وضع برنامج القراءة الأدبية الشاملة في مدارس البحرين: مقارنة بين مجموعتين تعليميتين

An Attitudinal Study of the Status of Extensive Literary Reading Programmes in Bahrain Schools: A Study of Two Learning Systems

Dr. Saif Al-Ansari

Associate Professors,
Department of Foreign Languages,
College of Arts, University of Bahrain,
Kingdom of Bahrain

Dr. Abdul Aziz Bulaila

Associate Professors,
Department of Foreign Languages,
College of Arts, University of Bahrain,
Kingdom of Bahrain

د.عبدالعزيز محمد بوليلة

قسم اللغات الأجنبية وآدابها،
كلية الآداب، جامعة البحرين،
مملكة البحرين

د.سيف هاشم الأنصاري

قسم اللغات الأجنبية وآدابها،
كلية الآداب، جامعة البحرين،
مملكة البحرين

وضع برنامج القراءة الأدبية الشاملة في مدارس البحرين:
مقارنة بين مجموعتين تعليميتين

د. عبدالعزيز محمد بوليلة
قسم اللغات الأجنبية وآدابها،
كلية الآداب، جامعة البحرين، مملكة البحرين

د. سيف هاشم الأنصاري
قسم اللغات الأجنبية وآدابها،
كلية الآداب، جامعة البحرين، مملكة البحرين

ملخص البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة أهمية مهارات القراءة ودور الأدب في تقديم مستوى أفضل لخطوات تعلم لغة أجنبية في مدارس المملكة. كما تكشف هذه الدراسة الأسباب الكامنة وراء تدني مستوى الرغبة في القراءة لدى غالبية طلاب المدارس، وتوصي بالحاجة الملحة إلى توفير برامج قراءة إضافية استدلالية، (كالجزء الأدبي) ودمجها بأقصى سرعة في مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية بالمدارس ضمن إطار المنهج الإضافي لأنشطة القراءة الشاملة والمكث. ولدراسة أسباب عدم وجود برامج متكاملة للقراءة الشاملةEFL تم توزيع استبانه على عينة منتقاة عشوائيا من المدرسين والطلبة في قطاعي التعليم الخاص والعام؛ وذلك لمعرفة نوعية البرامج المقدمة في القراءة الشاملة بالإنجليزي..بالإضافة إلى معرفة وضع ودور المدرسين تجاه برنامج دمج برنامج القراءة الإضافية في مدارس المملكة. إن هذا البرنامج في الواقع ضروري لتحسين مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطلبة البحرينيين، والذي لا يمكن إنجازه فقط من خلال زيادة ساعات العمل المعمول به في برنامج EFL في الوقت الراهن.

An Attitudinal Study of the Status of Extensive Literary Reading Programmes in Bahrain Schools: A Study of Two Learning Systems

Dr. Saif Al-Ansari
Department of Foreign Languages,
College of Arts, University of Bahrain,
Kingdom of Bahrain

Dr. Abdul Aziz Bulaila
Department of Foreign Languages,
College of Arts, University of Bahrain,
Kingdom of Bahrain

Abstract

This study examines the importance of the skill of reading and the role literature can play in contributing to a better standard of foreign language learning process in Bahrain state schools. It also reveals the causes behind the low level of reading habits among the majority of the students in the schools and recommends an urgent need for a constructive supplementary reading programme, (i.e. literary component) to be immediately incorporated in the school English syllabi in the form of both intensive and extensive extra-curricular reading activities. In order to measure the lack of a coherent EFL extensive reading programme, a set of questionnaires were administered to a randomly selected sample of students in two different educational sectors in order to measure the status of their extensive reading programmes in English and also to measure their attitudes and teachers' role towards the incorporation of a supplementary reading programme in the state schools and that such a programme is in fact what is needed to improve the standard of the Bahraini students in English and that improvement cannot be achieved by solely increasing the number of contact hours the students currently have in EFL.

