# GEPT Gains Using Extra-Curricular English Reading

**I-Chin Nonie Chiang**
Foreign Language Center
National Chengchi University
No. 64, Sec. 2, Zhinan Rd., Wenshan
Taipei 11605, Taiwan (R. O. C.)

## Abstract

*This study investigated whether extracurricular English reading in the form of additive ER would influence student performance on the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in a one-year Freshman College English course. The participants were Taiwanese university learners of English (N = 240) from three consecutive academic years. Extracurricular graded readers and novels were integrated into the Freshman College English Course with little accountability, following the ER principles (Day &Bamford, 1998). Even though the pre-test and post-test results showed significant gains each year, an examination of the assigned readings, compared to what the literature has reported, showed the assigned additive reading materials were level appropriate but not satisfactory in terms of the amount of reading. Pedagogical implementations and limitations will be discussed.*

**Keywords*:*** Extracurricular reading, extensive reading, graded readers, GEPT

## *1. Literature*

A common goal of many language programs is to improve learner competence of the target language, either in ESL or EFL. One of the trends in Asia is to increase proficiency through extensive reading (ER), free voluntary reading (FVR) or pleasure reading, which as Waring and McLean (2015) emphasized, should include the core elements of a large amount of time spent in smooth and high fluent comprehension at a threshold speed on meaningful text as input that in turn creates a virtuous circle in reading development (McLean, 2014; Nuttall, 2005). Along the same lines, learner free reading amounts can increase learner proficiency and literacy even more effectively than instruction (Lee, 2005a; 2007; Mason, 2007a; Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch &Krashen, 2009; Masuharu, Kimura, Fukada& Takeuchi, 1996; Nation, 2014; Rob & Kano, 2013; Smith 2006; Suk, 2016). Input is important in language acquisition; unfortunately, after carrying out a series of studies, Mason (2014) made the following claim:

"But the way we have been offering reading and listening classes to students has been ineffective, inefficient, and insufficient… What has been ineffective, inefficient, and insufficient about the way we offer reading and listening classes is that we teach in skill-based ways. Teachers have been misled to believe that conscious learning of the rules of the language is necessary, and that output practice helps consciously learned knowledge become automatic competence." (Mason, 2014:247)

That is, to facilitate acquisition, learners need the appropriate input in quantity and quality, using the right means. In other words, for extensive reading to be effective, learners need comprehensible input in large quantity through meaning-focused reading, so that incidental language learning could happen. Unsimplified reading texts will probably be too difficult to provide such comprehensible input (Schmitt 2008); and, thus, Nation (2009) suggested the use of modified texts. The main type of simplified text used with language learners are graded readers, that have strictly controlled vocabulary and grammar and are typically divided into several levels from a few hundred headwords to 4,000–5,000 headwords. After the highest level, many learners move on to read unsimplified texts/novels. Nevertheless, Nation (2006) argued that the gap between these two types of texts would cause difficulty for readers because it requires around 8,000–9,000 word families to obtain the 98% coverage of running words in unsimplified texts, which could allow readers to read independently (Hu & Nation, 2000). To fill this gap, Nation and other researchers have worked together to produce mid-frequency readers (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Hu & Nation, 2000; Nation & Anthony, 2013; Nation & Wang, 1999) that contain vocabulary size of 4,000, 6,000, and 8,000 word families. On the other hand, Waring (2008) argued that the gap might not be as big.

Furthermore, Uden, Schmitt, and Schmitt (2014) analyzed the gap between the highest level of the Cambridge English Reader series from Cambridge University Press and two ungraded novels in terms of vocabulary load, and claimed that even though the 98% coverage is considered more appropriate for fluent, independent, and pleasure reading to take place, the 'jump' from the highest graded readers to ungraded books is challenging but achievable. In their analysis, the 3,000 most frequent families provide over 95% coverage for three out of the four books, and it takes knowledge of the next level (4,000 most frequent families) to gain 95% coverage of the 4th book, which is the percentage recommended for general comprehension (Nation, 2001). In the Cambridge graded readers, the gap of the starter level book and the Level 1 book is around 150 headwords; while the gap between level 5 books and level 6 books is around 1,000 headwords. As the vocabulary level becomes less frequent, the vocabulary gap increases. Thus, the authors concluded the gap should be 'manageable' and 'appropriate'.

This method of deciding reading materials based on vocabulary size echoes Krashen's*i+1*. When a learner is at the 2,000 word (family) level, the learner should read to learn the next 1,000 level words, i.e. 3,000 words (the *i+1* level). Therefore, learner reading levels should be set at 3,000 words. As a result, when reading, the level is controlled under the 98% vocabulary coverage, providing multiple exposures to the already known vocabulary and sufficient comprehensible input to learn the rest of the 2% new vocabulary. Nonetheless, regarding the amount of reading, researchers have not yet come to agreement on how extensive one needs to read. A chronicle shortlist of the recently published studies is first,Nishizawa, Yoshioka, and Fukuda (2010) reported that when learners reach 300,000 words of reading, their TOEIC scores started to show significant improvements. Waring (2013) proposed 2 to 3 graded readers a week at the right level, while Belgar and Hunt (2014) suggested about 200,000 words a year. Huffman (2014) suggested 80,000 for 15 weeks. Nation and Wang (1999) considered that a graded reader a week at the right level appropriate, or at least one graded reader every two weeks. Hagley (2017) suggested 85,000 for non-English majors during a 15-week semester. To read this many words, McLean (2014) proposed that reading programs should last for at least two years. Carney (2016) also followed up Nishizawa, Yoshioka, and Fukuda's 300,000-word reading amount, did the math and concluded that it would take at least one to two years to accomplish this massive goal. Meanwhile, regarding the minimum reading amount, Waring (2013) suggested that 2-3 graded readers a month may not suffice; while Waring and McLean (2015) claimed reading one or two graded readers a semester is severely insufficient. Readers have different needs in different reading contexts; as a result, research has not yet find a way to define to what extent one needs to read.

