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# MReader and Extensive Reading: An Overview of Research and Practice

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the role of MReader, an online platform designed to facilitate extensive reading in second language acquisition, specifically within the context of Japanese high school education. Extensive reading, which emphasizes reading large quantities of material for comprehension rather than linguistic accuracy, is presented as a solution to the overemphasis on grammar-translation methods traditionally used in Japanese secondary schools. The paper discusses the benefits of extensive reading, such as improved reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency. It also examines the practical applications of MReader, which provides students with graded readers and tracks their progress, enhancing accountability and motivation. Research findings demonstrate the positive effects of extensive reading on L2 proficiency, with MReader offering an accessible and engaging tool for promoting learner autonomy. Despite challenges, such as selecting appropriate materials and ensuring consistent reading habits, the paper concludes that extensive reading, supported by platforms like MReader, can significantly enhance language learning outcomes.*

**Keywords—** MReader, Extensive reading, Reading fluency.

## I. INTRODUCTION

For many high school students in Japan, a key academic goal is gaining admission to a university of their choice. An essential component of university entrance exams is the English reading comprehension section (Inomori, 2012). To prepare for this section, the grammar-translation method is commonly used in English classrooms (Hino, 1988). In this method, accuracy is paramount, and as a result, reading instruction during the six years of secondary school in Japan focuses heavily on precision. Students are trained to read slowly and carefully, translating passages into Japanese. This emphasis on accuracy aligns with the format of university entrance exams, which test reading comprehension with sufficient time for students to read and translate passages (Waring, 2011). However, the long-standing focus on accurate translation techniques has led to a neglect of reading fluency in Japanese secondary education (Yamashita,

2008). Extensive reading could address this issue by encouraging students to read at a pace that moves beyond the constraints of the grammar-translation approach (Furukawa, 2010).

Extensive reading is a method of language learning that encourages learners to read large amounts of material in the target language, with a focus on comprehension rather than linguistic accuracy or the intensive study of individual words. Over the past few decades, extensive reading has gained significant attention in the second language (L2) learning community for its potential benefits in improving reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency. This paper explores the role of MReader, an online platform designed to facilitate extensive reading, and examines the broader context and research findings related to extensive reading in L2 classrooms. Drawing from the work of key scholars in the field, such as Day and Bamford (1998, 2005), Nation (1997, 2015), and

others, this article investigates the efficacy of MReader and extensive reading in promoting language learning, focusing on key benefits and challenges as well as the practical applications for educators and learners alike.

### 1. Concepts and Benefits of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading involves learners reading large quantities of text in the target language, typically at their level of proficiency, to increase exposure and improve overall reading skills. According to Day and Bamford (1998), extensive reading can be particularly effective in the second language classroom because it encourages reading for pleasure and helps learners develop a sense of autonomy in their language learning process. Extensive reading contrasts with intensive reading, which focuses on in-depth analysis of short passages, grammar rules, and vocabulary. In contrast, extensive reading promotes fluency, increases vocabulary retention, and provides learners with a more holistic understanding of the language. As Nation (1997) points out, extensive reading plays a crucial role in incidental vocabulary learning, as learners encounter words in context, reinforcing their meaning through repetition.

One of the primary advantages of extensive reading is its ability to improve learners' reading speed and comprehension. By reading a variety of texts, learners can internalize language structures and vocabulary naturally, which often leads to enhanced reading fluency. Moreover, extensive reading also promotes learners' motivation to engage with the language in a more enjoyable and relaxed manner (Powell, 2005). As learners become more confident in their reading abilities, they are more likely to continue their engagement with the language, further contributing to language development (Waring, 2011).

## II. THE ROLE OF MREADER IN EXTENSIVE READING

MReader is an online platform that supports extensive reading by providing learners with access to a large database of graded readers and tracking their progress. The platform allows learners to select books based on their level and interests, encouraging them to read at their own pace. One of the key features of MReader is its ability to monitor learners' reading habits and assess their comprehension through quizzes that follow each reading. This immediate feedback helps

learners gauge their understanding of the material and motivates them to continue reading.

One of the challenges of teaching English as a second or foreign language is maintaining student motivation, particularly in reading, where it can be difficult for teachers to assess how effectively students are engaging with the material. Although research highlights the many benefits of extensive reading, there are two key concerns for educators considering its use, either inside or outside the classroom.

The first concern is how to ensure students are truly reading and not just skimming (Robb & Kano, 2013). The second is managing classroom time effectively (Day & Bamford, 1998). MReader offers a practical solution to both of these issues. To assess whether students are genuinely reading, teachers could have students read the same book and then administer an in-class quiz to test comprehension. However, this approach is time-consuming for both teachers and students, and creating quizzes for each book can be burdensome. MReader alleviates these challenges by allowing teachers to track student progress in real-time, eliminating the need for time-consuming book reports or reviews. Additionally, MReader is affordable, free for academic institutions, and accessible, as students can take quizzes on their smartphones or devices. It is also motivating, as students receive instant feedback on their quiz results. Extensive reading further addresses the challenge of mixed proficiency levels in the classroom by allowing students to choose materials that match their individual English levels.

