การอ่านแบบกว้าง:การสอนการอ่านสำหรับนักเรียนจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศที่มีระดับการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่านในการอ่านต่างกัน

Extensive Reading: A Reading Intervention for Chinese EFL Students with Different Reading Self-Efficacy Levels

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บทคัดย่อ

การสอนภาษาอังกฤษในโรงเรียนมัธยมในชนบทของจีนไม่เพียงแค่มีความล้าหลังในทฤษฎีเท่านั้น ยังมีการไม่ใช้คู่กับความจริงในด้านเนื้อหาและวิธีการด้วย ทำให้แรงจูงใจของนักเรียนเสีย ความสามารถทางภาษาอ่อนลง และแม้กระทั่งเป็นการขัดขวางการพัฒนาความสามารถการอ่านอีกด้วย วัตถุประสงค์ของวิจัยนี้มีดังต่อไปนี้ 1) ศึกษาผลกระทบของการอ่านแบบกว้างขวางต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนจีนอีเอฟแอลที่มีความสามารถในการอ่านด้วยตนเองต่ำ 2) ตรวจสอบผลกระทบของการอ่านแบบกว้างขวางต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนจีนอีเอฟแอลที่มีการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่านสูง และ 3) สำรวจการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่านของนักเรียนจีนหลังจากเข้าร่วมโปรแกรมการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษแบบกว้างขวาง นักเรียนจีนระดับมัธยมปลายจำนวน 54 คนถูกเลือกโดยการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจงเข้าร่วมในการศึกษาแบบผสมผสาน 12 สัปดาห์ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ (1) แบบทดสอบวัดความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ (2) แบบสอบถามการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่าน (3) สัมภาษณ์กึ่งโครงสร้าง และ (4) บันทึกการอ่าน จากข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณจากการทดสอบ t-test ของตัวอย่างแบบจับคู่ พบว่านักเรียนที่มีการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่านทั้งต่ำและสูงมีการปรับปรุงความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษอย่างมีนัยสำคัญที่ระดับ 0.05 ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพยังแสดงให้เห็นว่าความรู้สึกในความสำเร็จที่นักเรียนได้รับนั้นแตกต่างกันสำหรับแต่ละกลุ่มการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่าน คำแนะนำของวิจัยนี้นำเสนอวิธีที่นักเรียนที่มีระดับการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่านที่แตกต่างกันมีปฏิสัมพันธ์อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพกับการแทรกแซงการอ่านแบบกว้างขวาง

คำสำคัญ : การอ่านแบบกว้าง, การรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการอ่าน, ความเข้าใจการอ่าน, นักเรียนจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

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Abstract

English language teaching in rural Chinese high schools has not only been methodologically backward, but also impractical in content and approach, it led to distract student motivation, decrease language abilities, and even diminish reading improvement. The purpose of this study was to 1) investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with low reading self-efficacy; 2) investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with high reading self-efficacy, and 3) explore Chinese EFL students' reading self-efficacy after participating in an English extensive reading intervention. Fifty-four Chinese high school students selected by purposive sampling participated in a twelve-week mixed-methods study. The research instruments included (1) an English reading comprehension test; (2) a reading self-efficacy questionnaire; (3) a semi-structured interview, and (4) a reading log. Quantitative data from a paired samples t-test indicated that students with both low and high reading self-efficacy had significant improvements in English reading comprehension at a level of 0.05. The qualitative data also showed that the sense of achievement experienced by the students was also different for each reading self-efficacy group. Recommendations also offered how students with different reading self-efficacy levels efficaciously interacted with the extensive reading intervention.

Keywords: Extensive reading, reading self-efficacy, reading comprehension, Chinese EFL students

Introduction

There has been an established principle in learning to read in a foreign language in that students learned to read through practices(Day & Bamford, 2018; Nation & Waring, 2019; Renandya et al., 2019). In China, it seems encouraging that many teachers allocated large amounts of teaching times to reading, however, scholars often criticized L2 reading instruction in Chinese schools for its unidirectional mode of instruction (Deng et al., 2019), for limiting opportunities for students to do independent reading, and for lacking clarity in the approach to reading and instruction in reading skills. English teaching in rural China differed from that in towns and cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Beijing. Rural high school English teaching was not only outdated in its method, but the teaching content and methods were unidirectional. Such unidirectional content and method of teaching made it difficult to motivate students, limited the expansion of their abilities, and even hindered the improvement of their overall reading quantity and quality.