ER exists in many forms (Waring& McLean, 2015) and yields various assessment and evaluation results that lead to difficult interpretations while comparing study results. The commonly mentioned benefits of ER include improved vocabulary size (Lee, 2005a; 2005b; Ponniah, 2011; Waring& Nation, 2004), better syntax (Cho &Krashen, 1994; Nation, 1997), higher self-confidence in language use (Iwahori, 2008), improved reading fluency (Beglar& Hunt, 2014; Grabe, 2010; Huffman, 2014), and motivation to read (Takase, 2012). One way to investigate the effectiveness of such reading program is to consider student performance on standardized tests. Research has shown this kind of comprehension-based reading program is excellent test-preparation (Mason, 2014). Gains in TOEFL (Constantino, Lee, Cho &Krashen, 1997; Gradman&Hanania, 1991; Mason, 2006, 2007b) and TOEIC (Krashen& Mason 2015; Mason, 2004; 2011; Mason &Krashen, 2017; Nishizawa, Yoshioka, &Fukada, 2010; Storey, Gibson & Williamson, 2006) have been reported in both qualitative and quantitative studies. In particular, Mason published a series of case studies showing impressive gains on TOEIC (2011; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). For instance, in their first study (2011), the male subject read 6,456 pages of English graded readers and gained 180 TOEIC points in 12 months. In the second study (2013a), the male subject read 2,624 pages and gained 85 TOEIC points in 6 months. And in the third study (2013b), the male subject read 4,125 pages and gained 220 TOEIC points over 6 months. The average of points of gain per month were 15, 17, and 36, whereas the gain points per page were 0.03, 0.03, and 0.05, accordingly. Even though in these studies, a small amount of listening to stories and occasional form-based learning was involved, the input came from the reading (78%, 92%, 67%), as Table 2 in Mason (2013b) has shown. Pendergast (2010) estimated that English-major EFL college students in Japan gained about 135 points on the TOEIC in four semesters, which was about 500 hours of instruction that combined both traditional instruction and reading (0.27 points per hour). After comparing the results of her own studies and that of Pendergast, Mason suggested that acquisition of reading competence from comprehensible input is more efficient than traditional approaches (2011; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c).

In Taiwan, a third standardized test option in addition to the above-mentioned two is available, the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), among many others such as IELTS and Cambridge Certificate. GEPT was developed and administered by The Language Training and Testing Center.

The test targets English learners at all levels in Taiwan, corresponds to Taiwan's English education framework and provides institutions or schools with a reference for evaluating English proficiency levels when needed. There are five levels in the GEPT: elementary, intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced, and superior. It aims to promote a balanced English learning process, covering the four language skills of listening and reading in the first stage, followed by writing and speaking in the second stage. The reliability indices for the GEPT listening and reading tests fall between 0.87 and 0.91 while the inter-rater reliability indices for writing and speaking are between 0.89 and 0.90 (Roever& Pan, 2008). Table1 shows the GEPT alignment. Please see Appendix A for the test format and structure (high-intermediate level) and the passing standard. [1]

**Table 1. GEPT alignment**

| GEPT | | CEFR | IELTS | TOEFL iBT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advanced | Speaking and writing | $C1^{+2}$ | 7.5 | 110 |
| | Listening and reading | C1 | 7.0 | 100 |
| High-Intermediate | Speaking and writing | $B2^{+}$ | 6.5 | 92 |
| | Listening and reading | B2 | 6.0 | 79 |
| Intermediate | Speaking and writing | $B1^{+}$ | 5.5 | Below 79 |
| | Listening and reading | B1 | 5.0 | |

GEPT is well-accepted in Taiwan because most Taiwanese students have at some point taken this test. Their reason to choose the test is probably the results of age and level limitation. Taiwanese learners can start taking the GEPT from secondary school and from a comparatively low level of proficiency compared to TOEFL. Additionally, many students use this proficiency certificate for their university applications. Despite the popularity of the GEPT, few ER studies use it for measurement. With the robust statistics to support it and the corresponding level it has towards the participants of the current study; the author has decided to use it as the measure to investigate whether a Freshman College English course with additional assigned reading of graded readers and novels would increase the performance of students through GEPT pre- and post-tests comparisons.

This study considers the factor of additive extracurricular reading in addition to the traditional instructional English course. While considering performance assessments, the author considered reading comprehension to be the most direct and relevant aspect of the four language skills. Therefore, the author investigated this concern through examining the reading scores on a standardized English proficiency test, the GEPT. To evaluate the current additive extracurricular reading program and its influence, this study gauged the following research questions:

1. Were the chosen graded and novels for the course at the right level?
2. Was the reading amount appropriate over the course of the academic year?
3. Did the students improve by the end of the year?

## *2. Methods*

### 2.1. Participants

The study involved two hundred and forty non-English major freshmen at a national university in Northern Taiwan from three consecutive years. After screening by the college entrance exam, the participants' overall English level was between 80–100% of the General Scholastic Ability Test. Based on the author's experience at university, student performance was on average approximated B1 to C1 (Council of Europe, 2001) according to the Common European Framework. Because the students of each class were from different departments, departmental and individual differences were observed. This difference also existed in student vocabulary size test results (through informal class surveys), ranging from 4,000–8,000 approximately, which fit Beglar and Nation's description (2007) of students at university level, "undergraduate non-native speakers successfully coping with study at an English speaking university have a vocabulary of around 5,000-6,000 word families" (p.12). Table 2 gives the detail of the population of each year.

[1]More information available: https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/E_LTTC/E_GEPT.htm.

[2]The English proficiency of individuals who passes the speaking and writing is higher than that of those who pas the listening and reading tests. Therefore, to reflect the results more accurately, a "+" sign is added to the corresponding CEFR levels. https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/E_LTTC/E_GEPT/quality.htm

**Table 2. Population detail**

| | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | 25 | 63 | 88 |
| Year 2 | 45 | 47 | 92 |
| Year 3 | 25 | 35 | 60 |
| | | | 240 |

### 2.2. Treatments

#### 2.2.1. Course design

The Freshman College English course was a four-skill integrated one-year obligatory module that was conducted entirely in English. In the course design, the students were asked to read a total of five graded readers and novels over the year as extracurricular readings following the extensive reading approach in addition to the in-class instruction from the textbook units. The first four books were chosen by the author based on the relevance to the textbook topics, whereas the fifth book was self-selected by the students. For the fifth book, the students were asked to form small reading groups of 4–5 students and reached a group agreement on the book that interested all members. Some of the example books were *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Charlotte's Web, Who Stole My Cheese*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, othergraded readers (e.g. *Murder Maker* and *Dolphin Music* from the Cambridge English Readers Series), and young adult novels (e.g. *The Giver*, *Harry Potters series* and *Twilight* etc.). The reason to use assigned readings rather than self-selected reading was the result of practical constraints, i.e. the author recognized that the majority of the students do not have English reading habits and may not know how to choose books at the right level and thus it may take far too long and become too late for them to find appropriate books for their level. If the reading were inappropriate to level, their reading attitude, experience, and interest would be negatively influenced. Therefore, the author used the course as the beginning stage to point students in the right direction and develop the students' after-class English reading habits. The reading report assignment showed that nearly all students could finish the reading, except for one or two students each year.