1. The Importance of the Skill of Reading

It is widely understood that reading is a highly complex process and has been defined as a visual-auditory task that involves obtaining meaning from symbols, i.e. letters and words. It has become common these days to accept reading as an activity which is made up of a large number of skills of both a motor and a cognitive kind. For further psycholinguistic definitions and analyses of the skill of reading see (Gurry, 1955; Allen and Corder, 1974; Broughton, et al, 1978; Rivers, 1978; Jonson and Morrow, 1981; Grellet, 1981; Rivers, 1981; Bright and McGregor, 1981; Hedge, 1985; and Nuttall, 1987). There seems to be an agreement that the key to progress in reading comes at the initial reading stage. When the learner begins to know how to read, he has already acquired some degree of competence in the language. In the early stages, learning to read is very largely a matter of transferring an already acquired competence into a different mode of performance. The more the students find a need to read, the more likely they will succeed in acquiring the skill of reading. Once they are encouraged to read at an early stage, they will experience some sort of motivation to read with enjoyment.

2. The Place of Simplified Readers in Extensive Reading Programmes

There is no doubt that simplified readers contribute to the development of the reading ability. Such readers are gaining worldwide popularity for their educational value. Historically speaking, simplified readers derive from an investigation into reading made by Michael West in the 1930s. He outlined the purpose of such readers as follows: It (the simplified reader) gives extra practice in reading; it reviews and fixes the vocabulary already learned; it 'streches' his vocabulary so that the learner is enabled to give a greater breadth of meaning to the words already learned; and lastly, by showing the learner that what he has learned so far really enables him to do something; it encourages him to read matter which is worth reading (West, 1950).

It is clear from this that the simplified reader is intended not only to reflect what the reader already knows, but to extend his knowledge. Hedge (1985) maintained that the procedure of simplification involves a compromise between:

(a) making a given text easier to understand by bringing its contents within the area of language already assumed to be known,

(b) allowing the inclusion of some language items not already known but whose meaning is, presumably, recoverable from the context.

The purpose of simplified texts, then, according to West, is to allow the pupils to practise and develop their reading comprehension. What we have to do

is to investigate how simplified stories based on literary works set about doing this, to discover what principles, if any, lie behind their procedures.

3.   How Can Graded Literary Texts Help the Language Learner?

Ideally, when teachers decide to introduce graded readers into the classroom, it will be with a clear idea of their usefulness in language learning and the selection of readers will be undertaken with definite objectives in mind. Therefore, before suggesting criteria for selecting readers and discussing possible ways of using them effectively in class, it is important to answer the fundamental question, 'Why use graded readers?' Hedge (1985) listed a number of language objectives that can be derived from using readers. These are as follows:

3.1.   Developing Knowledge of the Language

Graded readers can develop students' knowledge of the language, at the levels of vocabulary and structure and at the level of textual organisation. Every student needs to master a progressively expanding vocabulary, and the main way for a student to gain control of an adequate vocabulary is through reading (Hedge, 1985:23). In a similar way, graded readers consolidate the structures that students are learning. Most commercial readers are graded structurally so that teachers can suit the level of difficulty of the books to their students without too much trouble. Through extensive reading, students can gradually build up an understanding of how linking words, or connectives are used to develop ideas, give examples, express cause and effect, add information, qualify a statement, and contrast things. Those students who are either weak or lack confidence in developing their knowledge of vocabulary are able to practise following the relationships between sentences in a text. Similarly, extensive reading gives students a chance to follow up more intensive classroom work on understanding syntax and to see examples of how devices such as coordination and subordination are used to combine ideas. Building up an understanding of how connectives can provide clues to meaning in texts will help students to develop a deeper comprehension of how meaning is expressed, and can be grasped. It will help them to follow ideas through the organisation of information.

3.2.   Developing Knowledge of Language Use

Another useful function of readers is that they help the students to see how the grammar and vocabulary they have learned actually work in communication; that is, how words and structures are used by writers to express ideas, opinions and information. It is increasingly acknowl-

edged, however, that literature shows how language can be used to communicate facts and feelings.

Foreign learners who are literate in their first language can understand that differences between spoken and written English from their experience of their mother tongue, but they need to learn what devices written English uses to communicate intentions and meanings they are familiar with in their own language. In intensive reading activities, the teacher can point out differences and teach devices of written English, but through extensive reading students can gradually become familiar, as they move to higher grades, with how the devices of written English are used in different contexts.

Graded readers can also provide some experience of how language is used in spoken communication, although only in a limited way, without the phonological features which mark emotion and attitude. Many students are learning in situations where English is seldom heard outside the classroom and where the only demonstration of spoken forms is by a non-native teacher, whose own knowledge of how English is actually used by native speakers may be limited.