Motivating students to read has been the focus of research in the field of EFL learning in China. Some studies in EFL have highlighted reading self-efficacy as a critical motivational competence in fostering

self-motivated, and good readers (Burrows, 2012; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Reading self-efficac was also found to be correlated to reading comprehension positively, and the use of reading strategies among EFL students (Burrows, 2012; Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2010; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012), and should be encouraged and facilitated in the EFL classroom. Increasing Chinese students' reading self-efficacy was essential, as it prevented them from judging their reading ability or experience based only on their grades, and gave them a strong sense of belief that they would be able to read something successfully and enjoyably.

Extensive reading has been an effective and promising program to sustain foreign language reading skills (Birketveit et al., 2018; Yamashita, 2015). As Renandya and Chang (2017) mentioned, although teachers from Asia had strong positive beliefs about the effectiveness of ER in improving students' overall language competence, there were many difficulties in implementing it. ER had a low profile in mainland China because it tended to appear unfamiliar, especially for Chinese students and teachers in rural areas (He and Green, 2012). Therefore, this study investigated the effects of extensive reading and reading self-efficacy, its potential to help rural Chinese high school students develop their reading comprehension and reading self-efficacy by encouraging them to read written materials independently in class and outside of the class, according to their own interests and at their own pace, as well as attaining their motivation and confidence to read extensively.

Objectives

1. To investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with low-level reading self-efficacy.

2. To investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with high-level reading self-efficacy.

3. To explore Chinese EFL students' reading self-efficacy after participating in an English extensive reading intervention.

Methodology

1. Context and Participants

Fifty-four senior high school Chinese EFL students participated in the study. They were selected by purposive sampling from a rural private school in Guizhou province, China. All of them had studied English as a required subject for at least three years in the middle school, and one year in the senior high school. However, their English proficiency levels varied from person to person. None of the students who participated in this study had taken part in any extensive reading programs, so they had minimal knowledge about Extensive reading and reading self-efficacy.

2. Research Instruments

Four main instruments were used for the study: (1) English Reading Comprehension Test; (2) Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire; (3) Semi-structured Interviews, and (4) Reading Logs.

(1) English Reading Comprehension Test

The English Reading Comprehension Test was adjusted from the National College Entrance Examination reading comprehension test, also known as "Gaokao" in Chinese and the Academic Proficiency Test for Common Senior High Students, as known as "Huikao" in Chinese. The test was administered twice, at the beginning and at the end of the extensive reading intervention. It was used to assess Chinese EFL students' English comprehension, including thirty test items. In addition to the reliability of the test, it was validated by three experts and pilot tested with ten students who were not in the main study to examine its reliability, resulting in 0.84.

(2) Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire

The reading self-efficacy questionnaire was conducted to assess the pre and post reading self-efficacy of Chinese EFL students. The results of the pre reading self-efficacy questionnarie was used to classify students into low and high levels of reading self-efficay groups before the intervention. And the post reading self-efficacy questionnaire was also appiled to explore the differences after the intervention. The questionnaire focused upon students' reading confidence and reading challenge. There were thirty statements adapted from Burrow (Burrows, 2012), Rosenzweig and Wigfield (2017), and Mullin (2018), then translated to Chinese. The participants were required to rate each statement on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was validated by three experts for the verification of content validity and pilot tested with 10 students who were not in the main study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability was .76, indicating its reliability.

(3) Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the extensive reading intervention. The selection of interviewees was based on the results of the post reading self-efficacy questionnaire and was conducted in both English and Chinese to avoid misunderstanding. A total of six students, three from the low-level reading self-efficacy group and three from the high-level reading self-efficacy group were selected for the interview randomly. Three experts validated the interview content and construction using the item-objective congruence (IOC) index.