#### 2.2.2. Reading materials

After researching different series and titles of graded readers from various publishers, the author decided on the following titles: *Dragon's Eggs, Windows of the Mind, Frindle, and Frozen Pizza and Other Slices of Life*. The reasons for choosing these books are listed as follows. Firstly, the Cambridge English Readers Series has a clear level description (Appendix B), and books for Level 5 and 6 are written for B2 to C2 level readers, which means that they are appropriate for participants. Secondly, the stories are original and there is no Chinese version available yet. Therefore, students must read to know the plot. Next, the topics of these books were the same as the textbook topics, so that the students could relate what they read to what they had learned, and felt the reading was part of the course. *Frindle* was the only book that was not a graded reader; however, the language level was considered easy enough for independent reading and the length was shorter than an unsimplified novel. Table 3 gives the number of total word counts of the 4 assigned readings, that comes to a total of 93,751.

**Table 3. Book titles and word counts**

| | Book Title | Total word count |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Dragon's Eggs* | 25,405 |
| 2 | *Windows of the Mind* | 25,640 |
| 3 | *Frindle* | 16,232 |
| 4 | *Frozen Pizza* | 26,474 |
| | Total | 93,751 |

#### 2.2.3. Accountability

Researchers suggest MoodleReader or MReader to facilitate monitoring the reading progress, for instance, Robb (2015) as well as Robb and Kano (2013). The university where the current university took place has been transferred to electronic administration and the courses, thus different learning platforms have already been used, such as Moodle or MW5. The course of College English also worked with different e-learning platforms every year to provide students extra learning opportunities and exposure, e.g. MyET, VoiceTube, in addition to a specifically designed supplementary online course for remedial students. Students often were confused by having to access several platforms when they first set foot on campus.

Therefore, the author decided to ask the students to write a book report, a reflection rather than a summary, instead of using MoodleReader or MReader. The aim of the reflection was to ask the students to think of the message and the lessons the stories wanted to convey and how they relate to the stories. The author believes that active thinking helps retain memory and questions on platforms like MReader are comparatively more passive just like comprehension checks, which lacks a required deeper thinking. In Year 1, to provide more practice, the author asked the students to write their book reports in English, which was more output-oriented. Most student report content was superficial and general, probably due to the language requirement. As a result, in Year 2, the author chose to ask the students to write their book reports in Chinese, i.e. their native language. This decision was made based on the following two reasons. First, using Chinese to write can greatly reduce anxiety about writing and allow students to express their thoughts clearly and led to work that was more in depth. Secondly, many studies have shown that the comprehensible input, not the output, was the cause of language acquisition (Sari, 2013; Krashen, 2004; Lee, 2005a; Mason, 2004). The author wanted the students to concentrate on reading and enjoying the story, rather than worrying about writing the report. Therefore, the book report was changed to writing in Chinese and the length was limited to one page. In Year 3, some of the students asked for more English writing practice and wanted to write their report in English. Therefore, the author let the students choose the language they wanted, but most students wrote in Chinese. The author did not ask the students to keep a reading log because most of the time, self-reported data is questionable (Mason, 2014). Additionally, the author wanted the students to know it was the reading that really matters, not the record or book report.

Even though the course design did not follow the 10 ER principles of Day and Bamford (1998; 2002) since it is not simply for pleasure and information and regarding reading being its own reward, it is inevitable for many teachers who practice ER to include accountability and scores as incentives. It is a paradoxical situation (Mori, 2015). The current research adopted assigned reading and book report, disobeying the abovementioned principles, should still qualify as the "ER as *i*+1 – focus on meaning-focused input" in essence (Waring& McLean, 2015).

#### 2.2.4. Measures

Readers from each year were asked to take the same mock test of high-intermediate-level GEPT at Week 4 of the 1st semester (pre-test) and a month before the 2nd semester ended (post-test). The high-intermediate level requires learners have an effective command of English and handle a broader range of topics (see Appendix C for skill-area level description). The GEPT consists of reading and listening subsections in the first stage (Table 1) but only the reading subsection was used in the current study because of the following reasons. Firstly, the section was considered linked most directly to after-school reading. Secondly, the high-intermediate level was equivalent to the B2 CEFR level, which best reflected the participant level. In addition, passing the first stage of the high-intermediate level is the graduation bar for many universities in Taiwan. Next, research has shown the high reliability of the GEPT. The reliability indices for the listening and reading tests fall between 0.87 and 0.91 (Roever& Pan, 2008). Finally, the reading section consists of 45 questions and the allotted time for this subsection is 50 minutes, which can be easily arranged into the course because one class period in Taiwan is 50 minutes. After receiving consent from the students, the students took the mock test. The results of the correct answers were recorded and analyzed with SPSS.

## *3. Results*

### 3.1. Level of materials

ER literature suggests readers to start establishing reading habits with easy reading materials usually referring to the graded readers. Four books were assigned in this study. The first three graded readers were from Cambridge English Readers Series; thus, the level description has revealed the number of headword counts. Nevertheless, the fourth book, *Frindle*, was written for native speakers and so far, the author has not found any information on its headword count. As a result, an alternative method was used to estimate the language level of *Frindle*. After examining different criteria of the book's reading level online, the author compared the level information of *Frindle* on the Leveling Resource Chart (Scholastic Guided Reading Programs) and the information in the Lexile® level. A Lexile measure serve two functions: It measures how difficult a text is and it measures student reading ability levels. The higher the Lexile measure, the higher the student reading level is. *Frindle* is Scholastic Guided Reading Level "R", which is equivalent to Lexile Level 830L. Other novels of similar Lexile level include the Harry Potter series (880L) and Twilight (720L), among others.

According to McQuillan's (2016) analysis of word levels using Nation's criterion of 98% vocabulary coverage percentage from the 3,000–8,000 word-family level, these two series of novels fell at the 4,000–6,000 word levels, which is higher than the Cambridge English Reader Series. This means, the novel *Frindle* is approximately at this level, slightly but not dramatically higher than the first three graded readers (Table 4). In addition, this level is still in the range of the general description of an average undergraduate's vocabulary size of 5,000–6,000 (Belgar and Nation, 2007). Therefore, in terms of the level appropriateness, the degree of assignment completion, level description of the graded readers and Lexile level of Frindle, and the analysis of the vocabulary size all led to positive results. The chosen materials gave the readers an easier start to help establish a reading habit and contained sufficient comprehensible input and left a 2% space for new vocabulary expansion in the novel, which is at the highest level.