Through their reading, students will not only have the structures they have learned in class reinforced, but they will also begin to appreciate the different functions expressed by a structure and will experience the structures in a variety of contexts. In this way, they will gain a growing understanding of language use as well as language structure.

3.3.   Developing Reading Skills and Strategies

It is now generally accepted that reading is not the careful recognition and comprehension of each word on the page in sequence. It is the overall assimilation of clauses and paragraphs. We therefore must understand that knowledge of the language may well be inadequate and if the subject is unfamiliar, reading with understanding may be very difficult. When students become fluent in the language, they possess many different skills which they apply actively to the reading of a particular text. In order to read with comprehension, they should be able to achieve the following skills:

* They should predict from syntactic and semantic clues and from their existing knowledge of a subject in the way just described.

* They should read in phrases, not in single words, and actually skip over words if these are not needed for general understanding.

* They should learn to read 'between the lines' and work on the meaning of the text at different levels, understanding information, making inferences and critically evaluating ideas.

* They should guess the meaning of new words from contextual clues or by applying knowledge of how words can be formed from others.

* They should distinguish fact from opinions and statements from examples.

* They should follow meaning through a paragraph by recognising signals like 'however' and 'on the other hand', and by understanding how words and phrases like 'it', 'this', 'the latter' and 'these matters' refer back to something earlier in the text (Hedge, 1985:32).

Here the teacher's task is to help students to transfer reading ability from one language to another by encouraging good learning strategies for successful reading. The development of successful readers cannot be ensured through mere intensive reading. Indeed, it can increase the students' general understanding of language and their ability to understand socio-cultural meaning. But equal importance should be given to the kind of practice that comes from extensive reading, lots of practice in reading different types of material. Students will then get the opportunity to operate strategies like prediction or guessing word meaning and to develop the ability to follow lines of argument. Intensive reading practice in class needs to be complemented by extensive reading programmes in or out of class.

This is where graded readers are invaluable. If extensive reading is to serve a useful purpose in terms of developing reading skills, then we can see that there are implications for the type of material which should be made available to students. Graded readers present the possibility of controlling the level of difficulty and giving a balance between a challenging and a frustrating reading task. The kinds of opportunities that graded readers give to elementary and intermediate students before they have the competence to read authentic materials with self-confidence, makes them an invaluable resource for the language teacher. Readers provide an experience for the language learner which builds confidence and encourages independence in reading.

Walker's study (1969) on the fiction of Hemingway and Faulkner in a College Sophomore English Class showed that extensive reading encouraged

these students to perceive literature as an art illuminating human experiences. During the course of the study, the students seemed to acquire an appreciation of literature as well as develop more liberal attitudes (Walker, 1969). Kutiper's research citation (1983) suggested that extensive reading is as effective as intensive reading in developing general reading ability and is more effective in promoting good attitudes among elementary and secondary school students toward reading. Hafiz and Tudo (1989) conducted a three-month extensive reading programme using graded readers. The scheme involved one experimental group and two control groups of ESL in the UK. Their programme which was inspired by Krashen's Input Hypotheses was designed to investigate whether extensive reading for pleasure affect an improvement in the subjects' linguistic skills, with particular to reading and writing. The results of their study showed a marked improvement in the performance of the experimental subjects.

Rees (1992) carried out a study on the reading habits of a group of students who moved from GCSE French to A-Level French in the British school system. The overall findings of the study indicated a need for extensive reading over intensive, select text study and increased early emphasis on the learning of reading skills. Ma (1994) emphasised the need to address important cultural-based traits and that English language instruction should include development of non-linguistic competence and both intensive and extensive reading strategies, as well as linguistic competence. McQuillan (1994) examined the attitudes of 49 second-language students toward second language acquisition activities: grammar exercises and extensive reading of popular literature. The results of the study showed by a significant margin that students favoured reading over grammar in both respects. Tse (1996) emphasised the need to focus on the effects of an extensive program on an adult English language learner. Pressley, et al (1997) found out from teachers' response to a questionnaire that they considered extensive reading to be the heart of their reading instruction. Bamford and Day (1998) considered extensive reading to be an essential component in the four approaches to the teaching of second language (L2) reading. O'Donnel and Wood (1999) emphasised helping teachers to foster positive attitudes towards reading, promote extensive reading experiences and to read for meaning.

