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THE IMPACT OF EXTENSIVE READING STRATEGY ON DEVELOPING SAUDI EFL GRADE NINE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Naji Hamid Alenezi^{1*}

¹Associate professor of curricula and instruction College of Education, Al-Majmaah University, Email:
naj.alenezi@mu.edu.sa Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5354-1255>

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Corresponding Author: Naji Hamid Alenezi
(naj.alenezi@mu.edu.sa)

ABSTRACT

The current study explored the impact of using extensive reading strategy on developing the FL reading comprehension skills among 62 Saudi EFL grade nine students enrolled in Al-Majmaah based school. They were divided into two groups with thirty-one students each. The two groups were assigned in this quasi-experimental study into a control group and an experimental group. Collection of data relied on three instruments, namely pre-and-posttests of reading comprehension skills, and a questionnaire of experimental students' assessment of using extensive reading strategy. Inferential statistics was employed to assess the posttest performance of the two tested groups, determine statistically significant differences between two groups' performance, and compute the effect size for the two tested instruction methods. Qualitative analysis described the two groups' performance in the reading comprehension skills pre-and-posttests and analyzed the experimental groups' responses to the assessment questionnaire of using the extensive reading strategy. Findings asserted the supremacy of experimental group in the posttest; the effectiveness of extensive reading strategy compared to regular method in learning FL reading comprehension skills and the experimental students' positive assessment of tested extensive reading strategy.

KEYWORDS: Extensive Reading Strategy, FL Reading Comprehension Skills, Saudi EFL Students, FL Performance, Implications.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension skills cover a wide range of abilities which FL learners should possess to effectively handle reading texts. There are concerns of the EFL learners' reading comprehension proficiency attributed to limited reading practices and experiences, the focus on understanding literal meaning of words and text, and limited exposure to challenging reading texts which develop students' metacognitive skills. Strong (2024) explained that all these concerns can negatively contribute to poor performance in FL reading tasks and lead to low levels of reading proficiency, accuracy, understanding and critical thinking skills. The EFL learners' academic progress and learning outcomes can be adversely affected as well.

Iwata (2022) clarified that one of the most influential reading strategies in learning reading comprehension skills among EFL learners is extensive reading. According to Lakhdari, Makhoulouf and AL-Qaisi (2024), it is widely acknowledged as an effective student-focused strategy which contributes to the development of reading comprehension skills and promotion of students' linguistic competence, motivation and attitudes towards learning FL reading.

Do and Le Thu Phan (2021) emphasized that extensive reading has importantly vital role in FL learning process. It improves students' reading proficiency and accuracy since they are engaged in constant reading practices. It eventually decreases students' dependence on decoding literal meanings of words. It sustains learning of FL vocabulary through repeated exposure to contextually embedded meaningful vocabulary. It helps students to realize internalized absorption of vocabulary which develops their FL communicative production including the use of grammar, writing and speaking

skills.

Conversely, Banditvilai (2020) pointed out that employing aspects of regular method such as Grammar-Translation method (GTM) in teaching and learning reading comprehension skills is no longer fruitful. For instance, the partial or full employment of GTM exists in the Saudi EFL context such as memorization of vocabulary lists, using Arabic equivalents for the English vocabulary, applying Arabic sentence structure rules and translating the whole reading text into Arabic to ensure full understanding. According to Okasha (2020), these aspects negatively affect the development of reading comprehension skills among Saudi EFL learners in general.

In the context of Saudi EFL grade nine level; there is a need for further exploration of Saudi students' English language proficiency, accuracy, and semantic and syntactic knowledge. Therefore, it was necessary to explore the impact of using extensive reading strategy on developing the reading comprehension skills of Saudi grade nine students.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Contextually, a pilot study was conducted to test the FL reading comprehension skills of twenty Saudi EFL grade nine students. The results showed the participants' reading skills incompetency reflecting very poor performance. The results indicate the top-down arrangement of reading compression skills which require improvement. The top-down arrangement respectively includes inference of new knowledge (85%), critical evaluation (83%), textual structure (80%), vocabulary (79%), recognizing details (78%), summarization (77%), skimming and scanning (76%), identifying main ideas (75%), and making inferences (73%).

Table 1: Pilot Study Results.

Skills	Percentage of performance	Percentage of Required improvement
Identifying main ideas	25	75
Recognizing details	22	78
making references	27	73
Vocabulary	21	79
textual structure	20	80
Summarization	23	77
Critical evaluation	17	83
Skimming and scanning	24	76
Inference of new knowledge	15	85

Therefore, the present study explored the impact of using extensive reading strategy to develop FL reading comprehension skills at the Saudi EFL context. It examined the effect of employing

extensive reading strategy on developing Saudi grade nine EFL students' reading comprehension skills. It verified the statistically significant effectiveness of using extensive reading strategy

versus the regular method of (GTM) in developing the participants' reading comprehension skills. It explored the experimental students' opinions about the effectiveness of using extensive reading strategy for developing their reading comprehension skills.