Regarding the Lexile levels of the fifth self-selected novels by the students, the information is as follows: *The Giver* (760L), *Tuesdays with Morrie* (830L), *Who Stole My Cheese* (900L), *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (950L), *Charlotte's Web* (680L). Other best sellers at the similar level are *Hunger Games* (810L), *Book Thief* (730L), *A Game of Thrones* (830L), *Tuck Everlasting* (770L), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (810L), *Matilda* (840L), *Walk Two Moons* (770L), *Twilight* (720L), and *Breaking Dawn* (690).

**Table 4. Level of assigned reading**

| Book Title | Level | Head words |
|---|---|---|
| *Dragon's Eggs* | Cambridge English Reader Level 5 | 2,800 |
| *Windows of the Mind* | Cambridge English Reader Level 5 | 2,800 |
| *Frozen Pizza* | Cambridge English Reader Level 6 | 3,800 |
| *Frindle* | Scholastic Guided Reading Level: R<br>Lexile® measure: 830L | (Est. 4,000-6,000) |

### 3.2. Amount of Reading

The total extracurricular assigned reading amount in this course came from the three graded readers, *Frindle*, and a group-decided novel. Table 3 shows the total word count of the assigned four books was 93,751. Several examples of the students' self-selected books were given in the course design description in the methodology section. Therefore, the following analysis will use these books as examples to estimate the total word count (Table 5). The data showed wide word count variation among the novels, ranging from 23,000 to over 160,000, but mostly between 20,000–60,000 running words, that was approximately equivalent to 1–2 graded readers. In total, over the year, the word counts added up to around 118,000–154,000 words.

**Table 5. Total word count of readings**

| | Self-Selected NovelsWord count | Total word count |
|---|---|---|
| Assigned graded readers and *Frindle* | | 93,751 |
| Self-Selected Novels | | |
| *Dolphin Music* | 23,267 | 117,018 |
| *Murder Maker* | 28,170 | 121,921 |
| *Who Stole My Cheese* | 29,760 | 123,511 |
| *The Giver* | 43,617 | 137,368 |
| *Charlotte's Web* | 59,520 | 153,271 |
| *Tuesdays with Morrie* | 59,520 | 153,271 |
| *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* | 69,440 | 163,191 |
| *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone* | 77,508 | 171,259 |
| *Twilight* | 168,640 | 262,391 |

Looking back at the suggested levels of the research (Belgar& Hunt, 2014; Hagley, 2017; Huffman, 2014; McLean, 2014; Nation & Wang, 1999; Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Fukuda, 2010; Waring 2013; Waring& McLean, 2015), the lowest reading amount was the 80,000 words over a 15-week semester, which means 160,000 words a year. The second lowest was the 85,000 words over a 15-week semester, which means 170,000 words. The next in the line was 200,000 words a year suggested by Belgar and Hunt (2014).The data analysis revealed that the assigned reading amount was not sufficient.

To meet the minimum required amount (160,000 words a year), the students must read another 42,982 words (160,000–117,018), which could be rounded up to 45,000 words. In other words, if students can read 25,000 more words in a semester, they can read approximately 100,000 words a semester, which means 200,000 words a year. With readings in the summer and winter break, it is possible to reach the 300,000 words level, which Nishizawa, Yoshioka, and Fukuda (2010) claimed could lead to significant improvements on standardized test results, such as TOEIC.

### 3.3. GEPT gains

Table 6 presents the analysis results. A paired t-test was run on the sample of 240 participants to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between the scores of pre-and post-tests in three consecutive years. The results showed the gain increased every year, furthermore, the pre-/post-tests differences were all significant for the three years (Year 1: t = - 5.983, df = 87, p = .000<.05; Year 2: t = - 14.282, df = 91, p = .000, <05; Year 3: t = - 12.196, df = 59, p = .000<.05).

**Table 6. Results of pre-/post tests**

| | Pre-test | | Post-test | | Gain | t value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | mean | s.d. | mean | s.d. | | |
| Year 1 | 29.29 | 6.637 | 32.97 | 4.453 | 3.68 | -5.983*** |
| Year 2 | 21.26 | 5.003 | 28.98 | 6.852 | 7.72 | -14.282*** |
| Year 3 | 19.13 | 4.973 | 29.83 | 7.195 | 10.7 | -12.196*** |

## *4. Discussion*

The material selection procedure was long because the author read many graded readers and short novels that seemed appropriate and interesting. In fact, this could be done easily and efficiently with a vocabulary size test by matching student vocabulary sizes and the books' headwords or reading levels (Macalister, 2015). Vocabulary coverage is not the sole factor that impacts reading comprehension, but it surely is an important one. For instance, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) reported that vocabulary knowledge accounted for 64% of the variance in reading comprehension scores (in McQuillan, 2016, p.64). Many learners believe or prefer reading novels that are written for native speakers without any adaption or simplification. To find proper materials for learners after graded readers, Uden, Schmitt, and Schmitt (2014) studied participant reading comprehension, reading rates, vocabulary text coverage, and overall affect and compared two books of the highest-level Cambridge Readers and two ungraded novels, and found the graded readers fell slightly lower than the novels in terms of vocabulary coverage. Their results showed that during the transition from the graded readers to the ungraded novels, participant vocabulary coverage dropped from 99.1% to 95.7%, namely from the 98% optimal coverage to the minimum (95%) coverage. Even though readers might experience a reduction in vocabulary coverage, this transition is still possible for it is still above 95% for general understanding. Therefore, they concluded that encouraging motivated readers to move to ungraded novels after the highest graded readers was still pedagogically sound advice.Furthermore, in some cases, it might take to up to only 4,000–5,000 word families to provide the 95% coverage. In other cases, readers would read challenging novels because the story interested them so much that they were willing to ignore the vocabulary burden (McQuillan, 2016). This vocabulary burden could be decreased through narrow reading (Krashen, 2004b, McQuillan, 2016) in that the readers read the books by the same author or the same topics. Narrow reading, e.g. reading series books, gives readers the advantages of background knowledge about the characters and setting, writer style, word choice, and proper nouns used, to help facilitate comprehension after the first book in the series (McQuillan, 2016). This vocabulary recycling is most obvious with narrative fiction written by a single author (Gardner, 2008). Research studies of L2 adult readers have proved the effectiveness of series novels in increasing language acquisition (Cho &Krashen, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, in McQuillan, 2016, p.66-67). Even though series novels can sufficiently provide comprehensible input for vocabulary expansion, Nation (2014) further suggested learners to read a mix of reading genres for there is a better and greater chance to meet a wider variety of words.