4.   Level of Reading in State Schools

Data were collected at the University of Bahrain in order to measure the level of proficiency in English language, particularly proficiency in reading, at different stages in the educational system in Bahrain and to compare the level of proficiency attained with the number of hours of English language instruction received. This was done in order to gain some impression of the efficiency of the

instructional programme at each stage in the system.

The survey covered almost the entire educational system in Bahrain from Primary 4 through University 4. The total number of subjects tested was 2,178, all randomly selected from different types of schools and from different colleges within the University. Attainment at each level was measured in terms of the percentage of independent readers in the tested sample, i.e. the percentage of subjects who are capable of reading a simple passage of general, non-technical English without the help of a teacher. Achievement at each level, measured in terms of the percentage increase in the number of independent readers, was compared with the total number of hours of instruction per year in English language. Hours of instruction in other subjects taught through the medium of English were not taken into account.

The test instrument used was a cloze test in the standard format for reading, gapped at every ninth word and marked in accordance with the acceptable word criterion. The same test was applied at all levels in the system. Although a fairly blunt instrument, the cloze test is generally regarded as being very reliable with large samples when the purpose is simply to determine the mean levels of reading ability attained. A copy of the test is given in the appendix. The results of cloze tests, furthermore, usually correlate very highly with those obtained from other types of objective tests, e.g. reading comprehension tests and grammar and usage tests, and are thus a good indicator of overall proficiency. The maximum score obtainable in the cloze test was 30 and the independent reader score was fixed, in accordance with standard practice, at 18 (i.e. at 60%).

The results of the survey show that after 9 years of English language instruction in the schools, less than 15% of the secondary school population can read English independently and that after 1 year of intensive English language instruction in the orientation programme at the University only about 25% of the selected intake of students can read English independently, except in the College of Science, where the percentage of independent readers reaches about 45%. In the post-orientation programme at the University, however, where the number of hours of English language instruction is considerably reduced, the percentage of independent readers dramatically increases, such that by the end of the third year of the undergraduate programme virtually 100% of all students can read English independently.

For convenience of reference, the results are presented here in chart forms. Two charts are presented, one showing the proficiency profile and the other the number of hours of English language instruction received at different stages in the programme. By comparing the two charts, we obtain a clear impression of

the relative efficiency. The results call into question the efficiency and cost effectiveness of English language instruction at all levels except the undergraduate (i.e. post orientation levels at the University). The results suggest either a) a serious lack of instructional resources (including teacher competence) or b) serious deficiencies in the teaching methodology and syllabus design throughout the school system and the orientation programme. In particular, they suggest a serious neglect of reading, especially extensive reading, at all levels except the post-orientation undergraduate levels. Since the problem in the orientation programme is obviously not a lack of resources, one must assume that the methodology and/or the instructional design are seriously flawed. This strongly suggests, given adequate quality controls, considerable improvements in both productivity and cost-effectiveness can be achieved by reducing the intensity or duration of English language courses and by privatising the reading component of the courses, that is to say by removing reading from the taught courses and requiring students to read extensively on their own in their own time in accordance with guidelines laid down by the instructor. It is essential that privatised reading be systemically built into the syllabus at the design stage and adequately monitored at the operational level.

It can be argued that students at a university level will normally have more exposure to the language and that English becomes as a means of communication: thus their reading skill is supposed to have reached a reasonable comprehensional level. The fact is the cloze used in state schools is not of a University language level: With the high number of language hours the pupils in state schools have experienced the number of independent readers should at least be above 60%. This has certainly not been the case and a problem does in fact exist and if we wholeheartedly seek to maintain a better achievement in English language among pupils in the state schools.

