially designated by the Division of School Academic Affairs and is specially designed for high school students. As one of the most trusted commercially standardized assessments, developed by a highly recognized educational institution, its validity and reliability are well established. For the qualitative phase, there were two research instruments: the verbal report and semi-structured interview questions. Both instruments were evaluated and revised based on expert feedback. Additionally, the items were validated using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) with the assistance of three English Language Teaching (ELT) experts. A pilot study was then conducted with a group of high school students from the same grade as the research participants, carried out under similar interview conditions, to test the instruments.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were obtained from the students' English reading test scores. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, a pre-test was administered at the start. After completing all program procedures, students from both groups took a post-test one week later. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate measures of central tendency and data dispersion. Subsequently, inferential statistics were applied using non-parametric tests to assess significant differences within and between the groups.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected from focus group semi-structured interviews and verbal reports. According to the teaching procedure, verbal reports were conducted at the end of each activity, and a focus group semi-structured interview was held at the end of the program. The data collection process included filtering out irrelevant information. The processed data were then transcribed and translated from Thai to English. The transcripts were analyzed and developed into codes and themes. To enhance the validity of the data, intercoder reliability was employed to assure consistency and accuracy in the coding process.

Results

Difference between Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores for the Experimental Group

To answer Research Question 1 ("To what extent do students improve their reading ability after the task-based Extensive Reading program?"), a comparison was made between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in the experimental group to evaluate improvements in reading ability.

As shown in Table 3 above, all nine students in the experimental group demonstrated better reading performance. The mean pre-test score grew from 8.7 (SD = 6.04) to 12.56 (SD = 6.39) for the post-test, with scores ranging from 7 to 28. The group's raw gain scores showed improvements ranging from +2 to +5. These results indicate that the students in this group made notable gains in their reading ability.

Table 3*Students' Pre-Test and Post-test Scores from the English Reading Ability Test*

Experimental Group				Comparison Group			
Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Dif.	Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Dif.
Student 1	23	28	+5	Student A	19	24	+5
Student 2	10	12	+2	Student B	11	11	0
Student 3	10	15	+5	Student C	11	13	+2
Student 4	10	14	+4	Student D	11	10	-1
Student 5	7	9	+2	Student E	7	8	+1
Student 6	7	11	+3	Student F	7	9	+2
Student 7	4	9	+5	Student G	5	6	+1
Student 8	4	8	+4	Student H	5	5	0
Student 9	3	7	+4	Student I	5	4	-1
Mean	8.67	12.56	+3.89	Mean	9.00	10.00	+1.00
SD	6.04	6.39		SD	4.58	6.00	

To determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in the experimental group, a non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was conducted because the sample size was relatively small, and the data was not normally distributed. The statistical test results showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, with a significance level of .007. The findings suggest that the TBER program effectively enhanced students' reading abilities, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4*Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Result for the Pre-Test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group*

Pre-Test – Post-test	
Z	2.701b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.007

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks

Comparison of Post-test Scores Between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

The effectiveness of the TBER program was evaluated by comparing the post-test scores of the experimental and comparison groups using the Mann-Whitney U Test. Although the experimental group had a higher mean post-test score than the comparison group, the difference was not statistically significant ($p=.249$), as detailed in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Mann-Whiney U Test Result for the Post-test Scores between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

	Post-test
Mann-Whitney U	27.500
Wilcoxon W	72.500
Z	-1.154
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.249

a. Grouping Variable: group

b. Not corrected for ties

Research Question 2: What are students' perceptions towards the task-based extensive reading program?

Initial Challenges and Difficulties

In general, students in the experimental group agreed that they experienced difficulties at the beginning of this program. This was due to the fact that reading a great number of English texts was an unfamiliar activity for them. Additionally, their current limited knowledge of vocabulary and basic sentence structures hindered their ability to fully enjoy the experience of reading. However, as they continued reading, students gradually adapted and became more comfortable with the activity, eventually expressing a willingness to continue:

I think I enjoyed it. It was a good free time activity. At the beginning, maybe the first 2-3 books, I read very slowly because I didn't know the meanings. Translating some words, even sentences was needed. But I gradually felt better after I saw the same words repeatedly. (Student 7 interview)

There were a lot of difficult and unknown words in the book. I tried to find topics of each chapter. I think topics could help me guess those meanings. (Student 8 interview)

Emotional Response and Anxiety

Only a few students were willing to join the program due to anxiety about the new experience of reading numerous lengthy English books over an 8-week period. They also faced challenges in finding materials that interested them. However, after completing the program, they found the experience less difficult than they had anticipated:

Each book was so long. But eventually I could manage to get through it. I think I started feeling better with book 5 about Manchester United which is the club I love. (Student 8 interview)

I was okay. A bit worried about the length. But it wasn't that hard as it looked. (Student 9 verbal report)

Reading Habits and Motivation

Students reported that they noticed signs of improvement in their reading habits. They began independently selecting graded readers based on their preferred topics, shifting away from group-based book selection. In addition, students adjusted their reading goals when they realized that their original goals were not easy to attain.

The first book focused heavily on people's lives, which I found boring. I stopped reading it when I reached Act 2. However, I really enjoyed Book 4, which was about a murderer. It was so exciting that it kept me hooked until the very end. (Student 3 verbal report)

Once I had browsed the book I chose, I thought it was easy for me to read the whole book in a short time. So, I set up my reading goal like one book a week. But I couldn't manage to stick with the plan. My discipline was very poor and couldn't manage my time well. So, the plan for my next book was like two days spent for one book. (Student 6 verbal report)

Learning Atmosphere

Students expressed positive views toward the TBER program. What they liked the most was the freedom to choose books that genuinely interested them. They also reported that they received a lot of benefits from

reading with partners because they could interact and share opinions on the books they were reading together.