Regarding the amount of reading, the input in the current study was not sufficient. Nation's analysis (2009) estimated that a learner has to read over 500,000 words a year to catch up with the vocabulary size of a native speaker of an equivalent age; however, Nation (2014, p.2) suggested "a vocabulary size of 9,000 word families is a sensible long-term goal for unassisted reading of unsimplified texts" because such vocabulary size could cover over 98% of the running words in a variety of texts" (Nation, 2006). To learn these words, learners need to meet these words gradually and frequently. He used a novel corpus to see how many tokens a learner would have to read to meet a certain level, which was on average 12 times for the acquisition at a particular 1,000 word family level. Then, his corpus analysis showed that, if the input is at the right level, from the 4th 1,000 level on, to increase the next 1,000 words, a learner has to read 500,000 words per year (5 days a week, 40 weeks a year).

The time needed for reading per day at the reading speed of 150 words per minute will be 17 minutes for 4,000 words, 33 minutes for the 5,000 words and 50 minutes per day for the 6,000 words and more than an hour for the 7,000–9,000 words. McQuillan (2016) followed up and calculated that in total, one would need to read approximately 11,000,000 words to reach the 9,000-word-family level and this would take about 1,200 hours. That is, if one reads one hour per day, this is a little over three years of reading. Therefore, the author strongly suggests that the university years are a good time to establish reading habits; if the students can start reading from the first year, they can read enough words in the above calculation long before their graduation. To correctly provide input to the learners, Nation developed mid-frequency readers to help bridge the gap between the graded readers and unsimplifed novels (Nation, 2014). In the current study, the participants fell below the most frequent 9,000 words, thus Nation's calculation provided a clear goal for learners. Since individual proficiency levels vary, a teacher could use the vocabulary size test to locate student sizes and help them set up individual goals to read, or group students of similar size and work together to set up a group goal.

The author understands that the significant gain in test performance was not solely contributed by the assigned extracurricular reading. There could be other factors, such as more contact with the target language (Robb & Kano, 2013, p.244), more print exposure (Mol& Bus, 2011), and functioning along or interacting with each other. On how to increase the compelling input, Nation (2006), after studying different corpora combination, claimed, "the best advice to learners for vocabulary inclusion might be to read lots of magazines, newspapers and novels, and watch plenty of movies (Nation, 2014, p.13)". Considering how closely learning is connected to online courses in modern education, especially after the success of flipped classrooms, Taiwanese education has forced virtual learning and teaching into the curriculum. As a result, teachers must consider how to incorporate virtual learning into a reading program in the near future.

Simple math can show us the ratio between total reading amount (total word counts) and the gain scores of the tests. For instance, in Mason (2011), Mr. Tanaka gained 63 TOEFL equivalent points (from 461 to 524) over a year, and 0.25 points per hour of input and one TOEFL point for every 100 pages read. Similarly, we can get a number that shows how many words one has read to increase one correct answer in the test. For example, if we use *Dolphin Music* as the self-chosen novel. Thus, the total words read will be 117,018. The gain of Year 1 is 3.68. Then, we can do the math and get 31,798 words/score. This calculation is not only oversimplified but also incorrect because not all students finished the assigned reading. Also, the level of improvement varied widely in the three years, and so far, the author has not been able to interpret this variation yet.

Critics have questioned the positive results of the effect and efficiency of the ER reading approach. Regarding these, Mason (2013b) summarized studies that used a variety of analytical approaches and subjects to prove the power of reading, such as multiple regression and structural equation modeling for the former, and international students preparing for study in the US, international students in the US, and students of English as foreign language in Taiwan for the latter (Gradman&Hanania, 1991; Constantino, Lee, Cho, &Krashen, 1997; Lee, 2007). She then added her own various subjects in previous studies, including reluctant learners of English in Japan, Health Science majors, and vocational students and several case studies (Lee & Hsu, 2009; Mason, 2007; 2011; 2013a; 2013b; Mason &Krashen, 1997). Critics also suspected that the subjects who made gains must be getting supplementary or extra input somewhere else. Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, &Krashen (2009) used counterevidence and demonstrated how this suspicion could be wrong. In their study, even though the students had no contact with German outside of class, the students still showed impressive gains in vocabulary from listening to stories in German. Researchers might also criticize the current study for lacking a comparison group; however, the author chose not to withhold the reading approach from a subset of students, sacrificing what was believed good for them just to create a comparison group (Robb & Kano 2013:238).

Two types of College English courses are available at the university the authors work at: obligatory basic course (two consecutive semesters) and elective advance course (one semester). In general, students must finish the obligatory basic course for one year and then move on to the elective advance course. Students who can prove their proficiency can waive the basic course and take the advance course right away. This means, the curriculum design considers the advance course higher level than the basic course. Recent surveys of student vocabulary size in classes raised my suspicion that the students in these two courses are not different per se. Nevertheless, thestudents of the advance course should by default possess higher levels of proficiency. This being the case, the content of the course might not be the comprehensible input level for the students, they could be *i+2* to *i+n*.
This could also be a sign that the one-year obligatory English course could not improve student proficiency (cf. Krashen, 2010). Even if the students improved from the basic course, but the improvement become less obvious and in the advance course, the phenomenon indicates that something happens to deteriorate the learning and it is urgent to stop this from happening. Furthermore, university policy has been moving towards product-oriented instruction that diverges from the extensive reading spirit. It is up to an experienced teacher's expertise to balance between their own teaching belief and policy expectations. It is of vital importance that policy deciders consult teachers before any policy is formed and/or put into practice.

