MODIFYING INPUT IN EXTENSIVE READING: INTUITIVE SIMPLIFYING, ELABORATING AND GLOSSING

MRES THESIS

by

Paul Brigg

Submitted to Macquarie University, Faculty of Human Sciences,

School of Education

In partial fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Research

9th October 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not previously been submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no matter previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

Date: 08/10/2015

Acknowledgements

Abstract

In Extensive Reading (ER) learners are exposed to large quantities of reading material simplified to be within their linguistic competence. This study investigates the overall effectiveness of ER and whether extra simplification increases effectiveness. It is proposed that the greater the degree of simplification, the more positive students' attitudes to leisure reading will be and the greater their gains in language proficiency. Twelve English language learners were randomly allocated to 3 groups. Over a 5-week period, Group A read graded readers at the intermediate level; Group B read intermediate material additionally simplified to an easier level and control Group C did not undertake ER. The reading was conducted during the participants' own time and involved one-to-one shared-reading sessions with the researcher for each participant of Groups A & B. The individual sessions were conducted by telephone for approximately 1 hour per week. The ER participants did 30 minutes daily of private e-book reading and kept reading diaries. An English language proficiency test and an attitude scale were administered pre- and post-treatment. Overall, the ER participants in Groups A and B demonstrated significant proficiency and attitudinal gains in comparison to the control group. However, due to the small sample size of the extra-simplification group (B), no significant difference was established between the 2 ER groups (A and B). However, case studies involving one participant from each of the ER groups showed the extra-simplified material resulted in considerably higher proficiency and motivation towards reading. Further research is needed into the teaching of adult classes involved in the shared reading of materials that are modified for easy comprehension and that employ appropriate interactive strategies derived from one-to-one instruction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language *learning* strategies have explicit goals for which learners strive as they improve their knowledge of a target language; an example is completing grammar exercises. Language *use* strategies, on the other hand, are practice, rehearsal and interaction activities from which learners may implicitly acquire elements of the target language (Cohen, 1998). Extensive Reading (ER) is a language use strategy. ER involves learners doing large amounts of comprehensible and pleasurable reading, usually from collections of graded readers, in the expectation of building their vocabulary, automaticity and structural awareness while improving comprehension and developing motivation and confidence (Nation, 1997; Takase, 2007; Day & Bamford, 2010). An advantage of ER is that it is a relatively simple way of increasing learners' exposure to the target language in the belief that this will promote acquisition and it can lead to a lifelong habit of developing language proficiency through leisure reading (Dykes, 2011).

This belief in the effectiveness of ER stems largely from the hypotheses of Krashen (1982, 1985, 2003) suggesting a comprehensive theory of language acquisition. These have resulted in both heated debate and a loyal following within second-language learning circles. Krashen's Input Hypothesis has particular relevance to ER since it proposes incremental input adjustments that are slightly ahead of the learner's current competence, leading to progressive language learning. Similar incremental adjustments constitute the modifications which produce the grading in graded readers. However, Krashen's insistence that input alone is responsible for language acquisition has led to alternative theories such as Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1990; Ellis, 1999; Gass & Mackey, 2006). This argues that it is through input and interaction with others that language learners are afforded the opportunity to notice differences in their versions of the target language and the output of their conversational partners. In addition, Swain (2000) has proposed an Output Hypothesis which asserts that comprehensible *output* is as much responsible for language acquisition (LA) as comprehensible *input*. In a review of Van Patten and Williams' (2007) publication on prevailing theories of second language learning, Kozel (2008) comments that amongst modern observations, Krashen's theories still seem to "hold up well" (p.5).

All theories of second language learning acknowledge the significance of reading input as a fundamental component in the acquisition process (Gass & Mackey, 2006). Researchers have investigated the type of reading which constitutes the most effective input at different stages of language learning (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Hu & Nation, 2000; Hu, 2013). Hu and Nation (2000) investigated the

relationship between the density of unknown words and reading comprehension in one-off readings by second language learners preparing for university entrance. They find that students ideally need to know approximately 98% of the words they encounter to read comfortably for pleasure. These authors suggest that there are three options for considering the reading undertaken by English Second Language/Foreign Language (ESL/FL) students. Firstly, it may be seen as intensive reading (IR) in which students tackle language with unfamiliar features, possibly requiring assistance from teachers, glossaries or translation dictionaries. This is language learning, the instructional situation of academic study. The grammar translation method is often associated with this approach in which reading passages are the source for grammatical and translation exercises. Secondly, it may alternatively be seen as ER for language growth in which learners encounter some unfamiliar words but manage to understand most of the text with just a few interruptions on each page. This is language use. If the unfamiliar features are met often, learners have the opportunity for acquisition. The percentage of known words is recommended to be up to 98%. As Hu (2013) reports, there is not yet precision regarding the recommended number of words to be encountered in each aspect of knowledge to be learned. Therefore, a range is suggested. In this language for growth area, a range of 95-97% is commonly recommended and is often referred to as a lexical-coverage level. A third option is that reading may take the form of ER used for language fluency development, where readers encounter a minimal number of unknown features and are generally able to read without interruption. With this level of ER, learners have the possibility of increasing their reading speed and improving comprehension and vocabulary. This is also language use. The range for the percentage of known words is recommended to be between 99 and 100%.

Hu and Nation's (2000) study focusses on the second condition above, reading for language growth. The ER participants experienced unassisted ER, and one outcome of the study was to suggest that the third option, fluency development, with virtually no difficulties in the text, is necessary for unassisted comprehension. This current study acts on that suggestion, investigating the effect of ER modified to have minimal unknown language features. This is achieved by comparing the reading proficiency and attitudes of ESL students undertaking 5 weeks of ER, featuring each of the three options above. Those participants undertaking this form of ER had the assistance of shared-reading sessions with the researcher and undertook some ER in their own time. Graded readers were used as the reading materials; these are widely used as an input source for ER, especially for low- to intermediate-level readers (Hu, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that, while ER is generally effective, the 99-100% range of known words, also referred to as the simplified-intermediate level in this study, is a more effective

form of ER than other forms in that learners at this level will experience more gains in language proficiency and in affect. The gap addressed can therefore be expressed as the difference between ER at the intermediate 95-97% range as against the simplified-intermediate, 99-100% range. Thus this research focuses on a lexical-coverage gap of approximately 3%. This gap is potentially identifiable from parametric and non-parametric tests of language proficiency and attitudes. In addition, think-aloud verbal reports of case study participants reading at each of the two lexical-coverage levels can accurately reflect the readers' thought processes; these can therefore be an additional data collection tool for defining the research gap (Bowles, 2010).

