English Extensive Reading Practices in Nepalese Schools: A Case of An Institutional School in Nepal

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Keywords	Abstract
Extensive Reading, Pure ER, Fringe ER, Supervised ER, Independent ER	*This study aims to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the extensive reading practices and the materials used in grade nine at Prithvi School (Pseudonym). The study was conducted using a case study design, focusing on the Extensive Reading activities of Grade Nine students and the ELT teacher. Classroom observation, semi-structured interview and Focus Group Discussion were the main data collection techniques. The data were analyzed and interpreted thematically. The study found that students accessed diverse materials but preferred literary texts, with teachers guiding selection to match proficiency and interest. Extensive Reading (ER) was embedded in daily lessons through interactive activities, learner choice, and teacher support, and extensive reading improved language skills, boosted confidence, and encouraged independent, motivated reading.*

Introduction

In Nepal, English is taught as a compulsory subject from primary to secondary levels, and developing students' reading skills is the main focus of the ELT curriculum. However, reading instruction tends to rely heavily on textbooks and exam-oriented materials, with limited focus on fostering independent reading habits. Many students—particularly in rural areas—struggle with vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension due to a lack of adequate exposure to varied reading materials and limited implementation of ER strategies.

ER involves reading interesting texts for pleasure by allowing learners to read freely at their own level and pace (Bamford and Day, 2004), giving students access to level-

appropriate materials based on their interests. Teachers play a supportive role in choosing materials both in and outside the classroom, and in facilitating follow-up activities. Due to multiple advantages, ER has gained global recognition as an effective approach in developing students' English proficiency; however, its practices remain underexplored in Nepalese school contexts. Most of the existing studies in this area have focused on general reading skills and strategies, creating a gap in ER practices in rural contexts. This gap encouraged this study, and conducted at a reputed missionary school located in the rural context of Gorkha district, to examine the use of ER: what materials are selected and how they are used, what activities are employed and how they improve students' English proficiency and motivation in English reading.

Literature Review

ER is typically associated with pleasure, information, and general understanding, with reading being its own reward. The term *extensive reading* in foreign language teaching was first used by Harold Palmer, viewing ER as rapid and large-scale reading, especially for pleasure and information, and Michael West developed ER methodology (Day, 2015; Day & Bamford, 1998). ER follows the key principles such as ER materials should be easy to access; available in a variety of topics; freely chosen by learners; and read as much as possible. It is generally faster, individual, and silent; sometimes it may be guided by teachers who act as role models. Highlighting the concept of an *extensive reading continuum* that ranges from a program that applies all ten principles (termed *Pure ER*) to one that applies none, but is still labelled ER (*Fringe ER*), Day (2015) theorizes the evolving practices of ER: a.Supervised ER, or Instructed ER, which can take several forms, from Pure to Fringe ER, and does not

necessarily need to occur within a school or university setting. b.Independent ER, or Non-instructed ER, which involves individuals engaging in ER without supervision, deciding to do so on their own. c. Blended Extensive and Intensive Reading, where the internet becomes a prominent source of reading materials, supports ER practice by ensuring that students read outside of class.

ER has been widely recognized for its potential in improving learners' overall language competence across various contexts. Chang and Renandya (2017), in their investigation of teachers' perceptions of ER practice in Asia, found that L2 teachers held strongly positive beliefs about ER's effectiveness in enhancing students' language abilities. However, students often lacked interest in independent and voluntary reading, while teachers struggled to monitor the type and amount of reading materials students engaged with. Haider and Akhter (2012), in the Bangladeshi context, reveal a gap in ER practices and emphasize the need for joint efforts by all stakeholders to promote ER among young learners. Safaeia and Bulca (2013) expose students' views that ER improves language proficiency by re-establishing reading habits and supporting enjoyable, creative projects. In the Ethiopian context, Endris (2018) two-cycle experimental study in Ethiopian context reveals the importance of time allocation and supportive activities in implementing ER in input-poor EFL contexts. Sun's (2024) study in Chinese EFL classroom emphasizes the critical role of teacher scaffolding in sustaining students' pleasure reading, who can act as motivators, strategy guides, and monitors. He proposed the model of 'Scaffolded Extensive Reading' (SER), a student-centred yet teacher-facilitated approach. Similarly, Lindawati 's (2021) qualitative study reveals students' positive views regarding ER as pleasurable and information-rich reading that contributes

to various language skills. Ateek (2022) suggests a positive correlation between the amount of reading and the development of these skills.