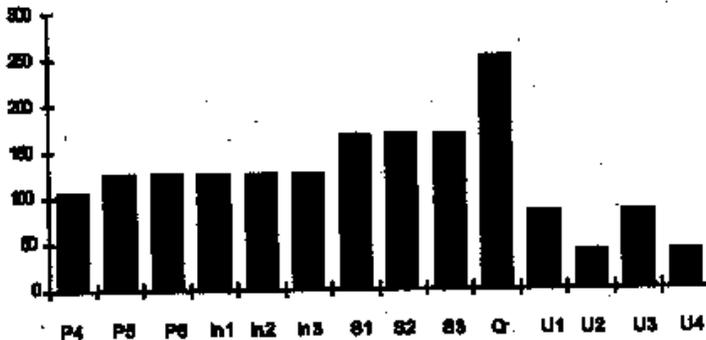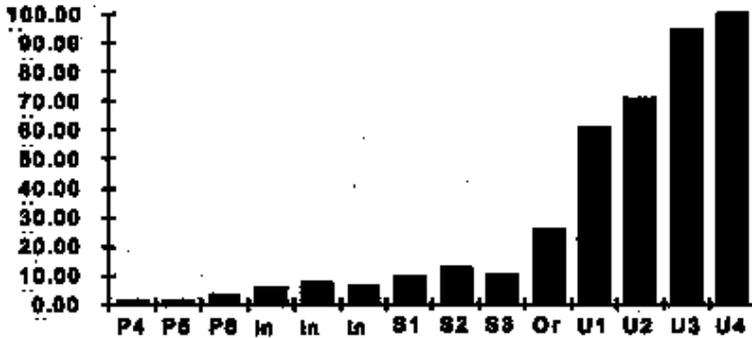**Table 1: Hours of English language instruction per year**

Table 2: Percentage of independent readers

P = Primary	U1 = Undergraduate (Non-English Majors)
In = Intermediate	U2 = Undergraduate (Non-English Majors)
S = Secondary Lit.	U3 = Undergraduate (English majors only)
Or = Orientation (Arts)	U4 = Undergraduate (English majors only)

5.   Rationale of the Present Study

The results of the above tables indicated a poor level of reading in English prior to university education. Their level is supposedly attributed to their extensive reading strategies. It has thus been essential to measure their attitude to the degree of the existence of extensive reading programmes and to their role in developing their overall language reading skills. It is interesting to see if such measurable attitudes tend to vary from one learning system to another. For this reason it has been important to examine the place of EFL extensive reading programmes in both state and private education. It is interesting to see whether the two learning systems adopt identical extensive reading packages for their students. It is believed that extensive reading in EFL is viewed much more significantly in private language learning institutions. This noticeable degree of variation resided not only in learners' educational background but in the way extensive reading was supplemented into the school curricular. The present study examines the degree of such variation and recommends certain pedagogical hints by which more effective extensive reading could be implemented. This would in turn lead to a better language performance on the part of the EFL learners.

6.   Research method

6.1.   Participants

A total number of 247 students in Bahrain state schools and a total of 129 in Bahrain private schools constituted the subjects for the study. Almost all the par-

ticipants were 17 years old and were in their final year of secondary education. All the subjects are exposed to a common secondary school curriculum except for the private school students whose education tends to be coeducational and are introduced to an English medium type of instruction where most scientific subjects are taught in English. All the participants in the study represent approximately 25% of the student population in both learning institutions. In spite of being derived from two different academic institutions, the subjects were homogeneous in respect of, nationality, mother tongue and both cultural and educational background. However, most of the private school participants were from upper middle-class families.

6.2. Material

A self-reported questionnaire consisting of the following two variables was developed and administered in English. The prime purpose of the questionnaire was to measure students' personal opinions of their school extensive reading programmes. All the students had to do was to give an answer that best described their own personal feeling to each included item. The students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that they would be used for statistical purposes only. The scale contains a total of 11 items, which measure the following variables: Attitudes towards Reading Stories and Teachers' Role. Respondents were asked to rate each item on the Attitudes towards Reading on either a 2-point Likert-type scale anchored by 3: Yes and 1: No. Respondents who answered "uncertain" received 2 points. The maximum score on this measure is 25 points. A respondent with a higher score is identified as having a more positive attitude toward reading stories than a respondent with a lower score. The test required 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The Arabic version of the scale has a test-retest reliability of .76, which was administered to 50 Bahraini students. The face validity was attested to by four experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language who were asked to comment on the various items. Upon receiving the experts' comments, some items were modified and others were either changed or omitted. A total of another 50 students were asked about the length, relevancy, and the language of the translated items. Based on the students' comments, some items were reworded.