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. This first chapter introduces ER and the research gap which initiated the current study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature underlying the empirical and theoretical basis of the thesis. Methodology is presented in Chapter 3 and includes the research design, selection of participants, data collection instruments and data analysis. The quantitative and qualitative findings are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, while the meaning and significance of these findings is discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the importance and significance of the outcomes to the theory, research and practice of ER.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following an overview of ER, this chapter critically reviews the literature regarding the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) element of ER. The concepts and issues raised in previous research then provide a background of understanding for the current study, which investigates one-to-one ER shared-reading instruction with additional SSR done in the participants' own time. The reading materials are modified to various learner proficiency levels by using simplification strategies. These are aimed at providing learners with additional understandable cues or corrective feedback. SSR can be deployed as a within-class activity involving a teacher supervising students' silent reading, or as students reading in their own time outside of class. The non-instructional nature of within-class SSR constitutes a research gap able to be resolved with modifications that offer more specific learning opportunities with an involved teacher. These opportunities include shared oral reading providing corrective feedback. This literature review focusses on five key areas. First, following the overview, the nature of SSR is discussed including its successes and its shortcomings when used as a within-class approach. A review follows of the various types of simplification that can be used by the writers of ER materials as they intuitively modify texts to fit within the proficiency levels of graded readers used in ER. Discussion next focuses on how the degree of simplification is able to be expressed as lexical-coverage that is the percentage of words understood per hundred words of text. The aim of the research is then established as determining the possible differences in attitudes and reading proficiency between groups reading at two levels of simplification: an intermediate range of 95-97% lexical-coverage and a simplified-intermediate range of 99-100% - a difference of approximately 3%.

2.1 An Overview of Extensive Reading (ER)

ER involves the reading of a substantial number of enjoyable and interesting texts that are within the student's language learning ability (Day & Bamford, 2010; Grabe, 2010). Contrasting ER with intensive reading, Nation (2001) states that "extensive reading involves reading with the focus on the meaning of the text" (p.149); this is language use, whereas intensive reading involves the close and deliberate study of short texts. In addition to the characteristics of quantity, comprehensibility and pleasantness referred to in descriptions of ER, other qualities include the availability to learners of a variety of reading topics and the freedom of book choice. A common view is that second language learners learn to read by reading (Grabe, 1991; Krashen, 2003; Day & Bamford, 2010). Comprehension occurs during reading and 'most available assessments rely on measuring comprehension *after* the text is read' (Magliano,

Millis, The R-Sat Development Team & Levinstein, 2011, p.1). These authors suggest that the delay between the occurrence of comprehension and testing constitutes a disconnection. This can be resolved by spontaneous or more-immediate testing such as the probing of participants' mental processes from verbal reports, or short passage multiple-choice cloze comprehension testing. Reading is generally regarded as an interaction of a variety of cognitive processes for a range of purposes (Day & Bamford, 2010). Comprehension testing is therefore comprehensive, covering the fluency aspects of speed, understanding and word knowledge, as well as the accuracy of grammatical usage and correct spelling. Comprehension testing also draws on many aspects of learners' prior knowledge including knowledge of the type of text, of the first and second language and of the world.

Despite these many differences in comprehension processes and purposes, the same cognitive resources are believed to be used for every situation. As Sadoski, McTigue and Paivio (2012) observe, 'all language is comprehended and remembered by incorporation into a common abstract code' (p. 491); this is an ability to make mental connections. Interaction is also common to all reading purposes, because many cognitive processes must function simultaneously to achieve reading comprehension. These factors result in general descriptions of reading comprehension, such as Koda's (2005) conception of it occurring when a reader identifies and integrates a variety of information and amalgamates this with existing knowledge. Grabe (2010) suggests an understanding of reading comprehension peculiar to second language learners who may have difficulty initially identifying information due to limited proficiency in the target language, which leads to minimal coherence. In such cases, learners are likely to over-rely on their existing knowledge by imposing some degree of coherence allowing them to respond, albeit erroneously, to comprehension questions. Grabe (2010) continues to observe that this "common problem occurs when students are asked to read a text that is much too difficult" (p.49). Cohen (1998) describes this phenomenon as a cover strategy which learners use to create an impression that they have control over some aspect of language learning when they do not. As detailed in the following research examples, using simplified texts can mitigate against this faulty processing to improve proficiency and attitudes towards reading, by making the process more successful with simpler syntax and structure.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

In order to assess reading comprehension, a standardized reading-proficiency test is often used to assess learners' overall reading abilities. Reading proficiency measures can be used for program or teaching evaluation, curriculum design, research and student placement. Standardized tests such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign

Language) and others are examples of proficiency tests of second language learners' reading ability involving a set of tasks that relate to the component skills of the reading comprehension process. These component skills are often identified, taught and assessed separately as reading fluency. A fluent reader is one who can read with few hesitations, without effort and with a good level of comprehension (Richards, Schmidt & Kim, 2003). The component skills of fluency include reading speed or rate, automatic vocabulary recognition and the syntactic parsing linked to text comprehension through meaning formation (Grabe, 2010). These fluency skills have been measured in research activities such as the following.

In a seminal project by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) regarding comprehension based research, fourth and fifth grade ESL pupils in Fiji were placed into three groups for their half-hour daily English class. Each group experienced a different method: the control group received traditional audio-lingual teaching; a second followed a within-class 'read-only' process of pupils undertaking SSR, with additional activities such as comprehension questions or book reports. A third group undertook shared reading involving both teachers and pupils, where the essence of the activity was that learning would occur due to pupils' interest in the stories. The assessment items were comprehension tests, developed and administered according to standardized conditions involving multiple-choice questions appropriate to each grade level. Overall, those pupils exposed to many stories in both the SSR and shared-reading groups progressed at twice the rate of the control group in reading and listening comprehension. In addition, studies have revealed that the incidental acquisition of vocabulary and grammar can occur when learners are reading for meaning and enjoyment. A number of empirical studies has investigated incidental vocabulary acquisition from ER, while Read (2007) describes the links between comprehension, vocabulary and proficiency assessment as follows: "since vocabulary size is closely associated with reading comprehension ability, vocabulary tests have traditionally had a significant role in research on reading development and in literacy programmes" (p.107). Such testing was crucial in the following study.