In the context of Nepal, several studies have identified key issues affecting ER practices. Sharma (2024) highlights the obstacles of the unavailability of level-appropriate books, the lack of libraries, and teachers' limited knowledge in their implementation. Similarly, Adhikari and Shrestha (2023) conclude that ER can be developed by only embedding into everyday reading instruction under teacher guidance in a resource-rich setting. Neupane (2016) claims that students favour easy and enjoyable reading materials and expect teachers to play multiple roles. This literature affirms the pedagogical value of ER in diverse EFL contexts. Several studies provide compelling evidence of ER's impact, while others reveal practical and contextual limitations in its implementation.

Overall, most studies, except for a few, focus more on teacher perceptions than on students' reading behaviours or lived experiences. A few explore how digital ER programs might address access and motivation, which shows limited integration with digital tools and blended formats. Contextual challenges were under-researched. While studies identify barriers, e.g. lack of materials, institutional support, there is minimal exploration of context-sensitive solutions in low-resource or rural settings. Based on the strengths and gaps identified in the current literature, several directions for future research would meaningfully contribute to both theory and practice in ER in Nepal's EFL context. It can be used to develop culturally relevant ER materials, evaluate the readability and student engagement levels of such materials. It is equally relevant to do research in the

blended ER models using digital resources, encouraging out-of-class reading, and combining intensive reading in class with guided ER at home are possible areas to study. Moreover, students' motivational factors in engaging with ER, how ER can be integrated into textbooks and evaluating institutional models of ER are some aspects that support the sustainable implementation of ER. Despite such a range of research possibilities, we aimed to investigate materials, strategies and effectiveness of ER in Grade 9 of the case school.

Research Design

This study adopted a Case Study Design. A case study design is a qualitative research strategy that involves an in-depth, contextual analysis of a particular phenomenon within its real-life setting. It is particularly valuable when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, making it ideal for exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive research. Yin (2018) emphasizes that case study research is not only about describing a case but also about developing a comprehensive understanding through multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, documents, and observations. It can be employed in both single and multiple-case designs, where the former allows for a detailed analysis of one instance and the latter facilitates comparative insights across different cases. Stake (1995) distinguishes between three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. In all forms, case study design promotes a holistic understanding by integrating different perspectives and allowing for rich, thick descriptions. Furthermore, the design requires a clear research question, carefully bounded case selection, and a systematic approach to data collection and analysis to ensure

trustworthiness and credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Prithvi School (Pseudonym): Prithvi School is located in Gorkha Municipality-11, Gorkha, Nepal, and was founded on February 5, 1992, by the Sisters of the Congregation of Jesus to educate girls in the region and Bishop Anthony Sharma, under the Congregation of Jesus. The school was initially located in Gorkha Bazaar and later moved to today's site. As a missionary school, it offers an international-standard education focusing on academic excellence, extracurricular/co-curricular activities, moral development and value-based pedagogy, primarily for girls, though boys can also be admitted. It accepts for admission with no donations. It is located in a peaceful and greenery environment that provides students how ecological awareness matters for holistic learning.

It implements the Nepal Government's educational policy and recommended curricula that include core subjects like English, Nepali, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, with substantial extracurricular programs that include art, environment, social justice clubs, scouting and physical training. As a mission-oriented as well as value-laden institution, its main aim is to incubate leadership, critical thinking, and social responsibility among students. It has good infrastructure, especially a well-resourced library, so that teachers can integrate diverse reading activities into the lesson. ER is possible through the initiation of teachers or students themselves. The study focuses on the Grade Nine English Classroom that consists of 35 girls from different socio-cultural, geographical backgrounds.

Mr. Sandeep Gurung (pseudonym) is an experienced teacher who teaches English at Grade Nine. He was originally from Gorkha and raised in Kiphire, Nagaland, India. He has a B.A. in English literature, a D.El.Ed., and he passed the NET in 2008. He has over 15 years of teaching experience, and has worked as an Assistant head-teacher, language trainer and textbook writer. After retiring, he joined Prithvi School as a secondary-level English teacher for a couple of academic years.