1.2. Questions

The present study intended to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the impact of extensive reading strategy on developing Saudi EFL grade nine students' reading comprehension skills?
2. What is the statistically significant difference between the two groups' posttest performance?
3. How do the experimental students assess the utilization of extensive reading strategy for developing their reading comprehension skills?

1.3. Hypotheses

The present study sought verification of the following null hypotheses:

1. The extensive reading strategy does not contribute to the development of the experimental participants' reading comprehension skills.
2. The effectiveness of extensive reading strategy and regular method is not a statistically significant contributor to the development of participants' reading comprehension skills.
3. The experimental students negatively viewed the effectiveness of extensive reading strategy.

1.4. Aims

Below are the aims of the current study:

1. Identification of the extensive reading strategy and regular method impact in developing the participants' reading comprehension skills.
2. Determination of the statistically significant difference between the two groups' posttest performance.
3. Computing the effect size of both methods' effectiveness.
4. Exploring the experimental students' opinions about the effectiveness of extensive reading strategy.

1.5. Significance Of the Study

The current study is significant as it is compatible with the objectives of 2030 vision which asserts the importance of enhancing the English proficiency levels among Saudi EFL grade nine students. Significance of the present study is mainly related to

its contribution to the FL learning strategy in the Saudi context. It threw some lights on usefully required strategy that can be implemented to elevate English reading skills among Saudi EFL students. Extensive reading strategy can crucially reshape the conceptualization and implementation of reading skills. The current study is useful for FL syllabus planning in the Saudi context as it changes students' attention to meaning, accuracy and enjoyment. It urged FL curriculum planning to combine a balanced approach by combining extensive reading strategy along with other regular strategies. It called for flexibility of FL syllabus by allowing grade nine students to select reading topics of interest which meet their learning needs and suit their proficiency levels. The present study gave priority to students' engagement and autonomous learning. It guides FL syllabus design to allocate independent reading activities monitored by reflective tools. It also asserts the important role of Saudi educational policymakers who are in charge of providing necessary support for the successful implementation of such strategy. Through the endorsement of extensive reading, Saudi policymakers can handle various challenges including how low reading proficiency can lead to low students' engagement in FL reading activities.

1.6. Dedinition Of Terms

1.6.1. Reading Comprehension Skills

According to Guo et al. (2024), reading comprehension is a construct of complex multi-dimension skills. It requires EFL learners to turn the reading text into a tangible representative situation or coherent mental model. Thus, EFL learners are expected to appropriately utilize different text cues including punctuation marks, exact meanings of words, idioms and exert full understanding of different types of sentence structure. Students are also expected to construct meaning by relying on their background knowledge, connecting sentences through inference, relating the reading text to other similar incidents and events. In the present study, reading comprehension skills include identification on textual main ideas, recognition of supporting details, making references, comprehension of the vocabulary contextual meaning, comprehension of textual structure, summarization, critical evaluation, skimming and scanning, and inference of new knowledge

1.6.2. Extensive Reading Strategy

Sugita (2016) defined extensive reading as a strategy intentionally aims to realize the development of reading habits among EFL learners.

It sustains students' knowledge of English vocabulary and sentence structure. Thus, it reinforces students' comprehension of the semantic and syntactic features of English reading texts. The present study employed extensive reading strategy as a learning tool to develop the Saudi EFL grade nine students' reading comprehension skills including proficiency, accuracy, semantic and syntactic knowledge of English reading texts.

1.6.3. Delimitations

The present study was delimited to the following:

1. FL reading comprehension skills
2. Extensive reading strategy
3. Saudi EFL grade nine students in Al-Majmaah province.
4. First term of the school year 2025-2026
5. Pre-and-posttest of reading comprehension skills
6. A questionnaire of experimental students' assessment of using extensive reading strategy

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kawakita (2023) conducted a longitudinal study to explore the impact of using extensive reading on developing the reading comprehension skills of nine Japanese students throughout three stage, namely elementary, junior and senior high schools. Data were collected through teacher's observation over the three stages and an interview of six students. Data analysis relied on students' reading corpus and records. The observation showed earlier development of students' reading skills when they were at grades seven and nine. The extensive reading also sustained the participants' knowledge of FL vocabulary as they used to freely select different reading materials including books and other relevant materials. Due to extensive reading, the participants managed to sustain their self-confidence and vary their reading preferences. The interview revealed that extensive reading is a positively motivating strategy that reinforced the participants' motivation towards FL reading activities including English books. Extensive reading supported the participants' dynamic motive towards English in general.

Katamba and Tomatala (2024) examined the effect of providing extensive reading instruction to overcome reading difficulties among Indonesian EFL primary school students. In this quasi-experimental study, Katamba and Tomatala formed two groups of participants including a control group and an experimental group. The former group was traditionally taught FL reading comprehension using L1 translation as a main medium of understanding

the reading comprehension along with memorization of FL vocabulary. However, the latter group studied reading comprehension through the extensive reading materials. Data were collected through the pre-and-posttest research design and perception questionnaire. The participants were tested individually and in groups. The findings showed better improvement of the experimental students' reading comprehension skills compared to those of the control group. The experimental students also expressed positive and moderate opinions about extensive reading which sustained their vocabulary and reinforced their motivation to learn English. The study asserted the importance of applying extensive reading to improve the primary school students' reading comprehension skills at an early learning stage.