Waring and Takaki (2003) conducted a study to determine which words were learned from just one reading of a beginner-level graded reader by 15 intermediate-level Japanese participants. Three vocabulary tests were administered over different time periods: the first immediately followed the reading, the second was after a delay of 1 week, while the third was after 3 months. The results were that the meaning of only one of 25 items was recalled after three months, and the meaning of none of the items that were met fewer than eight times was remembered three months later. The authors suggest that their study supports the view that massive amounts of ER are needed to develop new vocabulary. These

studies have examined some of the fluency components which ER can contribute to the development of second language reading, however it is widely recognized that another component of this process is the role of attitudes toward reading.

2.3 Reading Affect

In discussing affect in ER Day and Bamford (2010) state that "students who learn to read through an extensive reading approach develop positive attitudes and become motivated to read in the second language" (p.38).   In addition to ER's impact on comprehension, many researchers report that it develops learners' motivation to read in the target language (Mason & Krashen, 1997; Krashen, 2004; Takase, 2007; Lake, 2014). Attitudes to leisure reading are frequently assessed with a scale such as that developed by Stokmans (1999) and modified for the research of Broeder and Stokmans (2013) investigating the leisure reading of adolescents in three regions, Beijing, the Netherlands and Cape Town.   The reading attitudes of 2,173 participants were compared.   The model was found to be inappropriate for the Cape Town adolescents however, in spite of obvious environmental and cultural differences, the results showed a similar pattern for the Netherlands and Beijing. The most important determinants of reading attitude shared by both groups were concerned with the participants' perceived reading proficiency, the range of books, their attractiveness and the degree of enjoyment derived from them.   The norming effects of friends and family were also similar for these regions (Broeder & Stokmans, 2013).

Attitudes towards ER were included in a study of remedial EFL university students by Takase and Otsuki (2012) which involved a questionnaire about their 81 participants' motivating or demotivating factors. The study extended over 14 weeks with 80 minutes of within-class SSR. Students had a goal of reading 100 easily comprehensible books and each kept a reading diary with brief comments on the books.   The findings were that these students demonstrated positive attitudes to ER and gained sufficiently in self-confidence for this to be reflected in improved self-efficacy scores. In addition, Yamashita (2013) conducted an attitudes study of 61 Japanese university students undertaking a 15-week course of 90 minutes class time per week. The ER input was from a 500-book collection and a pre- and post-questionnaire assessed students' attitude in five factors. The results found increases in 'Comfort' and 'Intellectual-value' and a decrease in 'Anxiety'. The author claims that the participants are likely to become committed leisure readers due to positive feelings from ER, and furthermore, it is suggested that the development of intrinsic motivation resulting in intellectual fulfilment and positive feelings is a particular outcome of ER.

It is evident that input is an essential component of each of these empirical studies; input alone may trigger natural acquisition of native language or, when comprehensible and merged with interaction, it can contribute significantly to acquisition (Long, 1985; Ellis, 1999; Krashen, 2003). The main type of input used in ER teaching is the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) method, discussed in detail in the next section. In the most common form of SSR learners just read enjoyable and understandable books without any additional activities. Grabe (2010) provides further details stating that SSR lessons have a requirement that all students read a book at a set time for a period (usually 15 to 20 minutes) that is not interrupted; there is no talking and the teacher models silent reading during this time.

2.4 Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

SSR is the most important method within ER and there are innumerable examples of its usage within the many forms of ER. However, one problem is that within-class SSR often lacks instructional opportunity because the teacher is a passive model, silently reading with the learners. As a solution, corrective feedback opportunities in the form of various modifications are then possible. To maximize interaction, these can be presented within shared reading, as happened in the Elley and Mangubhai (1983) study. Whilst shared reading can replace the within-class method, private SSR will always be essential in order to achieve the large amount of reading input necessary for the success of ER.

There is a widely held belief that SSR is the best method available to ER programs. Krashen states that it is "the most powerful tool we have in language education" (2003, p.15). In addition, Day and Bamford (2010, p.7) develop the points that "reading is its own reward" and " reading is individual and silent, at the student's own pace, and, outside class, done when and where the student pleases". This originates from their list of ten characteristics of successful ER programs, showing much support for the primacy of SSR. Grabe (2010) identifies five variations of SSR ranging from DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) through to reading labs. He notes the endorsement of these namesakes for SSR as effective approaches to ER, when used in K-12 programs in schools.

Furthermore, SSR is often thought of as a stand-alone program synonymous with ER. Krashen (2004) for example, states "There are three kinds of in-school free-reading programs: sustained silent reading, self-selected reading, and extensive reading" (p.2). There are also explicit examples of the use of SSR as a stand-alone method. Pigada and Schmitt (2006) used their case study of French as a second language to determine whether an extensive reading program over 4 weeks could improve lexical knowledge. They find that knowledge of 65% of the target words was improved with an acquisition rate of approximately 1 in every 5 words tested. Other gains were found in comprehension, grammar and

spelling. The sole participant read one book a week at the intermediate level. The reading was individual and of the participant's own choice and time, and there was no treatment other than the SSR.

Huffman (2014) conducted a further study of the gains in the reading rate of 66 Japanese university students during a 14-week ER course in which participants reported reading for an average of 3.59 hours per week, including at least 30 minutes of within-class SSR. Some activities such as a poster competition and book summaries were included, but SSR was the major element. A similar number of students in an intensive reading course formed a control group. The SSR group scored significantly higher reading rate gains of 20.73 words per minute while the IR group experienced a decrease of .62 words per minute (p.17).

In a final example, Siah and Kwok (2010) recruited 362 Year 1 and Year 2 secondary school students from Hong Kong. A program strictly following the purist (just reading, no activities) form of SSR was conducted over a six-month period. The first 20 minutes of every school day were devoted to within-class SSR. The researchers used a questionnaire to evaluate attitudes to leisure reading and to the SSR program. They also conducted an overall assessment of the participants' value of reading. Their conclusions are that the SSR program was more effective for learners who already had a high value of reading. The outcome of a chi-square test indicates a significant association between learners' attitudes to leisure books and the value of reading. The researchers also find positive correlations between learners' attitudes concerning the effectiveness of SSR and their valuing of reading.