All these infrastructures, academic record, library and structured curriculum implementation prove that this school is an ideal case to observe and analyse their practices, especially focusing on ER and their pedagogical effectiveness.

The study used the classroom observation guideline, interview guideline and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) guideline as primary tools. A smartphone was also used to record the interview with the ELT teacher, informal discussions with students and to achieve the study's objectives. Moreover, field notes, classroom recordings and captured photographs were used to examine how ER activities were practised.

The data were collected for four weeks. The classroom observation schedule was designed, including one day for interviewing the teacher and another for student interaction. Upon the Grade Nine English teacher's advice, permission was sought and oral consent was obtained from the school principal. Daily classroom visits were conducted to observe students' practice of Extensive Reading (ER), and detailed notes were taken each day. During the observations, students' engagement, participation, group discussions, and enthusiasm for reading were recorded. Permission to take photographs, videos, and recordings was obtained from the school manager. With this consent, documentation of classroom activities was carried out over the four weeks. Observation was conducted

to assess their ER practices, followed by an interview with the teacher to gain insight into his instructional methods and motivational strategies. A diary was maintained to record these observations. In the final week, seven students were randomly selected for an hour of informal talks as part of the FGD, based on a pre-developed guideline for classroom observation, interviews, and group discussions.

All interviews with the ELT teacher, FGDs with students, and classroom observation notes were transcribed manually. Important sentences from the transcriptions were highlighted, and excerpts were organized in a table. Open coding was applied to each excerpt to develop a coding system. These codes were then grouped into categories, and key themes were identified. The data were analyzed thematically to derive meaningful insights.

Following the research ethic, approval was obtained from the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University. All source materials consulted were properly cited and acknowledged the value of the knowledge that contributed to this research. The manager, teacher, and students were fully informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality regarding their information was assured. Oral consent was obtained from all respondents, and it was assured that the data would be used exclusively for this research.

Analysis

The analysis was performed, creating three major themes, which were derived through a thematic analysis of data collected from classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and focus group discussions (FGDs)

with students and tallying with the study's objectives. These themes offer insights into: 1. The materials used for ER (input), 2. the strategies adopted during its implementation (process), and 3. the perceived effectiveness of ER in enhancing students' language learning (outcome)

Materials Used for Extensive Reading

Prithvi School offered a variety of materials to students for ER both inside and outside the classrooms. However, it was found that Grade Nine students dominantly read novels, fiction, poems and biographies, some of which are *To Kill a Mockingbird, The Giver, Monsoon, Saya*, The Road Not Taken, A Dream Within a Dream, and Mahatma Gandhi, respectively, that matched their interests and levels. While observing one of the classrooms, students were found reading novels like *Muna Madan*, *Summer Love, Wonder,* love stories with strong characters, biographies of famous people such as *Autobiography of BP Koirala*, *Mahatma Gandhi*, and *Albert Einstein* and other interesting books. They seemed to be reading such books sitting in the classroom or sometimes in the corner of the library. Moreover, students also read different poems and stories such as *Thank You, Ma'am*, and *The Lottery* for their Extensive reading. It was found that if students had an interest, they would explore materials from different resource centres. It opened up a door for their exploration. The following excerpt of one of the Grade Nine students affirms this generalization, "*Sometimes we friends, sit together discuss the materials, sometimes collect the books from the library, sometimes we bring them from outside.*" In this regard, another student shared-

We borrow short stories, for example, *The Child Bride, The Room Without Windows* from the school library, whereas novels, for example, *Animal Farm, The Giver*, short

fiction, such as *Summer Love and Saya*; mystery books, articles such as T*he Role of Women in Nepali Society*; poems such as *Still I Rise;* magazines, like *The Himalayan;* adventure books, motivational books, love story books, biographies that we usually read for extensive reading, are downloaded from online library.

Some students also shared that instead of exploring more materials from different resources, they usually read materials that are easily available to them, and sometimes explore an online library as per the suggestion of their teacher. In this regard, other students said,

We usually read those materials like a short story, a poem, or newspapers, which are easily found in the library. But for those materials which are not found in the library, the teacher suggests that we read those materials from online resources. There, we can find whatever we like to read for developing our reading skills.