Al-Hawamdeh (2025) conducted a qualitative study to examine difficulties of reading comprehension among 107 Saudi EFL tertiary students at Prince Sattam Bin Abdul Aziz University. Data were elicited on the basis of an open-ended questionnaire. The participants related the main reading difficulty to their poor English vocabulary which impedes their understanding of the reading text. They explained that they are rarely exposed to English vocabulary which makes difficult for them to be familiar with different patterns of English sentence structure. The participants also accounted their poor English vocabulary to their inability to correctly pronounce various English words. As such they became less motivated to study reading comprehension. They also expressed frustration because of being contextually unable to match multiple meanings of certain words with the reading text. As a result, the participants had problems with summarizing the reading texts. Al-Hawamdeh asserted the importance of developing the participants' cognitive skills by employing eclectic strategy with full repetition of reading exercises. Deductive teaching of reading comprehension is more suitable for EFL classrooms as it supports students' understanding and cognition during and after reading the target text. Deductive teaching sustains students' ability to imagine and visualize events contained in the reading texts. Thus, students can infer information that supports their daily communication skills. Deductive teaching can reinforce students' engagement in the pre-reading stage because it sustains their text skimming and scanning skills.

Aydawati *et al.* (2025) examined the effectiveness of utilizing innovative technology-based extensive reading in developing the Indonesian EFL learners'

metacognitive skills. The study aimed to sustain students' interaction, autonomy, and learning of English vocabulary. The study involved EFL learners participating in technology-supported extensive reading programs. Instead of focusing on classroom experiment, the study analyzed the arrangements of learners' interaction with the classroom environment. Data were collected by using different instruments. A questionnaire was used to measure participants' autonomy and the use of technology. Assessments of vocabulary learning pre-and-posttests were also employed. Classroom observations were adopted to explore the participants' engagement with the vocabulary learning provided through the advanced-technology based extensive reading instruction. Aydawati et al. found that extensive reading had significant contribution to sustain students' learning of English vocabulary. It promoted their active engagement extensive reading activities which enhanced the development of their acquired vocabulary. Technology also contributed to the enhancement of the extensive reading effectiveness. It also sustained the participants' autonomous learning ability and allowed them to monitor their learning progress.

Campbell suggested several implications for using the extensive reading strategy to provide instruction to EFL learners. The strategy can supplement classroom instruction for the purpose of increasing students' exposure to meaningful inputs. The EFL students should be allowed to choose and expand reading materials which are suitable to their interests and proficiency levels. Campbell emphasized that extensive reading can be blended with digital tools to promote students' understanding of the reading texts and enhance their metacognitive reading skills. Therefore, the EFL teachers should encourage students' reading habits by regularly giving them independent reading opportunities. Through extensive reading activities, the EFL teachers should assess students' understanding, reflection, and engagement in the reading texts instead of relying the traditional methods features of word retention and literal translation of every word.

Ilyas and Istaryatiningtias (2025) investigated the effect of incorporating both extensive and intensive reading strategy to develop critical reading skills of 19 university Indonesian students. Being a qualitative study, the collection of data relied on classroom observation during 14 reading sessions, interview and students' reflection. Data were thematically analyzed for the purpose of systematic interpretation. The observation findings showed that

participants had difficulty in selecting, understanding and critically analyze the reading texts. The incorporation of extensive and intensive reading strategy vitally contributed to the enhancement of participants' motivation, comprehension skills, and critical analysis. The participants became more confident during the discussions of reading comprehension contents. They exerted better improvement in connecting ideas and inferring information from the reading texts. Ilyas and Istaryatiningtias concluded that the two tested strategy significantly contributed to the participants' critical reading skills. Ilyas and Istaryatiningtias emphasize the importance of adopting a balanced approach which combines both extensive and intensive reading strategy to sustain the participants' critical thinking skills. Educational policymakers and curriculum designers were advised to include reading materials based on the utilization of extensive and intensive reading strategies.