However, SSR is not always regarded as successful: in the United States of America (USA) in 1997, a National Reading Panel was charged with conducting a thorough study of research and knowledge relevant to reading development and instruction. One of the outcomes is that SSR was judged to be non-instructional and its removal was recommended (Edmondson & Shannon, 2002).

Modifications in the method or content of ER can transform within-class SSR. This can be feedback used by a teacher or a more advanced learner to report on and correct errors (Richards et al., 2003). Although feedback strategies vary greatly, research studies suggest that the most effective should involve self-repair by the learner and should be compatible with inter-language development in that the learner is at the stage of readiness to address the error type (Ellis, 1999). Furthermore, feedback is an essential element in the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1990) which subsumes aspects of other theories of language learning such as the comprehensible input requirement of Krashen's (1982, 1985) Input Hypothesis. However the Interaction Hypothesis adds feedback as an error noticing mechanism. Feedback is then credited with arousing learners' attentional and negotiating processes, thereby

contributing to learning. Gass and Mackey (2006) point out that "the links between interaction and learning have been clearly demonstrated through a good deal of empirical research" (p.15). Swain (2000) also explains that the interaction involved in feedback allows learners the chance to use the target language; that is, to produce output as they negotiate meaning. For interaction to develop from input, researchers acknowledge that comprehensibility must be present, either in the written form arising from simplification to the level of the learners understanding, or through spoken negotiation to reach the same shared level of comprehension (Long, 1990). There is a range of modifications that can be applied to the material contents of ER that is, to the texts that help promote comprehensibility, feedback, interaction and learning.

2.5 Input Modifications to ER

Many input modifications are possible and shared reading is a teaching methods modification that is able to replace within-class SSR. Alternatively, input modifications can be changes made to texts that learners read and from which they can learn. Three types of modification relating to simplification will be discussed: (i) linguistic simplification; (ii) elaboration; and (iii) glossing. First, simplification is the modification of texts or materials often using a word list and structure list to produce simplified reading for language learners (Richards et al., 2003). Linguistic simplification is a term used to more accurately describe this syntactic form of simplification; it involves the use of simple sentences, controlled vocabularies and contracted storylines. The second type of modification, elaboration, involves the simplification of context by the provision of extra information to give more substance to underlying thematic relations. Finally, glosses are a modification that can be useful when it is ineffectual to make inferences from context, often due to a lack of cues. Glosses are overt textual modifications requiring a conscious learning decision by the reader.

In a study of 325 Korean high school students' reading comprehension at the intermediate level, Oh (2001) compares elaboration and linguistic simplification and concludes that the former is preferable because the added information produces more native-like text. Input modifications such as glosses, on the other hand, mediate between the text and the learner to aid reading comprehension and vocabulary learning; as such, these modifications are within e-text feedback mechanisms. Ko (2005) conducted an investigation involving three gloss conditions: no gloss; English second language glossing; and Korean first language glossing. The reading for the 106 Korean participants was a one-off, two-page reading of a non-fiction text in which 22 words were glossed. The glossed items were bold-faced and the definitions and synonyms constituting the glosses appeared at the bottom of the text. The findings are that only the English glossing significantly affected comprehension. As well as glossaries at the

beginning or end of books, with e-book graded readers, glosses can be within-text drop-down options. Chen, Chen, Chen and Wey (2013) used ER e-books categorized according to simplification to study the language proficiency and attitude development of 89 technical university students in Taiwan with approximately half this number in each of the experimental and control groups. The researchers employed reading proficiency tests adapted from the TOEFL 2000 test and find significant improvements in the ER participants. These authors sourced e-books from websites and used simplification to classify them into three levels. Other studies making use of graded readers are now discussed.

2.6 Graded Readers and Input Modification

Graded readers are the objects of simplification processes; they are "books written for learners of English using limited lexis and syntax" (Hill, 2008, p. 1185). These readers are published according to nine average vocabulary levels, from Starter through Intermediate to Advanced. After interviewing the editors of four major publishers, Claridge (2012) concludes that they are doing an effective overall job of modifying texts to satisfy the need for a wide choice for learners and generally producing "a good story, well written for the level" (p.117). She also surveys 25 second language learners from a tertiary institution and finds that while their perceptions of ER are positive, they read far too few books to have a positive effect on their fluency or vocabulary. The sample size was too small for these results to be statistically significant, but Claridge expresses the opinion that "If they are to read easily and for pleasure, readers should be reading extensively at . . . the level below their perceived proficiency level" (p.118). These levels can be expressed mathematically: if a reader's proficiency is established by proficiency tests to be 'intermediate', then s/he would be expected to have a 95-97% lexical-coverage of an intermediate graded reading book; that is just 3 to 5 difficulties per 100 words. A level below this would be a 'simplified-intermediate' level of 99-100% lexical-coverage at which the learner would have no more than one difficulty per 100 words. The same process would apply to all of the nine levels of graded readers. To simplify graded readers as suggested by Claridge (2011) requires the skilful use of modification strategies and the creative talents of skilled writers and materials developers.

Modifications can be used to produce graded readers by intuition and/or structurally, by using readability formulas. Intuitive simplification is a process in which the writer uses one or a combination of the glossing, elaboration or linguistic simplification strategies described above, in an instinctive approximation of what learners should understand at different proficiency levels (Allen, 2009). In their study of 300 intuitively simplified texts that were analysed using the Coh-Metrix computational tool, Crossley, Allen and McNamara (2012) largely agree with Claridge's (2011) observations, finding that

the simplified texts in the present graded reader corpus provide suitable linguistic input at the varying levels of second language proficiency. Zamainian and Heydari (2012) in their review of readability formulas for use in EFL, find that the Coh-Metrix tool is recognized for its "goal of improving reading comprehension in classrooms by providing a means to improve textbook writing and to more appropriately match textbooks to the intended students" (p. 46). Overall, the Coh-Metrix studies have endorsed intuitive simplification with the researchers commenting "Thus we can state with some confidence, that intuitive text simplification processes produce texts that become linguistically more comprehensible as the text level decreases" (Crossley et al., 2012, p.103).