But for both types of students, the teacher's suggestions had prime roles. It reveals that teachers should guide which materials are appropriate for their level and can be connected to their course, and have greater value. It is because it can make students active and motivated in ER. In this regard, the teacher said,

My students are active, they do their ER in their own way, I always encourage them to read different materials like novels, fictions, biographies, newspapers in the classroom or at home, also, then I connect to the text which engaged them in reading.

It reveals that teachers' guidance and encouragement are the key initiators for motivation and exploration of a variety of appropriate materials for their levels, as they can be connected to their learning and academic writing.

Material Suitability by Age and Level. Regarding the suitability of the materials, they responded positively in terms of age, theme and content. They also revealed that when they read materials that match their level, theme of the course and age, they discuss and interact more, actively participate in discussions and other activities in the classroom. In this regard, some students shared, some readings are really good for Grade Nine students because they teach us new things that are interesting, relevant and match our level. However, when it gets too hard, we could read simpler materials for practice. Students enjoy some readings more than others, particularly novels (e.g., Muna Madan, Summer Love, Saya, etc., but sometimes find articles (e.g. Protecting Nepal's Natural Heritage) more difficult due to challenging vocabulary and grammar. It exposes that literary genres are more interesting to read than academic writing pieces and that more complex materials cause confusion and distraction rather than arousing interest. In this concern, one of the student participants in FGD said-

Some readings are easy and fun, but some readings have grammatical difficulties in terms of grammar and sentence structures and vocabulary used, causing problems in understanding. I feel that novels like Wonder and fiction like *Monsoon* are okay because they tell about someone's story, but articles such as *The Role of Women in Nepali Society* are difficult, especially since they have many unfamiliar words and difficult grammar.

Regarding the selection of the suitability of materials, the teacher had a vital role as most of the Grade Nine students are not able to

select good materials on their own. In this issue, the teacher said, *"The materials I choose are appropriate for grade 9 in terms of language complexity, content and themes. I try to balance both challenging and accessible materials to cater to student levels."*

It was also found that students enjoy literary text more than academic text, which they enjoy much, suitable for their level also, while matching it with more or simpler literary text, it is more effective and beneficial for secondary level students, as it encourages and develops better interaction. The teacher adjusts the pace and student level of the materials based on their abilities, offering different supports to the students for a clear understanding of the texts.

Material Quality and English Learning Potential. While analyzing the quality of ER materials, it was found that all the available materials are authentic, produced in different contexts by different scholars in multiple disciplines. They were linguistically rich and appropriate in terms of students' level, age and interest. They could be discussed from multiple facets, discourse, linguistic aspects, culture and socioeconomic perspectives, offering diverse ways to develop English proficiency. The study revealed their potential and how well they contributed to English language development in students. It was found that those materials significantly contributed to English proficiency. While the teacher encouraged them in discussion, they frequently used new vocabulary, were highly engaged in interaction gradually challenged the contents. Students also experienced progress in their language skills and aspects. In this regard, one of the participants said-

I feel that the novels (e.g., Animal Farm), stories (e.g., The Open Window) and fictions

(e.g., Monsoon) are really good that improved my language. They're well-written and interesting to read. Reading them, I learned many new words and varieties of sentence structures.

In this line, another student shared-
The best materials are those that help us to learn new words, and by reading them, we also understand how they're used in different sentences. We have felt improvements in our vocabulary, especially when we read books with new and interesting words. It increases our motivation to read new materials.

The remarks of students show that the materials they read are beneficial not only to develop vocabulary repertoire but also to help them understand their appropriate use in different contexts. The teacher's opinion also justifies this. Through the interview, he revealed-

I focus on the provided materials that not only challenge students but also contribute to language growth. I choose materials based on the quality of language they offer. I prioritise well-written stories and texts that help the students to grow their vocabulary and improve their understanding of grammar and syntax as well.

It demonstrates teachers' sincerity in the selection of high-quality materials that are one level more challenging for them and can contribute to their language enhancement. These materials expose students to new vocabulary and diverse sentence structures, facilitating overall language development as students are engaged in classroom discussion, creating an environment to use newly learned vocabulary and their new knowledge.

