The Effect of Extensive and Intensive Reading Strategies on EFL Learners' Vocabulary Improvement

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the impact of extensive and intensive reading strategies on vocabulary development on EFL learners. The study was conducted at English department, Education Faculty, Kandahar University. The design of the study was inferential experimental, where pre- and post-tests were used to measure improvement in vocabulary improvement. The subjects of the study were first-year freshmen and night shift students. A total of 50 Afghan EFL students were selected based on their performance on placement test. The participants in the experimental group got extensive reading, and the control group got intensive reading, respectively. The experimental group and control group received 100-minutes per week. The collected data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study revealed that the vocabulary was improved from 83 to 93 in extensive reading and from 81 to 92 in intensive reading, which shows that there is significance increase in scores for intensive and extensive reading respectively.

KEY WORDS: Extensive reading, Intensive reading, Vocabulary improvement

INTRODUCTION

Reading in a foreign language has an important impact on learning, and it is classified into different forms according to how reading is handled. Intensive reading is done under the supervision of a lecturer, while extensive reading is a pleasure activity done by the learners on their own. Since it is an individual assignment, many studies have been done about it to see the exact nature and contribution of it to learning and to try to find ways to urge the learners to do this kind of activity. Both extensive and intensive reading approaches are effective and have their own advantages in the foreign language learning process. For that reason, a well-balanced reading program should include intensive reading and extensive reading concurrently.

Nuttall (1996) reminds that "intensive and extensive readings are complementary, and both are necessary" (p. 23), in that learners transfer the skills and strategies they developed in intensive reading to extensive reading. Extensive reading is pleasure reading in which one reads for fun (Krashen 2004). On the other hand, intensive reading is usually associated with class reading; through reading skills, one can develop good reading strategies. According to Grellet (1981), English language is a foreign language in the Afghan context, where students need much exposure to language learning and students' engagement in extensive reading is crucial. However, the curriculum in the Afghan context focuses more on intensive reading than extensive reading. Therefore, there is a need for a comparative study of intensive and extensive reading from which conclusions can be drawn to identify which reading plays an important role in improving reading vocabulary. As reading is a process of drawing information from the printed page, vocabulary is the primary goal for almost every reader, and it's the vital aim for EFL students. In addition to extensive reading, intensive reading also plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition. When students encounter new vocabulary, they use various strategies, such as using a dictionary or asking lecturers or friends to guess the word from the context. Since these skills are enhanced through intensive reading, guessing them from context is crucial for EFL students, and it is better developed through extensive reading.

Extensive reading plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition. No or limited studies have been conducted in the Afghan context on the importance of extensive reading. This study will pave the way for including extensive reading in the curriculum of EFL students in Afghanistan. After the formal process of conducting research, it would be highlighted whether it plays a vital role in the vocabulary development of EFL students. The students should be more active in classes where transformation can occur when students are prepared; however, in traditional classes of intensive reading, students only focus in class and are not required to read

more or use the library. In such situations, students are more passive in reading classes as they only participate in designed exercises that do not solve one's problem in reading.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading

Reading has been defined mainly as an interactive process between the reader and the text. In fact, the reader interacts dynamically with the text in order to elicit meaning. In other words, reading is the activity of word recognition, phonemic decoding, and text comprehension. Meaning is constructed through a process that includes dynamic interactions between the reader's background knowledge, the information in the text, and the reading situation context (Dutcher, 1990).

It can also be defined as recognizing the words, including their spelling, and their relationships with other words in a sentence. In other words, reading is the process of extracting and constructing meaning from a given material in written form (Aukerman, 2013). Gaining the ability to read in a second language is a demanding process, and that ability can be seen as the most durable second language learning skill to acquire (Bernhardt, 1993).

In addition, reading ability is an important second-language (L2) skill in academic settings where L2 learners are required to read to learn and complete related tasks (Grabe,2009). Given the importance of reading in academic contexts, a key issue is how L2 reading ability can best be developed. Based on recent research, reading ability is only likely to be developed gradually when L2 learners are continually exposed to abundant meaningful input.