Taye and Teshome (2025) quantitatively explored the impact of using extensive reading strategy to improve reading comprehension skills of 36 Ethiopian EFL undergraduates. Data were mainly elicited through the pre-and-posttests of reading comprehension skills along with an assessment questionnaire of the participants' preferences to be taught English reading comprehension skills by using the extensive reading strategy. After the pretest, the purposive sample of participants attended a month training program to sustain their reading comprehension skills through applying extensive reading strategy to independently selected literary reading texts. Taye and Teshome found that the extensive reading strategy effectively contributed to the significant development of participants' reading comprehension skills. Taye and Teshome recommended the integration of extensive reading strategy into EFL classrooms to sustain students' proficiency and accuracy of understanding the English reading texts. Taye and Teshome urged EFL instructors to pay their students' attention to the benefits of using extensive reading practices. The researchers also urged EFL instructors to utilize literary texts for improving the students' reading comprehension skills. They asserted the importance of using extensive reading strategy as a feasibly real instructional approach that can significantly improve the EFL learners' reading abilities.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The current experimental study employed the

mixed quantitative and qualitative method (e.g. Tashakkori et al. 2020, Marghany, 2023, Kheang, 2024, Creswell, and Poth, 2025). The quantitative analysis relied on descriptive mean scores and standard deviation statistics. It also conducted the inferential statistics of paired samples and independent samples t-tests to analysis the two groups' pre-and-posttests performance. Additionally, the effect size was computed to determine the effectiveness of both tested instruction methods. Qualitative analysis focused on the description of experimental students' responses to the 21-item attitude questionnaire.

3.2. Participants

The participants are 62 Saudi EFL grade nine students enrolled in Al-Majmaah based middle school. The range of their age lies between 14-15 years old. They all studied English in the local public schools and represent the output of instructional methods adopted in the Saudi EFL context. The study was conducted during the first term of the school year 2025-2026. The limitation of using only 62 students is justified due to the following reasons. The sample size of 62 students is suitable for the main objective of the present study. The study was only

restricted to investigate extensive reading strategy and did not include other instructional strategies. The investigation was only limited to the short-term period and did not extend beyond the intervention period. The study was also restricted to only one grade (i.e. grade nine) instead of having all grades in the school. Thus, it was logical to selected participants from only grade nine instead of all grades in the secondary school.

3.3. Procedures

The procedures are mainly based on the administration of the pretest and posttest of reading comprehension skills during the first term of the school year 2025-2026. The control and experimental groups were created with thirty students each. Whereas the control group studied reading comprehension skills by using the regular method of Grammar-Translation, the experimental students were trained to master these skills by utilizing the extensive reading strategies. The intervention training program lasted for ten weeks. Table 2 provides an example of lesson plan of utilizing extensive reading strategy to develop the experimental students' reading comprehension skills

3.4. Lesson Plan of Extensive Reading Strategy

Table 2: Lesson Plan of Extensive Reading Strategy.

Items	Description
Grade	Nine
Subject/ Setting	English/ EFL classroom
Duration	45minutes
Strategy	Extensive reading
Focused Skills	Reading comprehension skills
Objectives	By the lesson end, students will develop: - Accuracy and independence in reading the text. - Identification of the main ideas. - Inference of unfamiliar vocabulary meaning. - Holding discussions to show comprehension of the reading text. - Developing positive attitude towards learning FL reading.
Materials	- Textbooks - Excerpts from magazines, reports, etc. - Reading sheets - Board and markers - Students' selected reading texts
Stages	
Pre-reading	1. Brainstorming: - What do you think about reading stories? - What types of stories do you like to read? 2. Introducing two or three key words of the reading text. 3. Avoiding details of vocabulary explanation
While-reading	1. Silent extensive reading. 2. Teacher monitors and supports students 3. Teacher asks students to guess meaning from the text. 4. Avoidance of reading flow interruption
Post-reading	1. Checking comprehension through questions about main ideas, characters, and events of the story. 2. Pair discussion of the story. 3. Reading logs such as title suggestion, synonyms, short summary, opinions, etc.
Class feedback	Teacher encourages general group discussion, opinion exchange, critical evaluation and collaborative learning

Assessment	Formative assessment is based on observation, discussion engagement, and writing logs
Homework	Home reading text assignment

A multi-stage process was employed to verify the validity of the three used data collection instruments. Item pool specifications were developed on the basis of the present study's objectives and revision of the literature studies. To verify the face and content validity, a jury of three TEFL experts reviewed the instruments. After computing the content validity indices of item-level and scale level, some unacceptable items were removed. The three instruments were modified in accordance with the three experts' feedback. The three instruments were separately piloted using a sample of 20 Saudi grade nine students to assess the validity and reliability of data collection instruments. For the two tests, indices

of item difficulty were computed. Thus, some items were modified while others were discarded. For the questionnaire, the exploratory factor analysis was employed for the verification of factor structure. The *Average Variance Extracted* and *Composite Reliability* were used to assess the convergent validity. These procedures confirmed that final instruments attained satisfactory construct, content and validity. The three instruments were modified in accordance with the three experts' feedback. The reliability coefficients of the Cronbach' Alpha were also computed for the three instruments indicating high reliability as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Coefficients of the Three Instruments.

Instruments	Reliability coefficients
Pretest	.90
Posttest	.91
Attitude questionnaire	.88

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The reading comprehension pre-and-posttests were developed based on the intensive review of previous studies such as Li et al. (2022), Adora et al., (2024), Katemba and Tomatala (2024) and Kim (2024) (Appendices A & B). The test assessed the development of participants' ability to understand contextual vocabulary, infer meaning of new words, identify textual details and main ideas, comprehend the semantic and syntactic textual features, and read fluently and accurately. The test was scored out of fifty marks and consists of a reading comprehension passage, different types of comprehension questions, vocabulary selection questions, and short-response questions.