Strategies Employed in Extensive Reading

This theme focuses on the processes and strategies teachers employ to integrate ER into their teaching routines. The analysis sheds light on how ER is practiced: as part of a regular classroom activity, an independent task, or a flipped classroom strategy and how these approaches reflect institutional support, teacher support and facilitation and student engagement.

ER as a Routine Institutional Practice.

Prithvi School arranges a systematic routine for ER by offering diverse activities for every class. Firstly, it provides an effective learning environment by making different reading materials accessible. Secondly, on some days it allocates one period daily and on other days one period in one week. In the case of Grade Nine, it was managed every day at the beginning of the English lesson. The teacher would create an environment to share what they had read, new ideas, how they felt, and what the main idea of the materials was. Listening to students' responses, he would encourage them to share in pairs and in the classroom. Then, he would start the regular lesson. Finally, the teacher would either recommend or ask them to find their own and come to the next class. Regarding the ER routine in the school, a student revealed, "The school initially followed a weekly routine," and another student said-

The extensive reading class was held one whole period a week; during that period, we, both teacher and students, would completely focus on ER. We would read to discuss, share our ideas about the materials which we read and also connect to the topics.

Similarly, in this vein, another student mentioned-

At that time, the teacher provides materials, such as magazines, newspapers or poems, to us, borrowing from the school library and sharing them with us. We read in groups and share our perspectives with each other. Over time, the routine evolved; the teacher would sometimes give specific reading materials like story books and journals, while at other times, students were allowed to choose their own favourite materials according to their interest and level.

Similarly, another student further explained-

At the beginning of the class, we share what we have read. If we face any problem in reading, we ask the teacher for help. The teacher also listens to the problems that we face and helps us.

It demonstrates that Prithvi School placed a strong emphasis on developing students' ER ability. What started as a weekly activity eventually became part of the daily routine. In the interview, the teacher shared, *"At the beginning of each session, our school would allocate one period to ER every week, but now it has been integrated into daily class."* It means that extensive reading is one of the significant parts of everyday learning and has been continuing with the cycle of sharing in the daily session.

ER as a Flipped Classroom Strategy.

ER strategies were not only the school practice, but also a classroom teaching strategy. The teacher employed various ER strategies in the classroom to involve students in ER activities. In Grade Nine, many group discussions, pair discussions and choral interactions were conducted based on the ER that students did outside the classroom. Sometimes, the teacher provided the various tasks in groups and

encouraged them to do them and share what they had read and found with other members of the groups or the next group. It was found that every student's choice would be different according to their interest. Moreover, students were occasionally involved in project works linking their ER, such as creating presentations and posters based on biographies, such as Biographies of BP Koirala, and novels for meaningful and engaging reading. During the classroom reading activities, students would highlight the key points, take notes, skim for the main idea, and scan for the particular idea as suggested by the teacher.

Regarding the teacher's initiation, one of the selected participants in FGD said, " *The teacher encourages us to debate on certain topics from the reading materials, and allows us to express our opinion, views, sometimes posing critical questions based on the reading materials."* In this regard, other participants had a common voice-

The teacher divides us into groups of five and gives us different parts and paragraphs of the reading materials. Then, we discuss in groups, interact with each other, and share in the classroom. The teacher connects those ideas to the text.

Besides these, the teacher would also conduct ER, focusing on difficult vocabulary and engaging students in loud reading to develop their English pronunciation and fluency in connected speech. In this regard, he said, *" Sometimes I allow students to read a load of whatever they like… and encourage them to highlight or underline the key points."*

Teacher Support and Facilitation in ER. improving teachers' guidance resources and feedback to better support students in their reading journey. Teachers often recommend

or give students the choice to select any of the fictions, such as The Alchemist, Holes, stories, for example, The Sound of Thunder, The Lottery, or The Necklace; and magazines, such as The Rising Nepal, or The Himalayan Times, and ask them to share their perspectives on the text they had read. The teacher actively engages in the classroom activities, circulating, scaffolding and monitoring all the students' activities. He would encourage students firstly to skim, then to scan the texts, providing timely feedback to those who are struggling with their tasks. In this regard, one of the FGD participants said, *"The teacher helps me when I feel difficult in reading by teaching vocabulary, making it easier to remember and understand better, teaching me some tricks".* The teacher had a key role in monitoring and scaffolding students in ER. Regarding the teacher's continuous support, some students shared-

Teachers play an important role in guiding us through the reading process, explaining difficult parts and making sure that we understand the text before. He is supportive, giving us constructive feedback during group activities and offering extra help when necessary.