Simplification is integral to the process of preparing ER graded materials and the various methods of simplification, alone or in combination, have been shown to assist language learning. However, simplification by its very nature is individual, intuitive and vague. The outcomes of computational programs on readability can assist the intuitive preparation of graded readers. The Coh-Metrix study has resulted in an eleven indices *L2 Reading Index* which, it is suggested, could supplement and strengthen intuitive simplification (Crossley, Allen, & McNamara, 2011). These, however, are the material input in SSR; other modifications can be activities concerned with ER that could replace the non-instructional nature of within-class SSR. There is a range of such activities from report writing through quizzes to comprehension exercises, however, the teaching strategy of shared reading is the activity of interest to the current study.

2.7 Shared Reading

In shared reading, the teacher is an active rather than a passive model, as occurs in within-class SSR. There is evidence that within-class SSR programs fail because readers do not experience the pleasure of ER; SSR becomes a supervised chore for learners and boredom quickly sets in. As Fenton-Smith (2010) comments, "Simply making students read does not guarantee they will learn" (p. 52). It is believed that pleasure in reading can best be achieved when linked to shared sessions where guidance is given and the development of enjoyment and its transference to the individual's sustained reading are modelled (Fisher & Frey, 2008). This guidance and modelling can be provided by a teacher.

Such a shared-reading approach involves the teacher and students reading together from the same text. With primary students, this is often referred to as Big Book Reading featuring large text and illustrations, both of which can be viewed by children grouped within a few metres; it was popularised by the research of Holdaway (1979). In early education, Big Book Reading assists the establishment of reading habits, particularly for low-progress readers in areas such as directionality and sight-word

recognition. Beginner second language readers can have similar low-progress problems and can benefit from similar large text in well-illustrated story books. However, the question remains as to whether shared reading can be an effective ER strategy with adult second language ER learners. Shared reading has much in common with 'Read-Alouds', a popular school and community literacy practice. In surveying 141 middle school teachers in Texas, USA, Albright and Ariail (2005) find that 85% of them read aloud to their students. The most common reason given for the practice was to model good reading practices such as inflection and pronunciation. In Wang and Lee's (2007) research project with EFL students in Taipei, 11 students met after class for two 90-minute sessions each week. The study was conducted over 4 years in the middle-primary sector. To accommodate parents' expectations of traditional teaching, the first half of each session involved traditional instruction, with storytelling read-alouds in the second half. In the fourth year, 10 minutes of SSR preceded the read-alouds. This was a qualitative research approach. This style of research is recommended by Burton and Bartlett (2005) for the investigation of second language learning when a first-hand, long-term appraisal of the thoughts and feelings of participants and teachers is desired. Consequently, the Wang and Lee (2007) report contains description and anecdotes such as "every time the teacher announced it was time for a story the children shouted their approval. This was in obvious contrast to the course work they did in the first half of the class, which can only be described as 'calm-and-cool'" (p. 31). For an activity, they conducted student 'book talks' done in both English and Mandarin and modelled on the research of Elley and Mangubhai (1983). The researchers report that creating autonomous readers was the ultimate goal of the program and that "the read-alouds successfully brought the pupils to the stage of independent reading, confirming the hypothesis that reading aloud and silent reading are natural partners in developing enthusiasm for reading" (p. 5).

In ER the enjoyment of listening and reading, wondering and remembering, as learners and instructor journey through a book, is aimed at convincing students that books written in their target language can offer satisfaction, language learning knowledge, delight and a sense of accomplishment rather than a difficult academic challenge. This is still the case even when the interaction is one-to-one telephonic ER using e-books.

2.8 One-to-one Interaction

As Law (2001) and Westergaard (2012) note, traditional classroom group-work and one-to-one approaches share the same objective of allowing students to critically evaluate and reflect on learning situations, and make informed decisions by considering their options. In a study of primary school students mainly from American ethnic minority groups who were at risk of reading failure, Vasquez and

Slocom (2012) employed a synchronous online tutoring system which involved the use of telephone headsets and PC computers along with web camera and audio connections. The instruction was similar to the shared reading described above: "The lesson format incorporates word attack practice, group reading, individual reading checkouts, and workbook exercises" (p.224), delivered in 45-minute sessions over 8 to 18 weeks. The findings show that the participants made significant gains in oral reading fluency and overall gains were registered in the basic and broad skills of reading. The chief advantage of synchronous communication with shared computer reading was found to be the frequent and meaningful feedback tutors received. This was similar to inquiry dialogue, a communication strategy developed from early education shared reading in which questioning was more strategic and less descriptive (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). With older students, dialogic shared-reading becomes a joint discourse where students weave together the contributions of the author and their fellow readers to develop inquiry dialogue in a cumulative fashion (Chappell, 2014). The curiosity flowing from inquiry leads to dialogic questioning aimed at prompting thoughts and discussion beyond mundane observations. For example a popular intermediate level ER book is 'A Picture to Remember' (Scott-Malden, 2005) which has a cover picture of women and girls in a field of red poppies. A reading strategy common to ER and intensive reading is to begin by previewing aspects such as the title, author and cover details so as to gather information before beginning to read (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2003). Dialogic questioning would go to matters that can be deduced or inferred from the cover rather than perhaps the number of people depicted or the colour of the flowers. So a dialogic dialogue might begin with the researcher asking the reader what relationship can be perceived from the book title and cover picture.

The study by Hu and Nation (2000), which suggested the research gap being addressed in the current ER project, made use of some of the modifications just reviewed; and they paid some attention to dialogic principles in the form of a balance between implicit versus explicit questioning in their multiple-choice instrument. In particular, their 673-word stimulus reading was modified to four lexical-coverage levels ranging from 80% to 100% known words. Overall, their study showed a predictable relationship between the density of unknown words and the amount of comprehension. That is as the density of unknown words increases, comprehension declines. Their study found that readers would need to know up to 98% of words to read comfortably with just minor interruptions to comprehension. It is this same predictable relationship from which the research gap in this study has emerged.

2.9 Research Gap

Lexical-coverage is the "percentage of words that a reader understands. If, for example "readers have reached 95% text coverage, this means that they understand 95% of the running tokens {words} of the text" (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010, p.16). To read graded readers at the intermediate level and have just occasional difficulties with unknown words or phrases, learners need a lexical-coverage of approximately 95-97% (Hu & Nation, 2000). 'Intermediate' is one of a series of threshold terms used in language teaching to refer to minimal levels of proficiency defined by syllabus content and testing at that level and these thresholds are the starting points for calculating the lexical-coverage achieved by modifications in this study. International students enrolling in university entry preparation courses are accepted on the basis of a similar threshold - that they are literate in their own language and have entry level familiarity with written English (Day & Bamford, 2010). This entry level is usually referred to as 'intermediate' with IELTS scores of around band 5.