The 21-item questionnaire of experimental students' attitudes towards utilizing extensive reading strategy was constructed according to the review of certain studies such as Iwata (2022), Mulatu and Regassa (2022), Yeari and Avramovich (2022), and Mekuria et al., (2024) (Appendix C). It consists of five sections, namely general attitudes (1-4 items),

perception of improvement (5-8 items), development of English vocabulary (9-11 items), Evaluation of extensive reading strategy (12-16 items), and reading challenges (17-21 items). It is constructed on the basis of 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Neutral (N=3), Strongly Agree (SA=4), and Agree (A=5).

3.6. Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis was conducted for comparing the two groups' pre-and-posttest performance in the reading comprehension skills. The paired samples t-test determined the improvement in the two groups' posttest performance. The independent samples t-test was employed to detect statistically significant differences between the two groups' pre-and-posttest performance.

The pretest performance indicated poor reading comprehension skills of the two tested groups as shown in the descriptive statistics introduced in Table 4.

Table 4: Pretest Descriptive Statistics.

Tested groups	M	SD	N	Minimum score	Maximum score
Control pretest	1.7402	2.61602	31	13.00	23.00
Control posttest	11.7205	7.41946	31	25.00	32.00
Experimental pretest	1.6543	1.83021	31	13.00	24.00
Experimental posttest	24.9371	5.73104	31	30.00	48.00
Valid N (Likewise)			31		

Table 5 shows extremely higher improvement of the experimental students' reading comprehension

skills in the posttest performance compared to that of the control group. It also indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the two groups' posttest performance in favor of the experimental students. In other words, the experimental students had largely developed their reading comprehension skills vis-à-vis their control group counterparts. The large development the experimental students' reading comprehension skills is attributed to the utilization of extensive reading strategies. However, the use of regular method instruction had limited improvement in the control

group's reading comprehension skills. The findings lead to the rejection of the first two null hypotheses as the experimental students had highly outperformed the control group in the posttest performance indicating statistically significant difference in developing their reading comprehension skills. The findings are compatible with those reported by Kawakita (2023), Katemba and Tomatala (2024), Al-Hawamdeh (2025) Ilyas and Istaryatiningtias (2025), and Taye and Teshome (2025).

Table 5: The Paired Samples T-Test Results.

Tested groups	M	SD	df.	t-value	Sig.
Control pretest	1.7402	2.61602	30	8.533	0.005
Control posttest	11.7205	7.41946	30		
Experimental pretest	1.6543	1.83021	30	19.482	0.000
Experimental posttest	24.9371	5.73104	30		

Tables 6 & 7 underscore the higher effectiveness associated with the use of extensive reading strategy in developing reading comprehension skills compared to the utilization of the regular method of Grammar-Translation. Table 6 introduces the independent samples t-test results which computed the gained mean scores of both tested groups. The

experimental students gained mean score (23.28) was largely higher than that of the control group (9.98) showing statistically significant difference as the p value was < 0.000. In addition, the control group's higher gained standard (4.80) than that of the experimental group (3.90) showing more variance in their reading comprehension skills.

Table 6: The Independent Samples T-Test Results.

Groups	N	Gained mean score	SD	df.	t-value	Sig.
Control	31	9.98	4.80	30	10.949	0.000
Experimental	31	23.28	3.90	30		

Table 7 also computes the effect size resulted from using the two methods to develop reading comprehension skills of both groups. It indicates shows extremely high statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group since Cohen's D= .9 and $P < 0.005$. Therefore, the findings reject the third null hypothesis that both instruction method have equal effectiveness. The findings are in agreement with those reported by Li et al. (2022), Adora et al., (2024), Katemba and Tomatala (2024) and Kim (2024). Li et al. recommended the

integration of extensive reading strategy into EFL curriculum to promote ling term development. Adora et al., recommended that eFL teachers should rely on the extensive reading strategy to provide learners with self-reading opportunities. Katemba and Tomatala recommended that extensive reading strategy should be combined with activities of collaborative learning to maximize students' interactions. Kim reported that extensive reading should be blended with digital tools to achieve the effective development of EFL students' reading skills.

Table 7: Effect Size.