These excerpts show the teacher's ongoing support and facilitation in developing confidence and engagement in reading. It is justified by his following remark, "*I keep the students engaged by regularly changing the reading materials and incorporating fun activities like quizzes, book sessions, I help them analyse text, provide necessary vocabulary support, and I also give them positive feedback".* The teacher sees his role as a guide, helping students analyse text provided vocabulary support, and facilitating discussion to deepen understanding in their reading journey.

All these reveal that in Prithvi School, both the school and the teacher took initiative in ER activities, demonstrating how institutional and teachers' efforts play a key role in enhancing students' reading habits.

Perceived Effectiveness of Extensive Reading

Based on the above-mentioned input the school provided, what processes were followed for the effective implementation of ER strategies? This study focuses on the outcomes of ER practice in the school. The following are the perceived effectiveness of ER in the selected school and among the students.

Vocabulary Acquisition.

Engaging in ER of various literary texts, students found it easier to learn and use new vocabulary as they found new words and their contextual uses. When they found any new term, they would note, search meaning and learn their meanings in use. It built their confidence in their use in the classroom discussion and informal conversation. In this regard, one student shared-

Sometimes we read love story books, sometimes stories like Love Star Girl, because they introduce us to many new words related to emotion and relationship, and we find it hard to understand due to unfamiliar vocabulary. But after reading those books, we naturally start using these words while talking about feelings and describing characters.

In the interview, the teacher said, *"I believe that the materials that I use in the classroom or that I suggest for outside of the classroom are very useful and effective for students to learn vocabulary, improve fluency, and to see something differently."*

As such, vocabulary building is one of the key outcomes of ER.

Learning with Fun. ER made students learning with fun, where they read those materials that interested in and matched their level. Without focusing too much on every detail, they relaxed and read at their own pace. It made them more enjoyable. The classroom activities reveal that the best part of ER was stress-free reading: without the fear of pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary errors by choosing materials on their own, on their own time, on their own way. In the same theme, one of the students said, *"I like to read novels, for example, Wonder, which helped me read faster without feeling any burden."* Similarly, another student shared, *"I like to read fiction, e.g., Monsoon, because it improves my reading skills."* Other students shared that they would enjoy reading biographies of famous people, which increases their interest as they engage and keeps them motivated. In this regard, the teacher remarked, "*I always try to engage the students in reading, I mostly focus on those readings which they enjoy and read freely*". For effective and enjoyable learning, the teacher gave freedom to choose the materials for the students.

Scaffolding for Comprehension. Many students shared their experiences of receiving individual support from teachers and peers that significantly improved their language skills. Often in the classroom, students would actively participate in group discussions and individual tasks. The teacher would actively monitor these discussions, offering guidance and extra help to students struggling with tasks. Such individualised attention ensured that all students received the support they needed to succeed in their reading activities. In fact is approved by one FGD participant's sharing that,

Sometimes I often struggle with the vocabulary while reading novels and stories. When I have a problem, I share my problem with my English teacher. After listening to it, he promptly helps me, which makes it easier to continue my reading. I am inspired by his encouragement and am committed to keeping trying.

Similarly, participant 2 shared, *"Even when I struggle with sentences or difficult words, the teacher is always there to help me."* In this regard, the teacher expressed, " *I incorporate both group and individual activities, depending on the reading materials. Group activities foster collaboration, while individual tasks allow students to reflect more deeply on their learning"*. The personalized support allows students to feel more comfortable with new vocabulary and complex texts. It was found that individual support provided by the teacher plays a crucial role in helping students overcome difficulties, reinforce their learning, and feel motivated throughout the extensive reading process.