(4) Reading Logs

Reading logs were collected during the Extensive Reading intervention and were used to record students' thoughts, feelings and perceptions when participating in the ER intervention. The reading logs in Week Three, Six, and Nine were collected to analyze students' reading self-efficacy after participating in the extensive reading intervention.
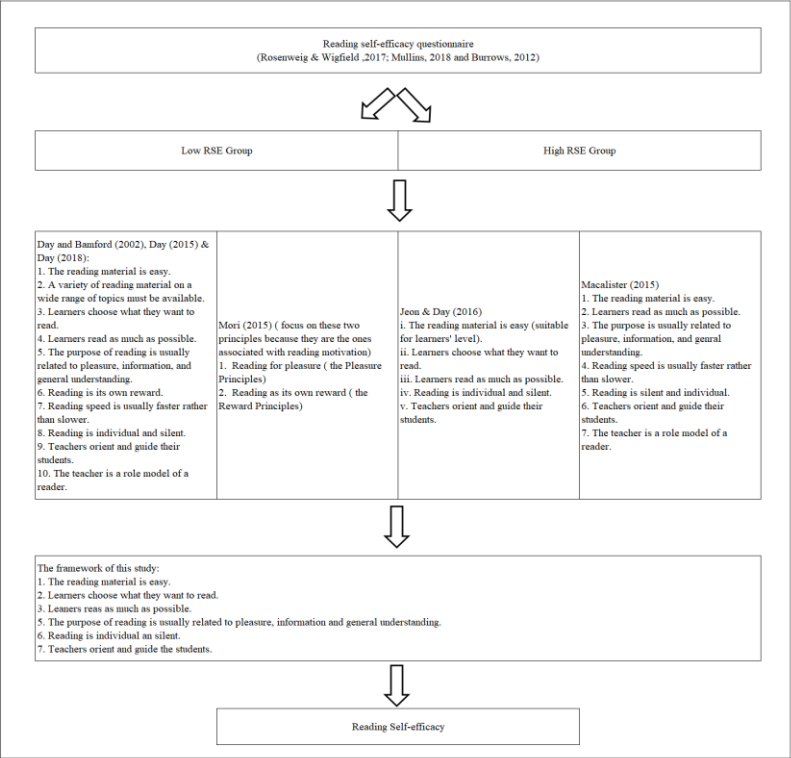
3. Research Framework

In this study, Chinese EFL students were divided into two groups based on the results of the pre reading self-efficacy questionnaire. After this, they received twelve weeks of extensive reading intervention.

The study followed seven principles of extensive reading as proposed by Day and Bamford (2002), Mori (2015), Jeon and Day (2016), and Macalister (2015).

Figure 1

Framework of this study

Reading self-efficacy questionnaire
(Rosenweig & Wigfield ,2017; Mullins, 2018 and Burrows, 2012)

Low RSE Group	High RSE Group

Day and Bamford (2002), Day (2015) & Day (2018):
1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

Mori (2015) (focus on these two principles because they are the ones associated with reading motivation)
1. Reading for pleasure (the Pleasure Principles)
2. Reading as its own reward (the Reward Principles)

Jeon & Day (2016)
i. The reading material is easy (suitable for learners' level).
ii. Learners choose what they want to read.
iii. Learners read as much as possible.
iv. Reading is individual and silent.
v. Teachers orient and guide their students.

Macalister (2015)
1. The reading material is easy.
2. Learners read as much as possible.
3. The purpose is usually related to pleasure, information, and genral understanding.
4. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
5. Reading is silent and individual.
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Reading Self-efficacy

Data Collection

In the beginning, students took the pre reading self-efficacy questionnaire before the intervention and were divided into two groups, low and high reading self-efficacy groups, according to the results of the questionnaire. They took the English reading comprehension test as well. After that, ten sessions of ER intervention were implemented. All students were required to record their thoughts and feelings on ER in weeks three, six, and nine. On week twelve, students took the English reading comprehension test again. Finally, six students chosen from the two groups participated in the semi-structured interview, expressing their thoughts, feelings and perception towards extensive reading and reading self-efficacy.