In the author's observation, the majority of the students do not know their own vocabulary size or why this is important. This not only leads to the difficulty in setting reading goals and estimating the required time, but also causes problems of locating appropriate reading materials and the time they need to search the materials. Students might spend more time looking for materials than the actual time it takes to read it. Research has pointed out that functioning average university students should have a vocabulary size of around 5,000–6,000 words (McQuillan, 2016); however, the author suggests that teachers should take advantage of the vocabulary size test websites to help students know their vocabulary size, test, and introduce the reading speed of EFL readers, then introduce the importance of extracurricular reading and then help students set reasonable goals. Websites such as Reading Length (www.readinglength.com) can help estimate how much time one would need to read a certain book. Students need to know how much time to set aside for reading by clearly planning on a weekly, monthly, semester-ly, and yearly basis; then they need to execute and self-monitor to be able to follow their plan and successfully establish their reading habits. As to the method of effective vocabulary growth, while investigating the relationship between extensive reading and incidental vocabulary learning, Nation (2013; 2015) found that in addition to extensive reading, deliberate vocabulary learning could accelerate vocabulary acquisition. He reported that 'guessing from context' does not stimulate learning, but 'looking up words in the dictionary after reading' does (Fraser, 1999; Mondria, 2003; in Nation 2015, p.142). So, 'dictionary skills' are still worth teaching. In the cases of reading graded readers that have already had high vocabulary coverage, a reader should write down the unknown words and look them up after reading.

Occasionally, asking readers of a higher proficiency to read easy graded readers might lead to negative attitudes (Tabata-Sandom, 2013). They may feel that they are being looked down on, unconfident or incapable, or they may think this reading does not help develop their proficiency at all. Therefore, with these learners, teachers should avoid leveling down the reading too much. Also, while using modified text on these learners, a teacher should first dispel learner misconceptions. Tabata-Sandom (2013) advised teachers to give explicit guidance about the efficacy of graded readers and extensive reading. In their study, some advanced learners had an urge to read unmodified Japanese texts that were much higher than their current level because they believed that this was the way to gain native-like proficiency. These learners must be taught why reading easier graded readers at the beginning could help them achieve their goal of being able to read original texts fluently later on. Thus, the authors recommended, "L2 teachers must enlighten their learners regarding the reasons why reading modified graded readers is efficacious" (Tabata-Sandom, 2013, p.279).

One of the signature features of extensive reading is the use of graded readers (Uden, Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014, p.2). Even though researchers have criticized the use of simplified texts, (e.g., Benhardt, 2011; Han &D'Angelo, 2009; Honeyfield, 1997), rejecting this methodology sacrifices the opportunity for learners to benefit from incidental language learning through reading and opportunity to develop fluency in reading (Nation, 2001). Lee (2005a) claimed that reading is still a better bet for it produced outstanding gains in less-than-optimal contexts and is "a tremendous source of pleasure" (p.18). So far, the best way to implement an extensive reading approach is still providing a reading environment and a massive number of books (McQuillan, 2016; Mori, 2015).

Classroom libraries full of interesting texts with easy access have proven to be successful with readers (Krashen, 2004a; Mason, 2013b; McQuillan, 1998). Nonetheless, with practical constraints, if extracurricular reading is not possible, in-class time is worth investing in self-selected reading (Macalister, 2015; Mori, 2015).

The study design presents several limitations that need improving. For example, a future study can use a reading log to quantify the actual reading time and investigate whether the readers really have done the reading. Keeping the target reading amount in mind, future research should continue look for ways to increase reading amounts, especially in the extracurricular reading context and to what extent these influences proficiency. Moreover, research on how readers can target the required amount for language acquisition to take place more efficiently, so the necessary repetitions of meetings for the vocabulary can become distributed and incremental.

## *5. Conclusion*

More reading leads to higher literacy performance (Smith 1996). Extensive reading programs have been proven to relate to increased and improved reading habits and the effect could last over time (Rodrigo, Greenberg & Segal, 2014). Even though the best time to establish reading habits, i.e. in childhood, when emergent reading started, learners should not miss the next best time. The earlier the intervention, the better the results. This study treated the first year of university to initiate extracurricular reading through College English courses, leading learners to a wide variety of reading materials to accomplish the research-based target amount of reading, such as using graded readers (Krashen& Mason, 2015; Mason, 2004; 2006; 2011; 2013a; 2013b; Mason &Krashen, 1997), mid-frequency readers (Nation, 2014), unsimplified novels (Uden, Schmitt & Schmitt 2014), and series novels (Krashen, 2004; McQuillan, 2016; Nation, 2015). It is never too late to develop the fundamentals of reading (Sheldrick-Ross, McKechnie and Rothbauer, 2006; cited in Rodrigo, Greenberg & Segal, 2014, p.86). Learners must know that if they do not read, they do not just pass a good story or miss an assignment; what they give up is their future language proficiency.

## *6. References*

Belgar, D., & Hunt, A. (2014). Pleasure reading and reading rate gains. Reading in a Foreign Language, 26, 29-48.

Belgar, D., & Nation, P. (2007). A vocabulary size test.The Language Teacher, 31, 9-13.

Benhardt, E. (2011). Understanding advanced second-language reading. New York, NY: Routledge.

Carney, N. (2016). Gauging Extensive Reading's Relationship with TOEIC Reading Score Growth. Journal of Extensive Reading, 26(4), 69-86.

Cho, K., &Krashen, S. (1994). Acquisition of vocabulary from the Sweet Valley Kids series: Adult ESL acquisition. The Journal of Reading, 37, 662-667.

Cho, K., &Krashen, S. (1995a). Becoming a dragon: Progress in English as a second language through narrow free voluntary reading. California Reader, 29, 9-10.

Cho, K., &Krashen, S. (1995b). From Sweet Valley kids to Harlequins in one year: A case study of an adult second language acquirer. California English, 1(1), 18-19.

Constantino, R., Lee, S. Y., Cho, K., &Krashen, S. (1997). Free Voluntary Reading as a Predictor of TOEFL Scores.Applied Language Learning, 8(1), 111-118.

Council of Europe, (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Day, R., &Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. Reading in a Foreign Language, 14, 136-141.

Fraser, C. (1999). Lexical processing strategy use and vocabulary learning through reading.Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21, 225-241.

Gardner, D. (2008). Vocabulary recycling in children's authentic reading materials: A corpus-based investigation of narrow reading. Reading in a Foreign Language, 20, 92-122.

Grabe, W. (2010). Fluency in reading – Thirty-five years later. Reading in a Foreign Language, 22, 71-83.

Gradman, H., &Hanania, E. (1991). Language learning background factors and ESL proficiency.Modern Language Journal, 75, 39-51.

Hagley, E. (2017). Extensive graded reading with engineering students: Effects and outcomes. Reading in a Foreign Language, 29(2), 203-217.