This study compares the reading proficiency and attitude scores of two groups: those undertaking ER (reading at either an intermediate or simplified-intermediate level), and the Control group who did not undertake ER. It is proposed that there will be proficiency and attitude gains for the ER learners when compared with the control group participants.

This study also compares the effect of ER at the intermediate lexical-coverage of 95-97%, with ER at the simplified-intermediate lexical-coverage of 99-100%. The coverage levels are established by either lexical-simplification, elaboration, glossing or combinations of all three. The research gap in this study is the difference between the performances of learners undertaking ER at the two lexical-coverage levels, therefore the research gap is approximately 3%.

Furthermore, the possible differences between participants undertaking the two forms of ER were investigated with two case studies using think-aloud strategies involving a student from each of the ER groups. The purpose was to investigate the mental processes of participants reading at the two levels. These research queries led to the following research questions.

2.10 Research questions

1. How do language learners' attitudes to leisure reading change after 5 weeks of ER?

2. How does language learners' reading proficiency change after 5 weeks of ER?

3. Are there proficiency and attitudinal differences between students in the intermediate reading ER Group A and the simplified-intermediate ER Group B?

2.11 Summary

This chapter has reviewed ER and provided examples of research activities concerned with the development of reading proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading. It has also identified opportunities for modifications to the non-instructional nature of within-class SSR. Possible modification strategies have been discussed, leading to the research problems to be addressed. The following chapter on methodology addresses the difficult circumstances of organizing an extra-curricular ER activity for busy students eventuating in a one-to-one shared-reading course conducted by telephone.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and theoretical approach used in the study. The first section outlines the design approach and purpose of the study. The next section provides information on the participants and their recruitment then details the data-gathering instruments, their reliability and validity and previous application in research leading to their selection and resulting in analysis of the data. Finally, the rank order of pre- and post-scores of the proficiency test is used to estimate the test-retest reliability of the instrument.

3.1 Research Design

This study was concerned with the effect of ER on measures of participants' reading proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading conducted in three groups totalling 12 participants, over a 5-week period. A mixed-methods design addressed the research questions and it had many of the characteristics of a true experiment as set out by Nunan (2002). Although small in scale, this project had both pre- and post-tests, experimental and control groups, and the random selection of participants. Furthermore, in two case studies, participants were interviewed in shared-reading sessions concerning the progress of their reading and their use of cognitive strategies. There was, therefore, the opportunity "to collect qualitative data on the reading habits {and} teaching procedures . . . such qualitative information is often crucial for the interpretation of quantitative data" (p.41). The study was an extra-curricular ER activity for the participants. In Group A, the reading material was at the intermediate level where students should understand 95-97% of the words and phrases. In Group B, the reading was at a simplified-intermediate level where 99-100% of the vocabulary should be understandable. The ER for both groups was conducted in two modes: first, weekly one-to-one shared reading with the researcher through the use of e-books and telephonic interaction; and second, participants undertook some SSR in their own time. Students in the control Group C continued with their normal course and had no ER involvement. Case studies using think-aloud protocols were used to qualitatively investigate differences between two participants, one from each of the ER groups (A and B). Finally, the participants' reading diaries were used to calculate the amount that each participant read. This triangulation design allowed for the application of multiple data sources and diverse data collection methods "as part of a validation process that ensures that the explained variance is the result of the underlying phenomenon or trait and not of the method" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzi & Turner, 2007, p.113). This design facilitated a thorough analysis of differences between outcomes of the two types of ER from different perspectives.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

3.2.1 Participants.

This section explains how the intensive nature of the participants' English Language Centre (ELC) preparation course led to the implementation of a one-to-one instructional method. The leisure reading habits of ELC students are then discussed before participant census data is presented. Finally, the recruitment process is explained.

Participants were recruited from two Academic English classes. The proposed program was described and a recruitment flyer distributed. This resulted in a number of possible participants volunteering, who then received consent and background information forms. Copies of these documents appear in Appendix A. Prior to any discussions with the volunteers or comments about them from their teachers, willing participants were randomly assigned to the two experimental ER groups and the control group. These arrangements are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary of the research program

	ER Group A	ER Group B	Control Group C
ER Lexical-coverage	Intermediate at 95-97%	Simplified-intermediate at 99-100%	No ER undertaken
Research project activity over 5 weeks	Shared-reading, reading progress and strategy discussion with researcher 2-3 times/week	Shared-reading, reading progress and strategy discussion with researcher 2-3 times/week	No contact, no ER activity
Individual SSR activity	Goal of 30 minutes SSR per day. Keep a reading diary allowing calculation of the number of words read.	Goal of 30 minutes SSR per day. Keep a reading diary allowing calculation of the number of words read.	No ER activity
Contact mode	Individual ER telephonic consultations while continuing with intensive language preparation instruction in class.	Individual ER telephonic consultations while continuing with intensive language preparation instruction in class.	Intensive language preparation instruction in class. No contact with the researcher.

The 12 participants were recruited from the stream of students preparing for university entry by full-time study at the Macquarie University ELC; as Table 3.2 indicates, these students comprised a diverse group from five ethnicities with an equal number of males and females. Each participant was allocated a research number corresponding with their group.

Table 3.2. Participants' profiles

Student Research Reference	First Language	Gender
A1 ER	Arabic	M
A2 ER	Chinese	M
A3 ER	Vietnamese	M
A4 ER	Chinese	F
B1ER	Thai	F
B2ER	Chinese	F
C1 Control	Japanese	M
C2 Control	Chinese	M
C3 Control	Chinese	F
C4 Control	Chinese	M
C5 Control	Thai	F
C6 Control	Chinese	F

Intensive English preparation courses are designed to prepare international students needing language instruction in order to undertake academic university study (Richards et al., 2003). As shown in Table 3.3, the 12 participants were at the most basic A1 level of entry to academic English courses after the completion of a General English Program or its equivalent. The intensive nature of their ELC course affected their attitude to, and availability for the ER research study, causing the adoption of a flexible research design able to operate alongside their existing commitments. As Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) note in their study of students' learning strategies in ESL courses, such learners have strong instrumental motivation as their learning outcome is closely related to the advancement of their academic and professional lives: "the threat of failing the program is a huge motivator for taking control of their learning" (p.409). Students graduating from the Academic English Program by progressing in 5-week-course intervals from the A1 level to A4 are able to enter directly into a further 10-week academic skills course before beginning their chosen degree at Macquarie University, without taking a language test (Macquarie University English Language Courses, 2014). Progression is determined by test results every 5 weeks.