The quantitative data were analyzed using a paired sample t-test to compare group mean scores on both the pre-test and post-test of English reading comprehension. Additionally, results of the pre and post reading self-efficacy were calculated to report descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviation, and its meanings. For qualitative data, the reading logs and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis based on the framework of this study, to discover

the differences between low and high reading self-efficacy groups, and their reading comprehension and self-efficacy.

Results

Research Objective 1: To investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with low-level reading self-efficacy.

Table 1

Results of the pre and post English comprehension for the low RSE group

	N	mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	d
Low RSE group - pretest	28	18.14	2.00	-4.47	27	.000	.85
Posttest	28	20.61	2.35				

Table 1 shows that students' pretest mean score was 18.14 (*SD*=2.00), while their post-test mean score was 20.61 (*SD*=2.35). The results indicated that students with low-level reading self-efficacy achieved significantly higher mean scores after the ER program (t=4.47), with a high effect size (d = 0.85).

Research Objective 2: To investigate the effects of extensive reading on the English reading comprehension of Chinese EFL students with high-level reading self-efficacy.

Table 2

Results of the pre and post English comprehension for the high RSE group

	N	mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	d
High RSE Group - pretest	26	19.15	3.41	-4.27	25	.000	.85
posttest	26	21.96	2.62				

Table 2 shows that students made a significant improvement (t = 4.27, p < 0.05) in their reading comprehension pre- and post-test after 10 weeks of the treatment. The effect size was .85 (d = .85), indicating a high effect size.

Research Objective 3: To explore Chinese EFL students' reading self-efficacy after participating in an English extensive reading intervention.

The English reading comprehension test, reading self-efficacy questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and reading logs were used for this research objective. The reading self-efficacy questionnaire was distributed to all fifty-four students in week one before the intervention, and in week twelve after the completion of the intervention. Students responded to the questionnaire on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics.

Table 3

Results of the reading self-efficacy Questionnaire

	N	*Mean*	*SD*	Meaning
Overall - Pre	54	2.82	0.34	Neutral
Post	54	3.22	0.34	Agreement
Low RSE group -				
Pre	28	2.57	0.14	Neutral
Post	28	3.06	0.36	Agreement
High RSE group -				
Pre	26	3.10	0.28	Agreement
Post	26	3.38	0.23	Agreement

Table 3 reveals that the overall mean scores of students' reading self-efficacy were 2.82 (*SD* = 0.34, *N* = 54) in the pretest, and 3.22 (*SD* = 0.34, *N* = 54) in the posttest which represented Agreement. The results of the overall indicate that students from both groups tend to differ in their reading self-efficacy after receiving the treatment.

In addition to further analyzing the relationship between extensive reading and reading self-efficacy, content analysis was used to analyze the data from the reading logs and the semi-structured interviews. Students' reading logs were analyzed to explain how they achieved higher reading comprehension and reading self-efficacy, in terms of the ER framework of this study. In this study, students were able to select materials at their own level of language proficiency. There were 205 books provided for the program, almost all of which were graded books. Many students who participated in the program reported that the graded books were quite suitable for them, because they were neither too difficult to understand, nor too simple. According to the Reading Record, on average, each student read at least 10 books of short stories and 2 books of long stories. As a result of reading extensively in English, some students assumed that they could get a good grade in the future if they read in English as much as possible.

"These few weeks, I always spend 15 mins to 20 mins in reading each day, and I have read 14 books, short or long! Amazing!" (Low RSE student #25)

"Looking back at the last few weeks, I have read many books. When I read, I found that I still have a long way to go. But I can feel my reading ability has improved." (High RSE student #4)

Being exposed to ER contributed to gaining a faster reading speed. And reading speed at the appropriate rate had an impact on students' reading comprehension.

"After these weeks' reading, my pace of reading increased a lot. What's more, I can find out the main idea or theme of the passage more easily." (High RSE student #6)

"By reading, my reading speed can also be improved. Although I am still confused by some words, I can guess their meaning by understanding the plot of the story." (Low RSE student #24)

When encouraged to record the main idea or their understanding of what they read, all students were able to write a few sentences to conclude the stories. Many students also gained improvement in finding the main ideas and details, and inferencing respectively. It was also reported that ER not only helped students gain a larger vocabulary, but also provided them familiarity with a large number of words without having to memorize them.