Reading in a second language learning context is described as having a central role in the learning process of the target language, and by nature, it is classified into two forms: extensive reading and intensive reading. Indeed, both approaches have played important roles in helping with reading improvement in different aspects, like reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary improvement. Extensive and intensive reading may be different in terms of purpose, level, and length. Both skills will be discussed in a literature review.

Extensive Reading

There are many definitions of the term extensive reading. Some use this term to refer to the skimming and scanning activities, while others relate it to the quantity of the reading material. Certainly, extensive reading has an essential role in language education. It is viewed as a practical option for reading pedagogy in foreign language teaching. According to Carrel et al., (1997), extensive reading involves the rapid and long reading of large amounts of material, including books and novels.

In addition, extensive reading is a type of reading that helps learners choose from a variety of non-academic texts, such as fiction series, detective stories, and biographies. Certainly, students are given the opportunity to read texts at lower and higher levels. Through this process, they can develop a comprehensive database and increase their background knowledge as they are exposed to a variety of subjects (Nuttal, 2005).

Also, understanding the concept of extensive reading is important because the way it is perceived can greatly affect how it is practiced. Grabe and Stoller (2011) defined extensive reading as an approach "in which learners read large quantities of material that are within their linguistic competence" (p. 286). According to Bamford and Day (2004), "extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language" (p. 1). These two definitions share two important concepts in regards to extensive reading: (a) learners read large amounts of text; and (b) for learners to read large amounts of text, reading materials should be within the learners' reading proficiency levels (a somewhat more challenging issue for L2 readers than L1 readers).

The term extensive reading was first introduced by Harold Palmer and Michael West after a pilot study in India (Loh, 2009) and they defined it as reading large quantities of easy language materials for comprehension without performing any tasks after reading. The term originated in order to differentiate extensive reading from intensive reading. It is also defined as reading longer passages just for pleasure in simplified language forms, and the purpose was determined as comprehending the general meaning and being able to pursue it to the end without the intention of focusing on grammatical and lexical components (Chiu-Kuei, 2015).

Extensive reading is a language teaching process where learners are exposed to a variety of reading materials to gain a global understanding, though they may read for pleasure (Day & Bamford, 2004). Students choose books of their own choice to read independently, and it should not be followed up by any task related to the reading materials. If they do not have any interest in the

chosen material or find the content hard to understand, they can leave it there and start off with the new book or text. Students of any age and level can benefit from extensive reading, but at least they should have the basic skills to read it (Day& Bamford, 2004).

Walter (2003) points out another dimension by stating that the learners choose the text to read it themselves freely, and they do not mind reading that material (Walter, 2003). In other words, the readers choose the material according to their taste, and they deal with it eagerly. In order to achieve the goal of having the students read the materials, they should be given the facility of reaching them and be loaded with enthusiasm and motivation; they should be given enough time to do such an activity (Walter, 2003).

Furthermore, materials chosen for extensive reading provide students with the opportunity to fairly understand them without any assistance from an external source (Aliponga, 2013). Extensive reading is a reading approach that aims to make covering large amounts of reading material enjoyable for language learners. Many years ago, people were interested in an extensive reading approach, which is believed to be helpful in the development of the reading rate of second language learners. It encourages readers to read a large amount of long, easy-to-understand text based on their individual interests and understand its meaning. It also helps in increasing interest in reading long passages of L2 language. Studies have shown and supported the idea that extensive reading has a more positive effect on promoting the reading rate of L2 learners than traditional intensive reading. (Bamford & Day, 2004). Furthermore, extensive reading is considered an effective way to enhance language proficiency. Maley (2005) focuses on meaning rather than the language, therefore, reading is done for general understanding.

Moreover, extensive reading makes learners more independent and confident (Day & Bamford, 1998). Learners make a better possibility for their reading fluency and speed (Walker, 1997), which guide them to be better readers (Camiciottoli, 2001). It also helps the reader improve their writing style and gain better knowledge of words and structure (Tsang, 1996). In a second language learning environment, students should be exposed to large quantities of target language input, which is succeeded through extensive reading (Aliponga, 2013). In this case, readers have the opportunity to read at their own pace and within their own time limits. This way, students adapt their reading speed and gain the ability to read faster (Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007).