Reading in pairs made me enjoy the activity more. I felt like I had a reading partner so that when I got some reading problems, I had someone to ask and consult. (Student 2 interview)

At first, I was not happy because the book we all chose together was harder than I thought. But after I chose the books to read by myself, I felt happier. (Student 7 interview)

Language Improvement

Most students reported that they found this program effective since it offered them opportunities to repeatedly encounter new words, expressions, and idioms. Some students also agreed that this program improved their reading ability. Moreover, few students perceived improvements in speaking ability and grammatical knowledge, particularly in English tenses.

It seems like there were some words used in many books I read. I think this helped me remember it easily. (Student 5 interview)

My speaking skill improved because I had to speak a lot when doing the post-reading activities from books 1-8. Even working in groups or in pairs, my friends always asked me to be a group presenter to share what we did together to the class. To be honest, I didn't like it at first. But I somehow felt more confident and wanted to speak more. I don't know why. (Student 1 interview)

I can read and understand faster. That is because I learned a lot of vocabulary from reading all of the books. Back then, I needed to spend time thinking and making myself understand what I read. Now, I understand what the text tries to convey right after I finish reading that line or paragraph. (Student 4 interview)

As I read faster, I find myself with extra time to finish other sections of the exam. Additionally, I'd like to mention that I've learned English tenses through this program. For instance, the surrounding contexts have helped me grasp when and why each tense should be used. Moreover, I've been able to practice identifying the parts of speech of each word in the sentence. (Student 4 interview)

I have better reading comprehension. And, because I started reading from the easier to more difficult level, it can strengthen my perseverance. (Student 9 interview)

Discussion

From the quantitative results of this study, it indicates that students in the experimental group who took part in the TBER program showed significant improvements in their reading ability. All nine students showed positive gains in their post-test scores, with an average increase of 3.89 points and a mean score rise from 8.67 to 12.56. This is also confirmed by a statistically significant Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test ($p = .007$). However, the results derived from a Mann-Whitney U Test did not show a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the TBER group and the comparison group ($p = .249$). In this case, the raw gain scores were used to compare the difference in reading improvement in both groups. The results revealed that participants in the experimental group showed consistent positive gains contrasted with the mixed results in the comparison group. This comparison suggests that the TBER program effectively enhanced students' reading ability. The results of this study echo those of previous investigations examining the impacts of ER and adaptive ER programs on reading speed and reading comprehension (Dhanarattigannon, 2022; Singkum & Chinwonno, 2021; Suk, 2017).

Additionally, the qualitative data revealed several key insights into how the TBER program influenced students' perceptions. Although many ELT scholars share the view that ER mainly promotes reading for enjoyment and pleasure, students in the experimental group reported that they struggled with difficulties and challenges in the beginning of the program. This may have resulted from the book selection technique which required every student to discuss and agree on the books they wanted to read. Some students may not have agreed with the selected books but chose not to voice their opposition. Furthermore, the inappropriate difficulty level of the books may have caused anxiety. As noted in the interview transcripts, some students admitted to selecting books that were too difficult, which make it challenging for them to read. However, with guidance and supervision throughout the study, they gradually learned to adapt to the program, becoming more comfortable with its procedures, and experiencing a sense of accomplishment after completing each book. From the students' responses, it can be suggested that this program promoted good reading habits and increased motivation as students began to identify specific topic preferences and learned to adjust their reading goals. Overall, TBER notably improved vocabulary, reading comprehension, and speaking skills, contributing to increased confidence in English. The results from this study also agree with Chen (2018), who

revealed improvements in reading ability among undergraduate students participating in Task-Based Extensive Reading (TBER) programs. This study also found that students reported faster reading and better comprehension. Participants in both studies reported that this program exposed them to more unfamiliar vocabulary, with repetition helping to reinforce retention. Additionally, both groups of participants noted improvement in their reading habits and motivation.

Pedagogical Implication and Conclusion

This study highlights some key recommendations for implementors of a TBER program. First, the success of the program relies heavily on motivation in reading. In general, many students tend to view reading as a dull activity, and it is often treated as one of the least appealing options for students. With this undeniable challenge, tools and techniques for maintaining students' motivation should be prioritized. In this study, a goal-driven approach was employed, with students setting personal reading targets, such as the number of words to read within a specific timeframe, the number of pages to finish, or the hours spent reading. This tool was used not only to motivate students to attain their goals, but also to monitor and assess their progress. Second, incorporating tasks into ER is recommended as this integration facilitates social interaction and engagement among students. In addition, the availability of graded readers and autonomy in student's choice should be taken into consideration to foster a sense of ownership. These factors can lead to an increase in the willingness of students to participate (Ro, 2024). Another issue is whether students should read physical books or online material. To answer this question, it depends on the teacher's goal. If the primary objective is simply to maximize students' opportunities to read, both options can be beneficial. However, Park and Lee (2021) investigated the effects of e-books and printed books on reading comprehension. The results of this study revealed that students who read printed books showed more improvement in both inferential and literal comprehension than those using e-books. This finding suggests that it is worth investing in physical graded readers since they promote deeper cognitive processing and enhance comprehension.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Even though the TBER program, specifically designed for this study, positively influenced students' reading ability and perceptions, there are some limitations that may affect the generalizability of the findings. First, this study was conducted at a demonstration school in Thailand, where students

typically live in urban centers and come from upper-middle-class families with access to ample educational resources. Therefore, to broaden the findings further, future research should consider conducting studies in different school contexts and across various educational levels. Another limitation lies in the nature of ER, which requires a significant amount of time to ensure students receive sufficient language input. However, the intervention period in this study lasted only 8 weeks. Therefore, it is recommended to extend the intervention period to allow students to gain deeper insights than those observed in this study.

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