7. Results and Discussion

Means and standard deviations for the questionnaire scores for the two groups were computed using the SPSS, together with the t tests. These indicated the extent to which the two learning groups differ in their attitudinal outlooks. These results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of comparisons of the means for the two learning groups

(Attitudes towards reading)

Variable	Private schools		State schools		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Do you read stories?	1.84	.44	1.26	.75	8.01*
What do you read in English?	2.38	.69	1.77	.62	9.21*
How often do you read in class?	2.47	.81	1.86	.76	4.47*
Do you read in your spare time?	1.68	.60	1.27	.60	5.20*
If yes, how many hours?	2.12	1.12	1.50	.88	4.11*
Do you like reading stories?	1.68	.66	1.45	.70	.6
Do you think it will improve your language skills?	1.94	.27	1.81	.51	2.77*
Total	**12.73**	**4.22**	**9.88**	**3.92**	**9.42***

* P <. 001

The mean scores obtained for the students in the private schools are significantly higher than those obtained for the government schools (p< .001). These results on the attitudinal scale tended to be different in almost all cases except for the variable concerning whether students like reading stories. This is quite understandable since students in general like reading stories regardless of the type of schooling in which they are enrolled. The high significant result obtained in the total mean score further supports the results obtained for all the studied variables. The results clearly indicate that the students in the private schools demonstrate a much more positive attitude towards reading stories and the amount of time they spend reading. The differences between the two groups can be attributed to their previous language learning background and their interest in becoming familiar with the target language culture. It is interesting to note that in spite of having similar mono-cultural and mono-lingual background, the students in the private schools tend to be more prepared to read in English. The only explanation that can be derived here is that there are possibly other environmental factors, such as parental support and encouragement and use of the language outside the school-learning environment, which might have contributed to their degree and type of such an attitude. This is only an assumption which could be investigated further.

Table 4: Summary of comparisons of the means for the two learning groups

(Teachers' role)

Variable	Private schools		State schools		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Does your teacher ask you to read English stories at home?	1.92	.36	1.87	.32	**10.58** *
Do you have a reading programme in your school?	1.78	.52	.75	.86	**8.25** *
Does your teacher give you marks for reading?	1.58	.80	1.59	.80	1.00
Does your teacher encourage you to read ?	1.87	.35	1.51	.74	**7.60** *
TOTAL	**8.98**	**2.92**	**3.99**	**4.44**	**12.23** *

*P < . 001

Table 4 gives the results of the mean scores obtained for the variables related to the students' attitude toward their teacher's role in encouraging the implementation of an extensive reading programme. The mean scores obtained for the students in the private schools are significantly higher than those obtained for the government schools (p< .001). These results on the attitudinal scale tended to be different in almost all cases except for the variable concerning whether students get marks from their teachers for doing reading. It is probable that the students might have misinterpreted the item. They may have thought that it was concerned with reading in general. However, the high significant result obtained in the total mean score further supports the notion that students in private schools view extensive reading much more favourably than those in government schools.

8. Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical implications that can be derived from this study are immense. The most significant of these are that EFL specialists in government schools need to develop constructive extensive reading programmes. These

should be intended to enable reluctant readers, at all educational levels, to approach reading more positively. Day and Bamford (2000) believe that the first step is to consider the ways in which EFL reading is commonly taught. Traditional approaches and classroom practices, with their focus on translating, answering comprehension questions, or practicing skills such as finding main ideas, tend to ignore the larger context of students' attitudes toward reading and their motivation to read. The result, inevitably, is that students having little or no interest in reading English. For further information on the characteristics of successful extensive programmes, see Day & Bamford, 1998. The following are some suggested educational proposals by which the adoption of a well-planned extensive reading programme could become a constructive and meaningful one.

8.1   Developing the Right Attitudes and Motivation

For an extensive reading programme to develop effectively, we need to take into account the students' own cultural background. It is impractical that a teacher attempts to introduce a reading programme in an EFL classroom where reading for pleasure is not very much valued. Smith (1997) suggests that books be attractively displayed and available, and the forming of a book club. We need to inculcate in reluctant readers a positive attitude toward reading. In short, students with positive attitudes toward reading in their own language are likely to begin with a positive attitude toward second language reading. Thus students for whom first language reading is less attractive or important will come to second language reading with less positive, or even negative, attitudes (Day & Bamford, 1998). Students with positive reading attitudes can be easily motivated to read in the second language and learn about its culture and people. An extensive reading approach may influence attitudes toward the second language culture and people if the students, through their reading, come to view the second language culture and people in a favourable light. Day and Bamford (1998) maintain that successful extensive reading programmes also place emphasis on positive classroom environment and ongoing reading experiences. It is indeed the ongoing experiences of extensive second language reading that have the most potential to establish positive attitudes toward second language reading. Extensive reading is thus a powerful tool for teachers concerned with building and maintaining positive attitudes toward second language reading among their students. But the development of positive attitudes is not an end in itself, for attitude influences something equally important in reading: motivation (Day & Bamford, 1998: 27).