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading includes a deep understanding of words, sentences, and paragraphs. Its concern is a detailed comprehension of the text. The goal of intensive reading is to achieve a full understanding of the arguments, the rhetorical arrangements, and the structural patterns of the text. Besides, it includes an understanding of the symbolic and emotional tones, the purposes and attitudes of the writer, and the linguistic tools that are deployed in the text.

In other words, intensive reading is used to refer to short texts that students can be asked to read, to find out the main ideas, and to build their understanding of the text. The main aim of this kind of reading is to focus on the meaning of the text and how this meaning is produced. According to (Nuttal, 2005), learners need to try to comprehend the text as good as necessary in an intensive reading activity. Still, students are required to focus on a small amount of material under the guidance of their teachers, who can introduce short texts and stories so as to develop intensive reading skills and strategies.

Intensive reading, on the other hand, focuses on accuracy rather than fluency by stressing detailed study of vocabulary and grammar. In general terms, intensive reading is about progressing in the given language through reading under a teacher's guidance. The teacher provides the students with unknown vocabulary and difficult sentence structures, so the learning mostly occurs at the lexical and syntactic levels (Richards & Schmidt, 2012). It is intended in intensive reading to procure detailed meaning by dealing with different aspects so that the reader takes the opportunity to make use of various reading abilities such as identifying the main idea, extracting the minor ideas, scanning for specific information, and paying close attention to specified vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, it could also deal with translation (Carrell & Carson, 1997).

The Impact of Extensive and Intensive Reading on Vocabulary Building

Mastering vocabulary effectively is essential for language proficiency. Mastering vocabulary is essential for enhancing proficiency in listening, speaking, and writing (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008, p. 1).

A study by Rashidi (2011) in Iranians' EFL classes investigated the effect of extensive and intensive reading on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary building. The research was conducted at the Omid English Language Center, and the 120 participants were divided into two groups, one receiving intensive reading and the other receiving extensive reading. The research was conducted through pre- and post-tests. Findings of the study indicated that through extensive (ER) and intensive (IR) readings, students' vocabulary knowledge increased, but students learned vocabulary a lot through extensive reading.

Another study was conducted in an elementary school to investigate the impact of extensive reading on learning and increasing vocabulary at the elementary level. The class was run for twelve weeks, and approximately 1040 students and 66 English language lecturers participated. The research was conducted through pre- and post-tests. The result shows a difference of 18.5% in marks, which indicates that there was improvement in the vocabulary of the participants and they were able to use the maximum vocabulary. The results also show that the maximum number of participants were able to retain new vocabulary and could use it in sentences as well. As a result, students' vocabulary knowledge was enhanced due to the extensive reading (Iqbal, 2017).

During mid-10-80s, it was believed that reading skills and vocabulary develop when learners are exposed to an enormous amount of comprehensible input, which in turn causes language acquisition. Krashen (1989) suggested that learners can acquire new vocabulary and develop their spelling ability through maximum comprehensible input. Krashen (1993) also stated that students can learn vocabulary through extensive reading.

Nutall (1996) stated that extensive reading programs were the most effective method of enhancing vocabulary size, improving reading skills, and expanding overall language ability. Many studies found that extensive reading worked efficiently, and it was compared with and associated well with achievements in reading comprehension.

Park (2017) studied the impact of extensive and intensive reading on Korean EFL learners' reading rate and reading comprehension. His findings revealed that students in the extensive reading (ER) group scored higher in the post-test than the students in the intensive reading (IR) group. The study further indicated that students' reading rate in the ER group increased (24%) in the 12-week program, while the improvement in IR reading was only 11%. In the case of reading comprehension, the improvement in the ER group was 4.53% higher than in the in the in the IR group.

Shiki (2011) worked on the effects of extensive reading on reading speed and comprehension among Japanese university students. His study shows that reading speed was higher in the post-test than the pre-test. He further indicated that students' reading rate (88.39%) in the pre-test jumped to 104.20 in the post-test, which indicates a 16% increase in the reading rate. On the other hand, there were no changes in comprehension skills. The result indicates that in the pre-test, 11.59% of comprehension questions were solved, but 12.26 comprehension questions were solved in the post-test. This indicates about a 0.5% change.