Item	Control group		Experimental group		T (62)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Maximum proportion	9.98	4.80	23.28	3.90	8.46	0.000	.9

4. RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 8 introduces the experimental students' highly positive responses to receive extensive reading strategy-based instruction for learning FL reading comprehensions skills. They

overwhelmingly expressed highly positive attitudes towards the extensive reading strategy as a source of enjoyable learning which increased their interest and motivation to learn reading comprehension skills compared to regular methods. The experimental

students expressed high perception of improvement as it facilitated their comprehension of the reading texts without reliance of Arabic translation and sustained their ability to guess meanings of unfamiliar words. The extensive strategy enriched their FL vocabulary size, made remembrance of newly learned words easier, and enabled them to use that vocabulary in different sentence patterns. They highly evaluated extensive strategy as they were free to choose suitable reading texts, teachers allocated times for reading during the classrooms and rendered help whenever needed. The strategy helped to facilitated reading difficulties such as vocabulary, textual understanding and having interesting reading materials. The findings are

consistent with those of Mulatu and Regassa (2022), Yeari and Avramovich (2022), and Mekuria et al., (2024). Mulatu and Regassa found that extensive reading strategy is an effective learner-centered approach which supports EFL learners' autonomous learning through exposure to meaningful texts and practice of authentic reading. Yeari and Avramovich found that extensive reading strategy sustained the EFL learners' ability to understand reading texts through the improvement of their strategic processing ability. Mekuria et al., reported that the combination of extensive reading with an explicit strategy effectively contributed to the development of EFL learners' critical thinking and other language skills.

Table 8: Experimental Students' Responses to The Questionnaire Items.

Questionnaire sections	Strong agreement		Agreement	
	Mean Score	SD	Mean Score	SD
General attitudes	17.6	0.97	13.51	0.92
Perception of improvement	16.9	0.96	12.74	0.91
Development of English vocabulary	15.3	0.94	11.70	0.90
Evaluation of extensive reading strategy	14.8	0.93	10.54	0.89
Reading challenges	13.0	0.92	9.86	0.88

5. DISCUSSION

The compared results of the pre-and-posttests provide evidence about the instructional approaches, represented in extensive reading strategy and regular method, on the development of students' reading comprehension skills. The results provide rich-grounded findings the superiority of extensive reading strategy over the regular method for developing the Saudi EFL students' reading comprehension skills. In the pretest, the two tested groups showed relative similarity in their reading comprehension skills. However, the experimental students showed remarkable improvement in their reading comprehension skills during the posttest. The experimental students had better performance in the identification of main ideas and details, comprehension of the textual meanings, accuracy of interpreting vocabulary, and inferencing of implicit information. Meanwhile, the group students showed restrictedly limited progress developing their reading comprehension skills.

In the pretest, almost all students struggled to understand the reading text because of their limited FL vocabulary knowledge. They mainly relied on translation as a main tool to comprehend the FL reading text. Thus, the failed to interpret the implicit contextual meaning as their responses reflected shallow understanding. In the posttest, extensive

reading strategy enabled experimental students to deal with the reading text more confidently and flexibly. They showed greater tolerance of ambiguity towards unfamiliar words which they guessed their meanings. The experimental students' posttest performance showed their supremacy in reading comprehension skills compared to the control group students in an indication of the extensive reading strategy privileges over the regular instruction method.

The extensive reading strategy made experimental students more abundantly exposed to the target language in a way that sustains their natural learning process. Due to these strategies, experimental students managed to internalize various sub-skills related FL reading comprehension including grammar, vocabulary, and sentence patterns. Such exposure also supports experimental students' cognitive reading skills like accuracy and fluency as they focused on the textual semantic features instead of decoding single words. The extensive reading strategy sustained the experimental students' affective factors including motivation increase and anxiety reduction. Such strategy allowed the experimental students to choose reading texts in which they are interested in decreased the evaluation pressure. Thus, experimental students experienced deep engagement with the reading texts.

The experimental students' positive responses to the questionnaire items indicated that the extensive reading strategy sustained the higher-order cognitive skills. Their responses manifest the highly rich meaningful inputs provided through extensive reading activities. These activities reinforced students' exposure to contextual language and helped them to internalize FL vocabulary and sentence structures. Experimental students were trained to efficiently handle reading texts with confidence and flexibility in an indication of developing their reading fluency skills. Accurate guessing of unknown words meaning indicated the development of experimental students' inferencing skills. The experimental students' responses showed development of affective factors such as motivation increase and anxiety reduction due to the extensive reading strategy as those students were less motivated attending traditional classes of FL reading comprehension.

In terms of sustainability, the extensive reading strategy should be considered as a long-life learning approach instead of being viewed as a temporary instructional approach. Schools should integrate extensive reading with the regular EFL curriculum. Schools should provide students with sustained accessibility to various reading materials. As such, schools can promote autonomous learning among EFL students. In turn, those students will pursue independent reading after the end of formal instructions. The EFL teachers should give priority to the development of students' positive attitudes towards reading. They should also reinforce students' intrinsic motivation, and self-regulated learning skills. The development of these factors can critically maintain students' vocabulary growth, fluency of reading, and overall proficiency over longer time.

6. IMPLICATIONS

The effectiveness of using extensive reading strategy in developing the experimental students' reading comprehension skills entails that these strategies should not be regarded as an optional instructional approach. Rather, they should be incorporated into the EFL curricula in the Saudi context. Thus, Saudi EFL teachers should encourage silent reading and sustain students' accessibility to different appropriate varieties of reading texts. Extensive reading strategy highlights the importance of promoting students' reading for meaning instead of only focusing on accurate forms. Thus, Saudi EFL teachers are advised to create more enjoyable reading classrooms with less emphasis on detailed questions.