The reading materials used in an extensive programme may have the power to motivate learners positively to read in the second language, as they are interesting, at the appropriate linguistic levels and readily available. Ray Williams

(1986) maintains that in the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible. This is an obvious principle which is often forgotten. Interest is vital, for it increases motivation, which in turn is a significant factor in the development of reading speed and fluency.

8.2　Selection of Reading Materials

The first task for EFL teachers is to find the type of reading materials that their students will find both easy and interesting. When selecting reading materials for any age group and ability level, teachers must have the students' interests upper most in mind (Day & Bamford, 2000). If reading materials are in the students' fields of interest, comprehension is made easier because the students have knowledge of the subject matter. For beginning and intermediate students, however, the most suitable reading materials are books, magazines and newspapers, especially those written for EFL learners. There are hundreds of attractive fiction and nonfiction books appropriate to students of various ages and interests. Titles of books are listed in the catalogs of such publishers as Oxford University Press, Longman and Heinemann. To make selection easier, the appendix of Day and Bamford (1998) includes a bibliography of 600 titles of high-quality language learner literature in English divided by student ability level.

8.3　Building up an Extensive Reading Programme

Educational practitioners in government schools need seriously to consider incorporating extensive reading schemes into any EFL curriculum, regardless of the methodology or approach currently in operation. For example, programmes, which utilize a reading-skills approach, can add extensive reading without compromising the existing goals and objectives. Once an extensive reading programme is incorporated into the curriculum, it helps achieve its objectives of teaching students to read and pass examinations. It also improves students' attitude toward reading skills.

The best way to incorporate extensive reading into the EFL curriculum is through the implementation of a programme in which students read and report on their reading to the teacher and other students. This becomes part of an existing course, as a noncredit addition to a course, or as an extracurricular activity. This is done by adding a requirement that the students read a certain number of books per week or per semester. As an inducement to read, teachers could tell their students the rewards of extensive reading. The teacher would then encourage the students to read on their own. His responsibility would be to keep a

record of this reading. At the same time, teachers could consider giving extra credit that might influence a student's final grade. A teacher can know if students are actually reading and that they understand what they read by having students answer questions. Another common way of checking reading is to require students to write a short summary of what they read. However, this type of evaluation gives no indication to the teacher of how much a student enjoyed reading. Thus a student can write a paragraph or two about their reactions to a book. Such reaction reports are enjoyable for teachers to read because they give insights into students' thoughts and feelings. They also indicate to what extent a student is developing into an eager reader of English. They also can begin by reading some of the easy English books or other materials that their students are reading. This certainly allows teachers to recommend books to individual students or to the whole class. Whenever appropriate, they read aloud to the students a paragraph from a book, a poem, a newspaper article or an item from an Internet site. These can be posted on the classroom wall and other students can be invited to do the same. Eventually teachers can build a reading community with the students' a community of people who are enjoying and sharing English reading and are making it part of their lives (Day & Bamford, 2000).

Since the results of the study reported here have indicated the neglect of an extensive reading programme in state schools, as viewed by the students, official educational practitioners must seriously consider implementing an effective extensive reading programme at all levels. This is the most significant stage in reaching reluctant EFL readers in Bahrain government schools because it allows students to discover that they can actually read in English and enjoy it. It is only through exposure to reading materials that they are likely to become proficient readers in English as an extensive reading programme surely supports all aspects of an English language school programme.

Limitations

1. Because we do not know much about the way the students read in their L1, it is hard to discern if what we see from the L2 data is of any real importance. Therefore, it is important not to go beyond the limitations of the data collected in regard to future directions.

2. The importance of exploring the benefits and drawbacks of using controlled vocabulary texts is not tackled in this paper since the scope of study focuses on extensive reading and its impact on students' in both private and state schools.

3. This paper does not examine the differences between reading in L1 and L2. because this issue is beyond the scope of the study.

4. Although the fact that the social differences between students in the private schools and state schools are crucial, these were found to be beyond the scope of study.

Recommendations

1. The benefit and drawback of using controlled vocabulary texts is worth exploring. In particular, it would be worthwhile to examine how the increase in the number of interferences that may be required in highly controlled text for L2 students (especially in the younger grades) will impact their reading.