In similar research, Suk (2017) studied the effects of extensive reading on reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition. The fifteen-week comparison program between extensive and intensive reading classes showed that in the pre-test for reading comprehension, there was little difference in scores between intensive reading and extensive reading groups. The students in the extensive reading classes read at a speed of 133.29 WMP, while those in the intensive reading classes read at 147.76 WMP. This indicates a 147.76 WMP difference. In the vocabulary test, the score of the extensive reading class (M = 51.63) was also lower than that of the intensive reading class (M = 54.22). In the post-test, the extensive reading classes produced higher mean scores for all three tests than the intensive reading classes did. In the reading comprehension test, the difference in the mean score between the two groups was relatively small, which was round 1. In reading rate, students in extensive class have improved 33.87 WMP in the post-test, whereas in intensive class, the students improved only 15.53 WMP.

The current study has explored the previous studies' impacts of extensive reading on EFL students' achievements in various areas. In the vocabulary section, the extensive reading class gained more words (M = 67.70), which means a gain of 13.07 words compared to the intensive reading class, which gained 3.41 words. Nakanishi (2015) has worked on a meta-analysis of extensive reading. His work focused on the overall development of extensive reading. In his fifteen-week study in a three- to six-month program, he found out that students gained 74% reading comprehension, and in the reading section, students increased their reading speed by about 40%, and the increase in their vocabulary was 35%. In addition, Sayeda (2017), in her journal "The Impact of Extensive Reading on Learning and Increasing Vocabulary at the Elementary Level," argues that 18.5% of learners' vocabulary was increased due to the extensive reading. She worked on pre- and post-tests, and she found out that there was an 18.5% increase in vocabulary in the post-test. In short, numerous studies have found that extensive reading positively influences reading rate, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

Goal of the Study

The main aim of the study is to compare the effectiveness of extensive reading and intensive reading for improving reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition of EFL learners.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study apply not only to Afghan EFL freshmen university learners but also to other levels as well (lower intermediate, pre-intermediate, and upper pre-intermediate). The significance of this study adds to the knowledge and creates awareness among Afghan EFL learners about how extensive and intensive reading helps in improving vocabulary. Additionally, the study helps Afghan EFL students know which type of reading (extensive or intensive) or both are effective for improving their reading. For example, Afghan EFL learners use the findings of this study to determine whether extensive or intensive reading, or both, is good for improving their reading. Also, they realize how much vocabulary should be learned to comprehend authentic text such as news articles, journal articles, magazines, advertisements, and noticeboards. Secondly, the result of this research updates Afghan EFL teachers to know how to provide their EFL students with authentic English text which is suitable to the level of their students' English knowledge.

On the other hand, the study indirectly stimulates Afghan EFL teachers to teach extensive reading with intensive reading (the main course) as well. Since extensive reading is not taught with intensive reading in the Afghan context or little attention is given to it, the exploration of this study motivates Afghan EFL teachers to use a new method in their teaching in order to integrate the two components, such as extensive and intensive reading.

In addition to this, the study will provide teachers with effective teaching methods based on students' needs, interests, levels, and desires. Extensive reading is the only tool through which students can increase their reading power. It will give students the chance to express their feelings and acquire the second language as their first language through a natural process. Since we read pleasure reading for fun which most of the time is a natural process. The study will help EFL lecturers build the vocabulary of their students. It will also help their students develop vocabulary that can be used in their day-to-day conversations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the students enrolled in language learning classes in the Afghan context are unable to read well. After attending many reading courses during the four years of bachelor's degree studies at the university, many students still have problems with vocabulary improvement. Sahibzada, Saeedi & Hussiani, (2018) investigated the causes of English Language and Literature students' poor English skills at Kandahar University. Their findings revealed that only 6% of the respondents reported that their current curriculum focused on reading. The study further revealed that students still had problems with their reading comprehension despite taking classes during their study years. The problem of reading comprehension does not only exist in the Afghan context, but it can be found around the world. Based on the findings of a study conducted by Haycock and Huang (2001), half of all whites seventeen years old, about less than one-quarter of Latin seventeen years old, and less than one-fifth of African Americans seventeen years old can read at the level assessed by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). I have taught reading courses at various levels for years, and I have found out that the majority of the students had problems with their knowledge of vocabulary, which is observed when they speak and write. Though they take reading courses for six semesters and are taught the relevant and necessary skills and strategies, but their vocabulary has not improved. Adopting an appropriate strategy of reading practice may have some effects on improving the reading activities of the students and making the practices more appealing to them.