Table 3.3 Participants' entry level and progression

Academic English programs						
TOEFL iBT entry requirement*		IELTS requirement*				Weeks of English before University entry*
Overall	Writing	Overall	Writing			
71	22	5.5	6.0	A4	↑	15
or		or				
79	20	6.0	5.5			
71	20	5.5	5.5	A3	↑	20
61	20	5.0	5.5	A2	↑	25
or		or				
71	17	5.5	5.0			
61	17	5.0	5.0	A1	↑	30
GENERAL ENGLISH PROGRAMS						

← Participants' Entry Level to this study

Note: Adapted from English Language Centre - Macquarie University (2015).

While the intensiveness of the participants' study program and personal lives affected the planning of the research project, an extraneous problem was identified in that most were working part-time, chiefly to pay their tuition fees. It was therefore unlikely that these students could attend an extra-curricular ER course; additionally, their short, intensive course made it difficult for them to find the time for ER and there were some early withdrawals. However, a one-to-one mentoring and motivation strategy was employed, which was effective in maintaining interest and involvement in the research study.

For second language learners, previous rewarding experiences with reading in English positively influence them in favour of ER. Alternatively, unsuccessful experiences can have a negative influence (Day & Bamford, 2010). A survey of ELC students' voluntary reading habits in English indicated that leisure reading was not an established habit (English Language Centre, 2015). These circumstances led to the conclusion that some form of individual consultation ER was required. It was especially urgent to introduce the habit and enjoyment of ER to novice readers, since they would be likely to lose interest if not rapidly captivated. As Woodward-Kron (2007) comments, individual consultations can assist students at such critical stages of learning as they allow learners to clarify requirements, the interactions are task-driven, and the learners are given immediate feedback and can participate actively in the teaching and learning context. Therefore, the planning problem for this project was to find an individual

consultation process that would function within the participants' study and personal situations. Meanwhile, it was necessary to ascertain interest in, and commitment to, an ER program.

3.2.2 The Context of the study.

It was apparent that these busy students would find difficulty in attending an after-hours course in ER. They were already involved in extra-curricular workshops targeting various aspects of language learning (but not ER). As a solution, conference-call group contact was considered but was rejected due to the varied study and work schedules of the participants. One-to-one telephone calls therefore became the method of contact for shared reading, monitoring progress and supporting the participants' private SSR. The researcher and participants had access to the same ER e-texts on their computers. As a result, the availability of interaction was structured into the research project. The practice was therefore established of having at least two shared-reading sessions per week with each ER participant. Initially, the communication arrangements were strange and unfamiliar to the participants and may have contributed to the few early withdrawals; these were mainly students who changed their minds in the first week and did not begin ER, so there was no opportunity to 'hook' them. However, the other participants soon adapted to the routine of a shared-reading schedule. Conversations took between 30 minutes and 1 hour and were not recorded, although the researcher took field notes, a procedure which has theoretical support.

Westergaard (2013) believes that one-to-one consultations are undeniably learning-teaching events with pedagogic attributes where "one-to-one interventions offer an in-depth exploration from an individualized perspective, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the practitioner as well as the client's ideas, thoughts and feelings" (p. 176). A feature of the one-to-one consultations was the frank and non-threatening dialogue that developed between the researcher and participants. For example, this facilitated understanding of some participants' reservations about the inclusion of the Chinese short story, *Kong Yiji* (Lu Xun, 2009) a tale that was already known to the Chinese participants who explained that similar stories had been taught in their school years. Several participants stated that they were already familiar with their Chinese culture and that one value of ER to them was being exposed to 'Western' cultural knowledge. The simplification strategies described in the previous chapter were employed to modify this short-story and the other readings made available to Group B, the simplified-intermediate readers. These input modifications are discussed below.

3.2.2.1 Input modifications used to prepare the simplified-intermediate readings.

The eleven indices of the Coh-Metrix L2 Reading Index referred to in section 2.6, were used as a guide to the modification process used in this study. The motivation for using the Coh-Metrix indices is that if the program achieves almost 60% agreement with graded reader levels, a writer's intuition in simplifying can only improve through developing familiarity with the indices. To illustrate, one of the indices is *spatiality*, which the Coh-Metrix authors selected because 'spatial cohesion helps to construct a text and ensures that the situational model of the text is well-structured and clearly conveys meaning' (Zwaan et al., cited in Crossley et al., 2012, p.96). The linguistic components by which the Coh-Metrix program identifies motion spatiality are computationally complex, but not so complicated that a materials writer cannot grasp their outcome and value as an aid. The program 'represents motion spatiality through motion verbs, and location spatiality through location nouns and prepositions' (Duffy et al., cited in Crossley et al. 2012, p.96). This information alerts the intuitive simplifier to be aware of the adequate and clear use of nouns and prepositions that locate an object, and to ensure agreement with motion verbs used in relation to the movement of the object. This requirement may already be known to an experienced materials writer, however the overall Coh-Metrix indices serve as a useful check-list and improve the quality of simplification. To illustrate from the simplification of the Chinese story just referred to above, the first line of the original English translation sets the story's location, which is then elaborated upon in the first paragraph.

‘The taverns of Luzhen were rather particular in their layout.’

An experienced teacher modifying this to a simplified-intermediate level may identify the need to modify 'taverns'; 'rather-particular' and 'layout'. The first two items concern linguistic and semantic simplification respectively; however, the third word, 'layout' (and the place name 'Luzhen'), have spatiality implications. In this example, the location of the place name is not considered important because Chinese readers may well know the name and others would simply recognize it as a place name. However, the 'layout' of the bar furniture is integral to the story's introduction. Considerations of spatiality in Coh-Metrix term come into play.   The author resolved the modification as follows:

‘The bar workers in Luzhen were very careful with the organization of their tables, chairs and other furniture in the bar.’