Han, Z., &D'Angelo, A. (2009). Balancing between comprehension and acquisition: Proposing a dual approach. In Z.-H. Han, & N. Anderson (Eds.), Second language reading research and instruction (pp. 173-192). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Hirsh, D., & Nation, P. (1992). What vocabulary size is needed to read unsimplified texts for pleasure? Reading in a Foreign Language, 8, 689-696.

Honeyfield, J. (1997). Simplification. TESOL Quarterly, 11, 431-440.

Hu, M., & Nation, P. (2000).Vocabulary density and reading comprehension. Reading in a Foreign Language, 13, 403-430.

Huffman, J. (2014). Reading rate gains during a one-semester extensive reading course. Reading in a Foreign Language, 26, 17-33.

Iwahori, Y. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL. Reading in a Foreign Language, 20, 70-91.

Krashen, S. (2004a).The power of reading. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, and Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Krashen, S. (2004b).The case for narrow reading.Language Magazine, 3, 17-19.

Krashen, S. (2010). The Goodman/Smith Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, the Comprehension Hypothesis, and the (Even Stronger) Case for Free Voluntary Reading. In P. Anders (Ed.), Defying convention, inventing the future in literacy research and practice: essays in tribute to Ken and Yetta Goodman (pp.46-60). New York: Routledge.

Krashen, S., & Mason, B. (2015). Can Second Language Acquirers Reach High Levels of Proficiency Through Self-Selected Reading? An Attempt to Confirm Nation's (2014) Results. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/2015_krashen_mason_can_second_language_acquirers__..._.pdf

Laufer, B., &Ravenhorst-Kalovski, B. (2010). Lexical threshold revisited: Lexical text coverage, learner's vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Reading in a Foreign Language, 22, 15-30.

Lee, S. (2005a). The Robustness of Extensive Reading: Evidence from Two Studies. The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, summer, 13-24.

Lee, S. (2005b). Sustained Silent Reading Using Assigned Reading: Is Comprehensible Input Enough? The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, Fall, 10-12.

Lee, S. (2007). Revelations from three consecutive studies on extensive reading.Regional Language Center (RELC) Journal, 38(2), 150-170.

Lee, S., & Hsu, Y. (2009). A three-year longitudinal study of in-class sustained silent reading with Taiwanese vocational college students. Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching, 5(1), 15-29.

Macalister, J. (2015). Guidelines or commandments? Reconsidering core principles in extensive reading. Reading in a Foreign Language, 27(1), 122-128.

Mason, B. (2004). The effect of adding supplementary writing to an extensive reading program. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/effect_of_adding_supplementary_writing_to_an_extensive_reading_program.pdf

Mason, B. (2006). Free Voluntary Reading and Autonomy in Second Language Acquisition: Improving TOEFL Scores from Reading Alone. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/improving_toefl_scores_from_reading_alone.pdf

Mason, B. (2007a). The Efficiency of Self-Selected Reading and hearing Stories on Adult Second Language Acquisition. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/the_efficiency_of_self-selected_reading_and_hearing_stories_on_adult_second_language_acquisition.pdf

Mason, B. (2007b). TOEFL Preparation using Recreational Reading. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/toefl_preparation_using_recreational_reading.pdf

Mason, B. (2011). Impressive gains on the TOEIC after one year of comprehensible input, with no output or grammar study. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/mason_tanaka_ijflt_11-11.pdf

Mason, B. (2013a). Substantial Gains in Listening and Reading Ability in English as a Second Language from Voluntary Listening and Reading in a 75 Year Old student. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/substantial_gains_b_mason.pdf

Mason, B. (2013b). The Case of Mr. Kashihara: Another Case of Substantial Gains in Reading and Listening without Output or Grammar Study. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/mr_kashihara.pdf

Mason, B. (2013c). The Efficient Use of Literature in Second Language Education: Free Reading and Listening to Stories. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/the_efficient_use_of_literature_in_second_language_education.pdf

Mason, B. (2014). Self-Selected Pleasure Reading and Story Listening for Foreign Language Classrooms. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/ibukiyomarch2014.pdf

Mason, B., &Krashen, S. (1997). Extensive Reading in English As A Foreign Language.System, 25(1), 91-102.

Mason, B., &Krashen, S. (2017). Self-Selected Reading and TOEIR Performance: Evidence from Case Histories. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/self-selected_reading_and_toeic_performance:_evidence_from_case_histories.pdf

Mason, B., Vanata, M., Jander, K., Borsch, R., &Krashen, S. (2009). The Effects and Efficiency of Hearing Stories on Vocabulary Acquisition by Students of German as a Second Foreign language in Japan. The Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching, 5(1), 1-14. [Online] Available: http://benikomason.net/content/articles/effects_and_efficiency.pdf

Masuhara, H., Kimura, T., Fukada, A., & Takeuchi, M. (1996).Strategy training or/and extensive reading? In T. Hickey & J. Williams (Eds.), Language, education, and society in a changing world (pp.263-274). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

McLean, S. (2014). Evaluation of the cognitive and affective advantages of the Foundations Reading Library series, Journal of Extensive Reading, 1, 1-14.

McQuillan, J. (1998). The use of self-selected and free voluntary reading in heritage language programs: A review of research. In S. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan(Eds.), Heritage Language Development (pp.73-88). Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.

McQuillan, J. (2016). What can readers read after graded readers? Reading in a Foreign Language, 28(1), 63-78.

Mol, S., & Bus, A. (2011). To Read or Not to Read: A Meta-Analysis of Print Exposure From Infancy to Early Adulthood. Psychological Bulletin, 137(2), 267-296.

Mondria, J. (2003). The effects of inferring, verifying and memorizing on the retention of L2 word meanings. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 25, 473-499.

Mori, S. (2015). If you build it, they will come: From a "Field of Dreams" to a more realistic view of extensive reading in an EFL Context. Reading in a Foreign Language, 27(1), 129-135.

Nation, P. (1997). The language learning benefits of extensive reading.The Language Teacher Online, 21(5), 13-16.

Nation, P. (2001). Learning vocabulary in another language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? Canadian Modern Language Review, 63, 59-82.

Nation, P. (2007). The Four Strands.Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1, 1-12. Doi:10.2167/illt039.0

Nation, P. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing. New York, NY: Routledge.

Nation, P. (2013). Designing reading tasks to maximize vocabulary learning.Applied Research on English Language, 3(1), 1-8.

Nation, P. (2014). How much input do you need to learn the most frequent 9,000 words? Reading in a Foreign Language, 26(2), 1-16.