Research objective

To identify the mean scores of pre and post vocabulary tests among morning and night shift freshmen students based on extensive and intensive reading approaches

Research Question

What are the mean scores of pre and post vocabulary tests among morning and night shift freshmen students based on extensive and intensive reading approaches

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research Design
This research employs a quantitative design and is an experimental type of study

Population

A total of 50 freshmen Afghan EFL undergraduate students of the morning and night shifts of English department from Education faculty of Kandahar University have participated in the study. They shared the same first language, Pashtu and Dari, and were selected through performance in a placement test where only four of them were female.

Sample

The study was quasi-experimental research with two groups (experimental and control groups). A placement test for selecting samples from the papulation was an objective test that contained 1000 vocabulary questions measuring vocabulary improvement developed from the reading book by Jeffries (2003). The second instrument was used for pre- and post-tests in both groups to test vocabulary improvement. It had 1000 vocabulary words for vocabulary improvement. The reliability of instruments was tested before use through the test-retest method of reliability, and the results showed stability over time. The validity was checked for content and construct validity of all questions required for vocabulary improvement.

Data Collection Method

The participants in both groups (i.e., intensive and extensive) took pre- and post-tests. The type of test is concerned with vocabulary improvement. Both pre- and post-tests contained a thousand words for vocabulary improvement. Participation in the text was voluntary.

It should be mentioned that for intensive, we taught them "Advanced Reading Power" book. On the other hand, an extensive group was guided by their lecturer during the same time span for using and getting familiar with reading materials such as different storybooks, short passages on the web, and what they thought could increase their vocabulary out of class and sometimes in class if time permitted. The duration of the experimental study was 10 weeks. Both groups had two credits of lessons (50 minutes each credit) in a week.

RESULT

The experiential study was conducted in two groups extensive and intensive reading in order to find out comparative results of both groups on the improvement of vocabulary. The findings are presented based on the following research question of "What is the mean score of pre- and post-vocabulary tests among morning and night shift freshmen students based on extensive and intensive reading?

Table 1 Morning and Night Shift Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests

Vocabulary Tests	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D
Morning Shift Pre-test bast on extensive reading	31	61	95	83.1	10.3
Morning Shift Posttest based on extensive reading	31	75	99	92.2	5.9
Night Shift Pretest Based on intensive Reading	17	56	99	81.4	11.4
Night Shift Posttest based on intensive reading	17	70	99	91.7	7.6

Table 1 of the study shows the mean scores of pre- and post-tests of vocabulary among morning and night shift freshmen students based on extensive and intensive reading. The group of extensive reading morning shift students contains 31 students who attended a 10-week course designed to find out whether extensive or intensive reading strategies help improve students' vocabulary. The minimum vocabulary test score in the morning shift based on extensive reading in the pretest was 61, whereas the maximum score in the pretest is 95. Similarly, the minimum score of night shift students in the vocabulary test based on intensive reading in the

pretest is 56, whereas the maximum score is 99. In addition, the minimum score of the vocabulary test of the morning shift based on extensive reading in the posttest is 75, whereas the maximum score in the posttest is 99. Similarly, the minimum score of night shift students in the vocabulary test based on intensive reading in the posttest is 70, while the maximum score is 99.

In addition, the mean score of the pre-vocabulary test of morning shift freshmen students based on extensive reading is (M= 83.1; SD=10.3), whereas the mean score of the night shift pretest of vocabulary in intensive reading is (M=81.4; SD= 11.4). Additionally, the mean score of the post vocabulary test of morning shift freshmen students based on extensive reading is 92.2 whereas the mean score of the post vocabulary test of night shift freshmen based on intensive reading is (M=91.7; SD=7.6).