2. What students in the private schools were being taught (explicitly and implicitly) in English should be further explored in order to make further recommendations for students in the state schools.

3. It is worthwhile examining the importance and influence of reading in L1 on L2.

Appendix

Fill each of the numbered blanks in the following passage. Use only one word in each space.

In the thirteenth-century Wales there was a handsome young prince called Llewellyn. He was very fond of (2)_____ hunting and often (1) _____ to go out into the forests and mountains with his favourite hunting-dog (3)_____ name was Gelert. (4)_____ day, however, he left Gelert (5) _____ home to guard his (6) _____ son who was only a (7) _____ months old. (8) _____ the evening when the prince returned (9) _____ hunting he saw (10) _____ his house was (11) _____ a terrible mess. The furniture (12) _____ been knocked (13) _____ and there (14) _____ blood on the walls. He could not (15) _____ his baby son. Then he saw his dog Gelert (16) _____ towards him covered (17) _____ blood. The prince (19) _____ that the dog had attacked and killed his son. Prince Llewellyn became violently angry, (20) _____ his sword and (21) _____ the dog with (21) _____ blow.

However when he looked (22) _____ his house more carefully he found his (23) _____ lying under (24) _____ chair, alive (25) _____ well. Then he saw (26) _____ dead body of a huge wolf. He (27) _____ that Gelert had (28) _____ his son's life by fighting and killing (29) _____ wolf. The prince was horrified at the mistake he had made and when he buried his dog he built an enormous pile of stones to mark the spot, which can (30) _____ be seen today. He never went hunting again.

References

Allen, J. P. B., & Corder, S. P. (eds.) (1974). **The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics 3**. London: Oxford University Press

Bamford, J. D., & Richard, R. (1998). Teaching reading . **Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 18**, 124-41.

Brigh, J. A., & McGregor, G.P.(1981). **Teaching English as a second language.** London, UK: Longman

Broughton, G. C., Brumfit, C., Flavell, R., Hill, P., & Pincas, A. (1978). **Teaching English as a foreign language.** London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). **Extensive reading in the second language classroom.** London, UK: Cambridge University Press

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (2000) Reaching reluctant readers. **Forum 38**, (3), 12-17

Grellet,. F. (1981). **Developing reading skills**. Cambridge: CUP.

Gurry, P. (1955). **The teaching of English as a foreign language**. London: Longmans .

Hafiz, F. M., & Tudor, I. (1989). Extensive reading and the development of language skills. **ELT Journal, 43** (1), 4-23

Hedge, T. (1985). **Using readers in language teaching**. London, UK: Macmillan.

Johnson, K., & Morrow, K. (ed). (1981). **Communication in the classroom**. London, UK: Longman.

Kutiper, K. (1983). Extensive reading: A means of reconciliation. **English Journal, 72** (7), 58-61.

O'Donnell, M. P., & Wood, M. (1999). **Becoming a reader: A developmental approach to reading instruction**. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED428322).

Ma, Lin .(1994). **English reading: An analysis of Chinese students' cultural assumptions and psychological characteristics** (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED376697).

McQuillan, J. (1994). Reading versus grammar: What students think is pleasurable and beneficial for language acquisition **Applied Language Learning, 5** (2), 95-100.

Nuttall, C. (1987). **Teaching reading skills in a foreign language**. London, UK: Heinemann

Pressley, M., & Others. (1997). A survey of the instructional practices of grade 5 teachers nominated as effective in promoting literacy. **Scientific Studies of Reading, 1** (2) 145-60.

Rees, P. (1992). **Reading in French-GCSE to A-Level** (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED392242).

Rivers, W., & Temperley, M. (1978). **A Practical Guide to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language**. New York: Oxford University Press

Rivers, W. (1981). **Teaching foreign language skills**. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Smith, R. (1997). Transforming a non-reading culture. In G. M. Jacabos, C. Davis, & W. A. Renandya (Eds.) **Successful Strategies for Extensive Reading (30-43).** Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Tse, L. (1996). When an ESL adult becomes a reader. **Reading Horizons, 37**, 1,16-29.

Walker, E. C. (1969). **A study of the fiction of Hemingway and Faulker in a college sophomore English class**. (ERIC Document Service No. ED048304).

West, M. (1950). **Teaching English in difficult circumstances: Teaching English as a foreign language**. London, UK: Longmans