Learner Engagement and Motivation. Increased engagement in language learning through ER helped students improve their language skills. In this topic, a student said, *"Our language improved a lot through engagement in various activities."* While observing the classroom, it was noticed that students are actively involved in both reading and discussions. They seemed enthusiastic to share their ideas about the read text. A sense of excitement could be witnessed in the classroom during their involvement and interaction with one another, ultimately advancing their learning. The following excerpt from a student can support this claim: *"My confidence was developed through certain ER materials of literary genres such as novels and fiction."* Similarly, participant

2 shared, *"I understood the text better."* In this regard, other students said, "*When continuing ER, we felt more comfortable with new words and sentence structures, which made us more confident to take part in the conversation and discussion and writing activities. It encouraged us to read more challenging books.* Along with this, ER improved their language abilities, critical thinking, and fostered a love for reading. One of the respondents said, " *I'm actively involved because I get to choose the materials that I like most, I read and discuss with my friends, which helps me understand the texts better."* In this line, another student expressed,

It's fun to talk about the materials with each other, which makes us feel more connected to the materials, enjoy. We feel more connected with materials like novels and fiction because they are closely related to our class, topics and often link to our real-life experiences.

These excerpts reveal how ER increased students' motivation in reading, resulting in active involvement in the English language learning process. The following excerpt of the teacher affirms students' engagement, *"I make sure that students are actively involved by encouraging them to choose their own reading materials and ask for their opinions and feedback on what they read. I am always aware of creating a comfortable environment to share their ideas."* The teacher actively involves students by letting them choose their materials and seeking their feedback on what they enjoy. This creates a classroom culture where students feel comfortable and share their ideas. There is a sense of excitement as students are engaged in interaction with one another, showing their involvement in the learning process.

Minimizing Reading Challenges. After continuous practice of ER using effective strategies and the teacher's support, many students shared that certain reading challenges were minimized. During classroom observation, it was found that students comfortably read and discussed the more challenging sections of the reading by themselves rather than expecting support from the teacher. In this regard, one FGD participant said, *"Since I started ER, I can now read longer texts and understand them easily. I feel confident in reading English."* It *means that* the consistent ER practice helped them build confidence and tackle longer and complex texts. Similarly, another student remarked, *"I learn many new words from novels and articles, and seem them in context made it easier to remember"* and next student said, *"Sometimes, the vocabulary is difficult, and it takes time to understand the main ideas, but I had tried to use the different strategies which the teacher taught me to work through the difficulties.*" Many students shared, *"The teacher always helps us with difficult parts and gives extra resources when needed".* It *reveals that t*he teacher played a crucial role in minimizing reading challenges by using various teaching strategies. In this regard, the teacher said-

I use a mix of strategies like reading aloud, group discussion, and peer feedback to engage students. I also connect the materials to their interest and reading levels by incorporating group discussions, debates and individual perspectives on reading. The teacher helped students engage deeply with the materials, making it easier to overcome challenges.

It means that the combination of teacher support, diverse strategies, and student collaboration helped minimize reading challenges during the extensive reading process.

Discussion

This study explored the materials used, strategies employed, and perceived effectiveness of ER in Grade 9 at an Institutional school located in a remote area of Nepal. Grounded in Day and Bamford's (1998) ten principles of ER and situated within the evolving framework discussed by Day (2015), the findings resonate with broader international and national literature while providing localized insights into how ER can be meaningfully implemented in resource-limited EFL contexts.

The findings on materials correspond strongly with Day and Bamford's (1998) core ER principles: that reading materials chosen by the learners should be *easy*, *abundant*, and *varied*. Students at Prithvi School frequently chose and engaged with a range of literary texts such as novels, biographies, poems, and short stories based on their interests and reading level. This leans towards Day's (2015) Pure ER on his ER Continuum, where learners read quickly and widely for pleasure, which supports general understanding of the texts rather than their detailed analysis.

The teacher played a significant role in selecting appropriate materials, particularly for students who struggle with choosing materials independently. This semi-guided practice represents a blending between **Instructed ER** and **Scaffolded ER** as outlined in Sun's (2024) study in the Chinese context. As Sun's model, at Prithvi School, English teacher acted as a strategy guide and a motivator, who regularly assisted his students with material selection and content comprehension, ensuring the accessibility

and effectiveness of the materials for English language development.

The effectiveness of ER materials in promoting vocabulary development and learner engagement correlates with empirical findings of Ateek (2022) and Lindawati (2021), who also focused on the role of interesting and learner-friendly materials in increasing motivation and language development. While Grade Nine students reported that they face challenges with complex academic texts with difficult vocabulary and sentence structure, their preference for narrative genres resonates with Neupane's (2016) findings that students prefer to read easier, enjoyable, and informative texts.