If we compare the mean scores of both pre and posttests of vocabulary morning shift students based on extensive reading (83.1, 92.2 respectively), there are significant changes in the result. The results showed that extensive reading has a positive effect on students' vocabulary improvement. On the other hand, if we compare the mean scores of both pre and posttests of vocabulary among night shift students based on intensive reading (81.4, 91.7 respectively), there is also a positive improvement in the student's vocabulary improvement as well.

In conclusion, the post-test performance of both the control (intensive reading) and experimental group (Extensive reading) were compared, and the obtained results revealed significant differences between the mean scores of the pre- and post-tests, indicating that both of the groups have actually improved significantly. In other words, both reading methods (extensive and intensive) led to significant improvement in vocabulary scores. Meanwhile, the posttest mean scores for intensive and extensive reading were found to be minor, indicating that there is no significant difference in extensive and intensive reading strategies. However, intensive reading strategy is found to be a slightly more effective strategy compared to extensive reading strategy in improving the vocabulary of students.

DISCUSSION

The current study assessed the impact of the Extensive and intensive approach on Kandahar University, English departments' EFL learner's vocabulary improvement compared to the IR approach over a 10-weeks reading course. The findings revealed significant improvement in the ER group's vocabulary.

According to the descriptive statistics of the study, the mean score of extensive group for pre-test of morning shift students was 83% and for post-test was 92%. The analysis revealed that the difference was significant. Therefore, this improvement in post-test indicates the effectiveness of extensive reading on the vocabulary improvement of students. In other words, the extensive group performed better in post-test than in the pretest. Therefore, it can be concluded that extensive reading had a positive effect on students' vocabulary improvements. This is similar to the findings of Park (2020) on the impacts of intensive and extensive reading approaches and the attitudes of EFL learners. The study finds out that both of the approaches resulted with positive impacts significantly on the attitudes of the EFL students, although the study shows that proficiency levels did not significantly affect their reading attitudes. In a similar study by Park (2017), it was stated that extensive reading approach was more impactful and had greater positive effects on the reading skills of EFL learners, compared with the intensive reading approach. However, in terms of the students' levels (intermediate and advanced), students noticeably benefited more from the use of the extensive reading approach than intensive reading approach. On the other hand, in another study conducted by Novita (2018) in an English Study Program, an alternative approach was tested by the researcher to be used instead of extensive reading approach. The study shows that the majority of the students evaluated the use of the syndicate learning approach for both (individual and group) types of learning and considered this approach to contribute to the types of problems that students face during extensive reading.

In the case of intensive reading, the mean score of intensive group for pre-test night shift students was 81% and for post-test was 92%. It was found that there was approximately 10% improvement in vocabulary. The results of the findings are contradictory to the results of Nakanishi's (2015) meta- analysis of extensive reading, which revealed no significant difference in vocabulary improvement. In another study by Park (2017), the ANCOVA results revealed that the participants noticeably benefited much more from the extensive reading approach compared with the intensive reading approach in terms of the knowledge of the participants about the meaning and use of the target words. In another study conducted by Celik (2019), the findings revealed that in terms of extending language proficiency, extensive reading really worked well and resulted in a good rate of vocabulary enrichment and grammatical structures. This means that they were able to encounter a sufficient number of vocabulary words and grammatical structures during working in extensive reading approach activities.

CONCLUSION

The students' vocabulary knowledge before the application of IR and ER was relatively low. Based on the studies the post-tests performance of both the control (intensive reading) and experimental (extensive reading) groups vocabulary mean scores were compared and the obtained results revealed significant differences between the mean scores of pre and post vocabulary tests indicating that extensive group improved from 83 (SD, 10) to 92 (SD, 6) and intensive reading improved from 81 (SD, 11) to 92 (SD, 8).

The result revealed that in post-test, students' vocabulary in reading was increased. IR and ER method is suitable to be applied as reading method in higher education.

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ABBREVIATIONS

C/CT	Critical Thinking
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
M	Mean
POT	Post-test
PRT	Pre-test
SD	Standard Deviation
ER	Extensive Reading
IR	Intensive Reading
WMP	Word Per Minute