Nation, P. (2015). Principles guiding vocabulary learning through extensive reading. Reading in a Foreign Language, 27(1), 136-145.

Nation, P., & Anthony, L. (2013). Mid-frequency readers. Journal of Extensive Reading, 1, 5-16.

Nation, P., & Wang, K. (1999). Graded readers and vocabulary. Reading in a Foreign Language, 12, 355-380.

Nishizawa, H., Yoshioka, T., &Fukada, M. (2010).The impact of a 4-year extensive reading program. In A. M. Stoke (Ed.), JALT 2009 Conference Proceedings. Tokyo: JALT.

Nuttall, C. (2005). Teaching reading skills in a foreign language. Oxford, England: Macmillan Education.

Pendergast, T. (2010). English language proficiency gains in an integrated, self-access program class of 2005 Part 2: The ETS test battery. Shitennoji University Journal, 49, 355-369.

Ponniah, J. (2011). Incidental acquisition of vocabulary by reading.The Reading Matrix, 11, 135-139.
Robb, T. (2015). Quizzes – A sin against the sixth commandment? In defense of MReader. Reading in a Foreign Language, 29(1), 146-151.
Robb, T., & Kano, M. (2013). Effective extensive reading outside the classroom: A large-scale experiment. Reading in a Foreign Language, 25, 234-247.
Rodrigo, V., Greenberg, D., & Segal, D. (2014).Changes in reading habits by low literate adults through extensive reading. Reading in a Foreign Language, 26(1), 73-91.
Roever, C., & Pan, Y. (2008). GEPT: General English Proficiency Test. Language Testing, 25(3), 403-418.
Sari, R. (2013). Is it possible to improve writing without writing practice? International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 8(1), 6-10.
Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. Language Teaching Research, 12, 329-363. Doi:10.1177/1362168808089921
Sheldrick-Ross, C., McKechnie, L., &Rothbauer, P. (2006). Reading Matters: What the Research Reveals about Reading, Libraries and Community. West Port, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
Smith, M. (1996). Differences in adults' reading practices and literacy proficiencies.Reading Research Quarterly, 31(2), 196-219.
Smith, K. (2006). A comparison of 'pure' extensive reading with intensive reading and extensive reading with supplementary activities.The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching (IJFLT), 2(2), 12-15.
Storey, C., Gibson, K., &Williason, R. (2006). Can extensive reading boost TOEIC scores? In K. Bradford-Watts, C. Ikeguchi, & M. Swanson (Eds.) JALT 2005 Conference Proceedings. Tokyo: JALT. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/archieve/pro-ceedings/2005/E034.pdf
Suk, N. (2016).The effects of extensive reading on reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition.Reading Research Quarterly, 52(1), 73-89.
Tabata-Sandom, M. (2013). The reader-text-writer interaction: L2 Japanese learner's response toward graded readers. Reading in a Foreign Language, 25(2), 264-282.
Takase, A. (2012). The impact of extensive reading on reluctant Japanese EFL learners.The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL, 1, 97-113.
Uden, J., Schmitt, D., & Schmitt, N. (2014). Jumping from the highest graded readers to ungraded novels: Four case studies. Reading in a Foreign Language, 26(1), 1-28.
Waring, R. (2008, December 5). In reply to Paul Nation's comment on the gap between graded readers and unsimplified text on The Extensive Reading Foundation website. Message posted on the former Extensive Reading Foundation blog site.
Waring, R. (2013). What kind of vocabulary is in course books and graded readers? Paper at the Vocab@Vic Conference, December, 2013. Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand.
Waring, R., & McLean, S. (2015). Exploration of the core and variable dimensions of extensive reading research and pedagogy. Reading in a Foreign Language, 27(1), 160-167.
Waring, R., & Nation, P. (2004).Second language reading and incidental vocabulary learning.Angles on the English Speaking World, 4, 97-110.

## 7. Appendices

**Appendix A GEPT test format, structure and passing standard**

| Stage | Module | Part | Task Types | Number of Items | Time (mins.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First | Listening | 1 | Answering Questions | 4.5 | 35 (approx.) |
| | | 2 | Conversations | | |
| | | 3 | Short Talks | | |
| | Reading | 1 | Sentence Completion | 4.5 | 50 |
| | | 2 | Cloze | | |
| | | 3 | Reading Comprehension | | |
| Second | Writing | 1 | Chinese-English Translation | 2 | 50 |
| | | 2 | Guided Writing | | |
| | Speaking | 1 | Answering Questions | 10 | 15 (approx.) |
| | | 2 | Picture Description | | |
| | | 3 | Discussion | | |

| Level | First Stage | | | Second Stage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Subtests | Passing Standard | Max. Score | Subtests | Passing Standard | Max. Score |
| Advanced | Listening &Reading | The total score is equal to or above 150, with each subtest score no lower than 64. | 120 | Writing &speaking | Band 3 | Band 5 |
| High-Intermediate | | The total score is equal to or above 160, with each subtest score no lower than 72. | | | 80 | 100 |
| Intermediate | | | | | 80 | 100 |
| Elementary | | | | | Writing: 70 Speaking: 80 | 100 |

**Appendix Description of the Cambridge English Readers Series**

| Level | Headwords | Approximate number of words | Pages |
|---|---|---|---|
| Starter | 250 | 2,000 | 32 |
| 1 | 400 | 4,000 | 32 |
| 2 | 800 | 10,000 | 48 |
| 3 | 1,300 | 15,000 | 64 |
| 4 | 1,900 | 20,000 | 80 |
| 5 | 2,800 | 25,000 | 96 |
| 6 | 3,800 | 30,000 | 112 |

Adapted from http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers/which_level.htm

**Appendix CGEPT General level and Skill-Area descriptions – High-Intermediate level**

| GEPT | Description | CEFR |
|---|---|---|
| High-Intermediate | Test-takers who pass this level have a generally effective command of English and can handle a broader range of topics | B2 Vantage |

| Skill | Description |
|---|---|
| Listening | • Can understand English conversation in social setting and workplaces<br>• Can grasp the general meaning of lectures, news reports, and TV/radio programs |
| Reading | • Can read different types of articles on concrete and abstract topics<br>• Can read work-related documents |
| Writing | • Can write about topics related to daily life<br>• Can write about personal viewpoints on current events. |
| Speaking | • Can express their opinions on topics they are interested<br>• Can express their personal thoughts and opinions in social setting and workplaces without much difficulty |

https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/E_LTTC/E_GEPT/hi_intermediate.htm