As the extensive reading strategy helped experimental students to realize various benefits, there is a need to expose Saudi grade nine students to differentiated instruction. Thus, Saudi EFL teachers are encouraged to allocate guided FL reading sessions for low-achievement students. Meanwhile, they should encourage high-achievement students to sustain their FL reading progress by exploring more challenging reading texts. As such, all students with different achievement levels can be meaningfully engaged in the extensive reading-based instruction.

In addition, Saudi EFL teachers should adapt the assessment practices in accordance with the extensive reading principles. Primarily, the discrete language questions administered through traditional tests may not achieve the benefits of extensive reading approach. Thus, Saudi EFL teachers can rely on other assessment practices including the use of reflective journals, reading blogs or discussions. These practices sustain the purpose behind FL as mainly a meaningful activity which allows teachers to trace students' development.

The findings highlight the necessity of preparing EFL teachers to handle extensive reading-based instruction. Teachers should be knowledgeable about how to effectively implement extensive reading instruction. They should guide students' selection of appropriate reading texts, create supportive learning environment, and guide students during different reading stages. As such, teachers' roles are transformed into being facilitators instead of only providing knowledge.

Furthermore, the questionnaire findings provide practical implications. The experimental students' highly positive responses to use extensive reading strategy justify their integration as an essential component in FL curriculum planning and design in the Saudi context. They also emphasized the importance of allowing Saudi grade nine students to choose their FL reading texts as an essential factor to main motivation towards learning FL reading comprehension skills and effectively participate in these classes.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that extensive reading strategy significantly contributed to the development of Saudi EFL tertiary students' reading comprehension skills. It crucially improved the experimental students' English proficiency, accuracy, vocabulary, semantic and syntactic knowledge. The investigation of extensive reading strategy is fundamentally necessary for the optimization of

using such strategy to handle constant learning challenges in the Saudi EFL context.

The study highlighted the importance of integrating extensive reading strategy into grade nine curriculum planning and design. It is particularly true due to the strategy effectiveness in developing the experimental students' reading

comprehension skills vis-a-vis the regular method of (GTM). In addition, the experimental students expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards learning FL reading comprehension through such strategy. This entails that Saudi EFL teachers should be well-trained and equipped to implement extensive reading strategy with classrooms.

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Suggestions Conflict of Interest: It is suggested that investigation of extensive reading strategy can be broaden to include a large number of schools affiliated to different Saudi governorates. The inclusion of such schools can benefit the process of findings generalization and formulate better understanding of the extensive reading effectiveness in different settings within the Saudi EFL context. It is necessary to expand the intervention duration to a full school year, for instance, to ensure insights accuracy, sustainable effect of extensive reading strategy, and constant development of students' reading comprehension skills and learning autonomy. The present study suggests that integration of extensive reading strategy is no longer an option; rather it should be viewed as an integral part of EFL syllabus. Thus, design and planning of EFL syllabi should incorporate activities that reinforce students' employment of such strategy. It is also useful to explore the shifting and transformational roles of EFL instructors to guides. To reduce FL reading anxiety and discouragement, it is suggested to use assessment practices such as writing summary reports, or reflective journals as well. In line with the advanced technology revolution in FL learning, it is suggested to investigate the impact of utilizing digital learning tools on enriching the implementation of extensive reading strategy among different educational levels in the Saudi EFL context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations of further research include the following tentative topics:

1. The sustainability of extensive reading strategy effectiveness can be examined over different phases for the same participants in the form of a longitudinal study.
2. The applicability of extensive reading strategy effectiveness can be expanded to cover other FL skills such as listening, speaking, and writing.
3. A study may explore the role of learners' individual differences that can affect the effectiveness of extensive reading strategy.
4. The roles of Saudi EFL instructors in creating awareness of applying extensive reading strategy can be discussed as well.
5. A study can test the appropriateness of selected learning materials integrated within the activities of extensive reading strategy.
6. The effect of utilizing extensive reading strategy on students' FL motivation and learning styles requires deeper exploration.
7. A study may investigate the role of Saudi educational policy frameworks in supporting the implementation of extensive reading strategy.

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APPENDIX A

A pretest of reading comprehension skills

Total: Fifty Marks

Reading comprehension

A Day Free of using technology

Jack made a decision to spend a day free of using technology last week. His mobile phone, laptop, and TV were turned off. Initially, a boring feeling dominated his thought as he was confused. He often used to spend hours watching videos or scrolling through different social media.

Shortly, Jack decided to go outside the house and walked to a park nearby his house. He saw children playing and birds signing. He recognized that these things did not attract his attention before.

Upon returning home, he found a book and began to read it. Jack was surprised to forget about his mobile phone and enjoyed reading that book. Jack felt relaxed and happy by the end of the day. So, he decided to repeat the experience and spend more days without using technology.