"Recently, I found that I could understand the main idea of a book more clearly... Compared with last week, obviously, I read more clearly than before. It's very happy and exciting for me... I found that the words I didn't know were less and less, which makes me proud. Because it meant that I have expanded my vocabulary through reading." (High RSE student #25)

"At the same time, I also learned many new words from those books. I think it will not only be beneficial to us to expand our vocabulary but also to gain more knowledge." (Low RSE student #3)

Interesting and appropriate books facilitated students to learn something new about the people and things that interested them.

"I learned that you will get repaid if you help people in need with a real and warm heart." (High RSE student #23)

"Reading the book also makes me know more truth about life and more knowledge about English." (Low RSE student #3)

Some students also mentioned that the teacher played an important role in guiding them on how to read effectively.

"The teacher played an important role in guiding us. She always told us don't spend too much time on an unfamiliar word, we should read the whole article for general understanding." (Low RSE student # 11)

After participating in the program, many students from both groups mentioned that it boosted their confidence and willingness to read English books.

"I surprisingly found that my reading speed and skill have improved, which largely boosts my confidence." (High RSE student #4)

"I believe I can do better in the future if I insist on reading." (Low RSE student #8)

Based on the semi-structure interviews, the selection of interviewees was based on the results of the post reading self-efficacy questionnaire, and conducted in both English and Chinese. A total of six students, three from the high RSE group and three from the low RSE group, were invited to attend the interview.

Low RSE group – during the program, three low RSE students reported that they had read around 20 short story books under the guidance and encouragement of their teacher and classmates. When asked about their reading purposes, all of them mentioned that they want to improve their reading and writing abilities by reading various kinds of books.

"Huh...I want to improve my reading ability and read faster so that I could get a higher score in my English exams." (Student #1)

"The purpose is to improve the ability of writing." (Student #2)

"Aiming to learn phrases, I am sure it will improve my skill of reading and writing." (Student #3)

However, the language proficiency of low RSE students made it difficult for them to fully engage in L2 reading. Three students explained that while they could read shorter, easier books, they had difficulty understanding longer books. They made use of the pictures in the books as an aid when the language itself was too difficult and would try their best to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words.

"In the beginning, it made me frustrated and want to give up. Because it is my first time reading a whole book in English. But when I finished reading some rather short and interesting books, I felt a bit relaxed. Sometimes, it was a little bit difficult, but I didn't give up and regarded it as a challenge." (Low RSE Student #1)

However, while one student did not feel a great sense of improvement in specific reading ability, he said that his negative attitude and anxiety toward English had lessened. He felt proud and confident about reading in English, as he tried his best to read.

"Yes, it changed! When I read in English, I felt strange and proud. I don't know why. Maybe because normally we just read everything in Chinese. But in this program, I tried my best to read the whole book in English. And when I finished, I felt a sense of pride and confidence." (Low RSE Student #2)

High RSE group – under the guidance and encouragement of the teacher, three high RSE students reported they had read only about 10 books, almost half of which were long world-famous literature classics. When asked about their reading purposes, they had the same answers as the low RSE group. They expressed that they wanted to improve their reading and writing abilities and broaden their horizons via reading various topics of books. They also explained that they read books for pleasure and useful information. They had a positive attitude towards ER because they already enjoyed reading English books and thought of the program as a way of securing time.

"I can read whenever and wherever I am available, and I have great interest in reading what I like. That's amazing!" (Student #4)

"I would choose those books that appeal to me and can be used in my daily life." (Student #5)

"The books I chose were a bit higher than my current level so that I could have a chance to challenge myself." (Student #6)

Discussion

Extensive Reading and English Reading Comprehension

According to the results of mean scores on pre-and post-tests of English reading comprehension indicated that students with both low and high reading self-efficacy had significant

improvements in English reading comprehension through extensive reading. This is consistent with other studies in which extensive reading helps to improve reading comprehension (Gu & Lau, 2021; Suk, 2016; Sun, 2022).