According to Truscott (2017), MReader offers several advantages, such as personalized reading choices, easy accessibility, and the ability to track learners' progress. Learners can choose books from a wide range of genres and difficulty levels, making the reading experience more enjoyable and suited to individual preferences. Additionally, the system's feedback mechanism allows teachers to monitor students' reading progress, which is essential for ensuring that learners are consistently engaged in reading and making measurable progress in their language skills.

MReader also supports the development of autonomous learners. As Day and Bamford (2005) suggest, autonomy is crucial in language learning, as it enables learners to take charge of their learning process. By using MReader, students are encouraged to

take responsibility for their own reading habits, selecting books that interest them and reading at their own pace. This autonomy fosters a sense of ownership and motivation, which is essential for sustained language learning. MReader enhances accountability in extensive reading by verifying that students are actively reading and showing sufficient understanding of the books (Truscott, 2017).

### III. LITERATURE ON EXTENSIVE READING AND MREADER

Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of extensive reading on L2 proficiency. Robb and Kano (2013) conducted a large-scale experiment examining the effectiveness of extensive reading outside the classroom. Their findings suggest that extensive reading not only enhances vocabulary knowledge but also improves overall language skills, such as reading comprehension and writing fluency. Furthermore, studies have shown that learners who engage in extensive reading are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward reading and the language in general (Tanemura, 2020).

Leung (2002) conducted a diary study of a beginning learner of Japanese and found that extensive reading significantly contributed to the learner's language development, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. The learner reported enjoying the reading process, which motivated them to continue reading outside of the classroom. This finding aligns with the views of Day and Bamford (2000), who emphasize that motivating reluctant readers is a key factor in promoting successful extensive reading practices. By providing learners with materials that are both accessible and enjoyable, extensive reading programs like MReader can help foster a positive attitude toward language learning.

The connection between extensive reading and vocabulary acquisition is well-established in the literature. Nation (1997) argues that vocabulary acquisition is a natural by-product of extensive reading, as learners encounter new words in context and reinforce their understanding through repeated exposure. This incidental learning process is particularly beneficial because it allows learners to acquire words that are relevant to their interests and needs, rather than focusing on isolated vocabulary lists. Nassaji and Chung (2014) support this view, suggesting that reading in context is one of the most effective ways to acquire vocabulary in a second language.

Moreover, the extensive reading approach has been shown to contribute to improvements in other areas of language proficiency, such as listening, speaking, and writing (Yamashita, 2008). As learners read more in the target language, they become more familiar with sentence structures, grammar, and writing styles, which helps them produce more accurate and natural language in both written and spoken communication. This holistic approach to language development is one of the key benefits of extensive reading, as it allows learners to improve multiple language skills simultaneously.

### IV. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Despite the numerous benefits of extensive reading, there are challenges that must be addressed when implementing it in L2 classrooms. One common challenge is ensuring that learners have access to appropriate reading materials. While MReader offers a wide selection of graded readers, it is essential for teachers to ensure that the books available match the learners' proficiency levels and interests. If the material is too difficult or not engaging, learners may become frustrated or disengaged from the reading process. As Waring (2011) notes, it is crucial that students read materials that are both enjoyable and within their language capabilities, as this will help sustain their motivation to continue reading.

Another challenge is promoting regular reading habits among students. While MReader tracks learners' progress, it is important for teachers to encourage consistent reading outside of the classroom. This can be particularly challenging in contexts where learners have limited time or access to reading materials. To overcome this, teachers can incorporate reading goals, class discussions, and other motivational strategies to encourage students to engage in regular reading practices (Takase, 2008).

Additionally, some learners may experience anxiety or discomfort when reading in a second language, especially if they are not confident in their reading abilities. As Day and Bamford (1998) suggest, it is important for teachers to create a supportive and non-threatening environment where learners feel comfortable reading at their own pace. MReader's feedback mechanism, which allows learners to monitor their progress without the fear of judgment, can help alleviate some of this anxiety and encourage students to continue reading.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, extensive reading is a powerful tool for second language acquisition, with numerous benefits for vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, and overall language proficiency. MReader, as an online platform designed to facilitate extensive reading, provides learners with a convenient and engaging way to practice reading in the target language while offering teachers a valuable tool for monitoring progress. Research supports the effectiveness of extensive reading in improving various aspects of language learning, and platforms like MReader can enhance learner autonomy and motivation. While there are challenges to implementing extensive reading, particularly in terms of selecting appropriate materials and promoting consistent reading habits, the potential benefits for L2 learners make extensive reading a valuable practice in language education. Further research on the impact of MReader and extensive reading in different contexts will continue to provide insights into how best to leverage these approaches to support language learners' development.

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