The integration of ER as a routine part of school practice, which evolved from a weekly activity to a daily classroom ritual, reveals the school's commitment to embedding ER within institutional structures. This practice correlates with Day's (2015) continuum of **Supervised ER**, in which structured ER occurs under teacher guidance within formal education settings like Prithvi School. Its strategy of starting each English class with ER activities reflects a process-oriented approach, transforming ER from an individual task into a collaborative and reflective learning opportunity. These practices also resonate with Endris' (2018) findings, which showed improved outcomes when ER was combined with meaningful, motivating activities and extended reading periods in Ethiopia.

Likewise, the use of **flipped pedagogy,** where ER takes place outside the classroom and is then explored through discussion, presentation, and group activities, is in line with the notion of **Blended Extensive and Intensive Reading, as suggested by** Day (2015). This integration reflects Chang and

Renandya's (2017) argument regarding the role of flexible, teacher-supported ER practices in promoting deep engagement with texts. The evidence shows that when students are encouraged to read independently and then collaboratively interact with those texts in class, their motivation and language development are significantly enhanced.

The effectiveness of ER in language development, particularly in vocabulary learning, reading skills, reading confidence, and motivation, confirms Day's (2015) statement that ER's *learner-centred*, *pleasurable*, and *authentic features make it* the most effective technique in language improvement. It is also similar to the findings of Safaeia and Bulca (2013), Lindawati (2021), and Ateek (2022), who shared that students' freedom to choose their own materials increased their motivation, reducing the burden. This learner-driven approach is one of the defining features of effective ER programs, as echoed in Day and Bamford's (1998) principles.

Teacher scaffolding and peer collaboration during ER activities reduced reading challenges over time, which is similar to Sun's (2024) model of **Scaffolded Extensive Reading (SER). In this study, the teacher** supported students through vocabulary instruction, personalized guidance, and encouragement, helping them overcome difficulties with complex texts. In building learners' confidence and enabling them to tackle more challenging materials, such support was crucial, which was a noted finding of Endris (2018) in his longitudinal study.

In the broader Nepalese context, as Sharma (2024), Adhikari and Shrestha (2023), and Neupane (2016) documented, students continue to face barriers such as limited

access to level-appropriate materials, a lack of teacher training in ER pedagogy, and an exam-driven curriculum. Prithvi School demonstrated strong implementation of ER principles. This study suggests that many of these barriers can be mitigated with sustained institutional support, teacher initiative, and strategic integration of ER into classroom routines, even in resource-limited settings.

Prithvi School provides a working model for other Nepali schools seeking to implement ER in meaningful ways by emphasizing collaboration, flexibility, and learner choice. However, this model also depends heavily on committed teachers and a supportive school culture, factors that may not be readily available in all contexts. Thus, by developing culturally relevant ER materials and promoting ER as a whole-school approach, future research and policy efforts should focus on training teachers in ER strategies.

Conclusion

Focusing on materials used, strategies employed, and perceived effectiveness, this study explored the implementation of ER in a Grade 9 classroom at a community school in Nepal. The findings reveal that when ER is thoughtfully integrated into institutional routines and supported by active teacher facilitation by drawing on Day and Bamford's (1998) ER principles and Day's (2015) continuum framework. Therefore, it can significantly enhance students' language learning, motivation, and reading autonomy.

The school provided diverse and level-appropriate literary materials that were engaging and linguistically enriching. Extending through flipped activities, ER was institutionalized as a regular classroom practice, where the teacher played a pivotal role in guiding, scaffolding, and motivating students. This led to remarkable results, including vocabulary building, improved content comprehension, increased learner confidence, and reduced reading anxiety.

The findings correlate with the global studies (e.g., Chang & Renandya, 2017; Lindawati, 2021; Sun, 2024) that confirm the value of student-centred as well as teacher-guided ER practices, particularly in EFL contexts. While in the Nepalese context, the limitations exist in resource scarcity and insufficient teacher training, this case study signals that ER can thrive through strategic implementation, learner autonomy, and sustained support, even within modest settings. These insights can be replicated in similar educational contexts and open up a window for further action-based and longitudinal research to deepen their impact.

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