Students who were exposed to rich comprehensible input through extensive reading developed reading fluency and comprehension. The selection of reading materials on a wide range of topics offered in the extensive reading support vocabulary knowledge, improve reading skills through extensive reading practices. More importantly, extensive reading could be a viable solution to support the lives of students who only read English texts in schools. At the initial stage, both groups of students needed the teacher's help in selecting books, determining their reading proficiency levels, and sharing their thoughts. However, as the intervention proceeded, students with high reading self-efficacy could choose the books and decided how much to read per day more independently, while some students with low reading self-efficacy still needed the teacher's guidance. Results from this study were similar to Sun's study (2022) in which the effectiveness of the extensive reading program was influenced to a great extent by teachers' scaffolding in the design of extensive reading. Thus, it can be inferred that teachers played an important role in guiding students to read extensively.

Extensive Reading and Reading Self-efficacy

Based on the results from the descriptive analysis, the mean scores on the post reading self-efficacy questionnaire of Chinese EFL students with low and high reading self-efficacy were higher than their pretest mean scores. This indicated that participants' reading self-efficacy improved after participating in the ER program. The results of the reading self-efficacy questionnaire showed that students with both low and high reading self-efficacy were motivated to read English extensively. These findings support previous research that extensive reading influences reading self-efficacy (Burrows, 2013).

In this study, students received two 45-minute ER sessions per week for 12 weeks in which they were asked to read extensively both inside and outside the classroom. The program consisted of 205 books, and students were free to choose which books they wanted to read. The free choice of books engaged the students. As students' abilities improved, so did their confidence in reading in English. As a result, in this study, students read an average of at least 10 short stories as well as 2 full-length novels. These findings suggested that there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and English reading comprehension, which means increased self-efficacy increases students' reading ability, and having higher reading ability increases students' reading self-efficacy. These results are consistent with Bandura's (1997) view that self-efficacy is an influential predictor of achievement. Particularly in the EFL setting, these findings are also supported by previous studies (Ro, 2016; Soilheim 2011) whose findings showed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and reading ability.

The overall experiences of Chinese EFL students with low and high reading self-efficacy were similar. However, there were also differences in the reading self-efficacy of Chinese EFL students. For students with low reading self-efficacy, although they tried their best to read and guess the meanings of vocabulary, it was difficult for them to be fully engaged in reading because of their limitation of vocabulary knowledge and language proficiency. They preferred to do extensive reading under the guidance of the teacher. These reading experiences more or less led to their less positive perceptions toward English at the beginning of the extensive reading intervention. But as the instruction progressed, their feelings and perceptions changed. Although they felt that they had not improved particularly much in their real reading skills, they were generally able to continue through each novel and were able to get the main idea of the text correctly. Therefore, students with low reading self-efficacy thought extensive reading was a good experience and a preferable approach to learning English. Students with high reading self-efficacy viewed their reading as for pleasure and enjoyment. These students also showed a steady interest in the books they chose to read, and they independently read more difficult and longer books as part of their extensive reading intervention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effects of extensive reading on the reading comprehension of students with different reading self-efficacy. The study concluded that students with different reading self-efficacy improved their English reading comprehension after participating in the study. The findings revealed that students' experiences in reading varied depending on their reading self-efficacy. Furthermore, the sense of achievement experienced by the students was also different for each reading self-efficacy group. Students with low reading self-efficacy thought extensive reading was a good experience and a preferable approach to learning English. Students with high reading self-efficacy believed that ER helped develop their reading skills and willingness to read more advanced books. Thus, the study is meaningful in suggesting a way of improving reading self-efficacy for students in the Chinese EFL context. Second, though students of different reading self-efficacy groups experienced ER differently, all students positively perceived ER.

The results of this study suggest two pedagogical implications. First, the combination of extensive reading and reading self-efficacy in traditional English courses. Second, the concerns of Chinese EFL reading teachers and educators.

In future studies, researchers could extend the duration of the ER program for a more reliable outcome. Second, there could also include a control group to better understand ER's effect on reading self-efficacy, as the current study did not compare experimental and control groups.

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