Q1: Multiple Choice (Ten Marks)

1. Jack felt bored at the beginning of the day because of.....
 - a. Being sick
 - b. being tired
 - c. using technology
 - d. not using technology
2. Jack walked to Park
 - a. Far
 - b. Remote
 - c. Nearby
 - d. Close
3. Jack became interested in
 - a. Listening to songs
 - b. Reading
 - c. Playing music
 - d. Playing sports
4. Jack decided to go outside home because he was
 - a. Happy
 - b. Bored
 - c. Tired
 - d. sick
5. Using technology prevented Jack from noticing
 - a. Birds singing
 - b. Birds flying
 - c. Kids quarreling
 - d. Kids studying

Q2: True / False (Ten Marks)

1. Jack was an addict of using technology.
2. After the experience, Jack decided not to repeat it.
3. It was difficult for Jack at the beginning of the experience.
4. Jack decided to stop using technology totally.

5. Jack did not experience relaxation without technology.

Q3: Fill in the spaces with appropriate words (Ten Marks)

1. The antonym of happy is.....
2. Scrolling means
3. The noun of the verb repeat is
4. The synonym of surprised is
5. 'His mobile phone, laptop, and TV were turned off' is in the form.

Q4: provide short answers to the following questions (Ten Marks)

1. What did Jack notice in the park?
2. What did Jack recognize?
3. Why did he feel bored at the beginning?
4. Why did he feel happy at the end?
5. What lesson did he learn?

Q5: Inferencing questions (Ten Marks)

1. How did jack manage to develop new hobbies?
2. Why do you think Jack wants to repeat the experience?

APPENDIX B

A posttest of reading comprehension skills

Total: Fifty Marks

Reading comprehension

The project of School Library

Sama and her classmates decided to take part in the project of improving their school library. Many students mistakenly thought that the library is boring, so they decided not to visit it. Sama proposed to create a reading club and add new interesting books.

The teachers admired the idea and asked other students to encourage Sama's idea and take part in the project. Many students decided to help Sama by painting the walls, making posters to encourage reading and organizing the books. Few weeks later, more students decided to visit the library.

Sama felt proud since her idea managed to make a difference. She recognized that little changes can make a big impact.

Q1: Multiple Choice (Ten Marks)

1. Sama and her classmates wanted to
 - a. do the same assignment
 - b. join the school sports team
 - c. improve the school library
 - d. buy new desks
2. Initially, students thought the library is
 - a. interesting
 - b. boring
 - c. good
 - d. nice
3. Sama suggested to create
 - a. A team
 - b. A lab
 - c. Reading club
 - d. Kitchen
4. Students decided to..... the walls.
 - a. Painted
 - b. Painting
 - c. Paint
 - d. Paints
5. The books were.....
 - a. Organized
 - b. Organize

- c. Organizes
- d. Organizing

Q2: True / False (Ten Marks)

1. Teachers did not support Sama' idea.
2. Sama did caring about her school.
3. Sama had a proud feeling about her idea.
4. Many students had misconception about the library.
5. Students did not join Sama's project.

Q3: Fill in the spaces with appropriate words (Ten Marks)

1. Proud means.....
2. Mistakenly though refers to
3. The underlined 'it' refers to
4. The synonym of 'proposed' is
5. The antonym of 'manage to' is

Q4: provide short answers to the following questions (Ten Marks)

1. Why did Sama feel proud?
2. How did teacher support Sama's project?
3. How did students support Sama's project?
4. Why did Sama propose the project?
5. What was the result of Sam's project?

Q5: Inferencing questions (Ten Marks)

1. What is the lesson you learned from the text?
2. What the conclusion of the reading text?

APPENDIX C

A questionnaire of experimental students' assessment of using extensive reading strategy

No.	Items	SD	D	N	SA	A
A.						
General attitudes						
1	Extensive reading is a source of enjoyment					
2	I am more interested in English reading due to extensive reading strategy					
3	I prefer extensive reading to other traditional methods for learning reading comprehension					
4	I became more motivated to learn reading comprehension due to that strategy					
B.						
Perception of improvement						
5	Easy understanding of textual main ideas					
6	Guessing the contextual meaning of new words					
7	Text understanding without L1 translation of each word					
8	Answering comprehension questions					
C.						
Development of English vocabulary						
9	Increase the vocabulary size of English vocabulary					
10	Better remembrance of newly learnt vocabulary					
11	Using new vocabulary in English sentences					
D.						
Evaluation of extensive reading strategy						

12	Reading materials are suitable for grade nine					
13	I freely choose the reading materials					
14	Enough time is allocated for reading during the classroom					
15	The teacher's help is available whenever needed					
16	I became a better reader because of that strategy					
E.	Reading challenges					
17	It overcomes difficult vocabulary					
18	It provides sufficient time for reading					
19	It compensates lack of interesting reading materials					
20	It sustains motivation					
21	It supports textual understanding					