In the actual text used in the study, the term 'layout' is dealt with as an overt elaboration, thus:

‘The bar workers in Luzhen were very careful with the **layout** of their bar-room that is <u>with the organization of their tables, chairs and other furniture in the bar.</u>’

So attention is directed to the word with high-lighting then the elaborated explanation is underlined

Overall, lexical simplification resulted in 'bar workers' replacing 'tavern'; semantic simplification resulted in 'rather particular' being replaced with 'were very careful with the organization'; and the spatiality concepts in 'layout' resulted in 'the organization of the tables, chairs and other furniture in the bar'.

Simplification is integral to the process of preparing ER graded materials and the various methods of simplification, alone or in combination have been shown to assist language learning. However simplification by its very nature is individual, intuitive and vague. The outcomes of computational programs on readability can assist intuitive simplification and were employed in this study. A fuller example of the modification processes used in this study appears in Appendix F.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations.

The researcher had the responsibility of ensuring that data was collected in an acceptable manner and that the values of the participants were respected and represented "in a manner that dignifies their valuable participation in the research process" (McMaugh, Sumsion, Symes, & Saltmarsh, 2006, p.2). To this end, the processes and procedures, such as the handling of participation and consent documents, followed the requirements of the Macquarie University Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

This current study is a mixed method research project in which pre- and post-study measures were used to ascertain differences in attitudes towards ER and changes in reading proficiency levels. In addition, qualitative data were collected from shared-reading session notes and two think-aloud case studies. The measuring instruments are outlined below.

3.3.1 Stokmans' reading attitude scale.

This study employed Stokmans' Reading Attitude Scale in pre- and post-tests to determine whether there were any differences in reading attitudes. The scale's purpose is to predict behavioural intentions

by taking account of attitudes and behaviour. An underlying belief in the development of the scale is the view that reading attitude can be determined from the sum of a person's experiences of reading fiction, such as graded readers. This is so since reading attitude is a learned disposition which affects a reader's cultural behaviour (Stokmans, 1999). The same scale was also employed by Chen, Chen, Chen, and Wey (2013) in their 10-week e-book ER study of 89 university students, with approximately half this number in each of the experimental and control groups. The authors find that ER positively influenced the overall attitude to reading. They report that the Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs confirmed the high reliability of the questionnaire. Broeder and Stokmans (2012) in a study described in Chapter 2 investigating the leisure reading of adolescents in Beijing and the Netherlands, used a scale based on Stokmans' 1999 constructs and report their measures to be reliable since their Cronbach's alpha was larger than .60. The attitude scale in the current study was operationalized by 24 statements (four groups of six questions) of which four were negatively formulated. Respondents indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed in a 5-point Likert-scale using the 'don't know' style of answering.

3.3.2 The Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading Placement Test (EPER).

The EPER Placement Test (2012) was used to assess reading proficiency in this study. This was a modified cloze test aimed at measuring a full range of language proficiencies from beginner to near-native speaker level, employing short texts at various levels with high frequency words removed. As an example of this progression, there were nine items on definite or indefinite articles in the first 50 questions, but only one in the last 50. The background knowledge reference in the first question set was of children climbing trees in a garden, whereas the last of the 12 sets was about human reactions to an aeroplane emergency. Appendix D provides a sample.

A list of correct-word answers was supplied and mistakes in grammar and spelling were not allowed, even for answers that were semantically correct. The spread of learners' lexical knowledge was catered for by providing alternative answers. It was believed that this characteristic, as well as the comparative shortness of each item, emphasised micro-level linguistic ability such as morphosyntax, spelling and vocabulary (Yamashita, 2008).

The EPER Placement Test (2012) has been employed in a number of recent research studies: Figueiredo-DeSilva (2001) in her investigation of the role of hedging in teaching academic reading, employs the test; Smith (2006) uses it in a comparison of 'pure' ER with IR; Takase (2008) finds that the EPER Placement Test was significantly correlated with TOEIC scores in an ER study; and Yamashita (2008) makes use of the EPER test in a study of the relationship between ER and different

aspects of L2 proficiency. In addition, Smith (2011) again uses the test in gauging the effect of SSR on proficiency and spelling; and Takase and Otsuki (2012) apply it in their research in relation to how to motivate remedial EFL students to read extensively. Finally, Azmuddin, Ali, Ngah, Tamili and Ruslim (2014) employ the EPER test in their study of ER using graded readers. In addition, regular use is made of the test in the University of Edinburgh English Language Teaching Centre where it is employed as a find-your-level instrument for starting ER. Of the three versions prepared, Version A, employed in this study, is the most convenient to use and the most popular amongst ER researchers (University of Edinburgh, 2010).

The Placement Tests (EPER, 2012) are designed to assess learners' progress easily by administering the same, or a parallel test, to students at a different date as was the procedure in this study. The reliability of the tests has been reported from several studies; for example, Smith (2006) reports a Cronbach Alpha score of .90 and then .91 in a test-retest of reliability. Yamashita (2008) finds an alpha of .78 in a study of 31 Japanese university EFL students undertaking ER for 11 weeks. One of the designers of EPER tests, Irvine (1993), finds that the tests had poor face validity because "many teachers, students and administrators do not see any immediate visible connection between a cloze test score and extensive reading performance" (p.3). A second reservation is that the test could be a traumatic experience for lower level learners because it is designed to measure all levels of proficiency; this means that lower level students are likely to be faced with a test where they are unlikely to be able to complete more than half. With this in mind, the link between cloze testing and comprehension was explained to participants in this study. The situation in which learners would reach their level of proficiency before completing the test was also explained. These tests assess the outcomes of ER in terms of proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading. Next the investigation of ER through case studies employing think-aloud protocols is discussed.

3.3.3 Think-Aloud case studies.

Qualitative research is defined by Brown and Rogers (2002) as "asking participants to delve into their own states of consciousness and verbally report on cognitive, affective or social aspects of that consciousness" (p.53). For researchers concerned with second language teaching, Richards (2003) also recommends a qualitative approach since it allows the researcher to thoroughly explore research concepts with a first-hand grasp of what is happening as the thoughts and feelings of participants are investigated. In accordance with qualitative research design, in this study data was first collected from field notes over the 5 weeks of ER and combined with the case studies in week 6. These were based on think-aloud interviews of two participants, one from each of the two types of ER under investigation.

The analysis of the participants' transcripts involved thematic analysis, with the categories for analysing the think-alouds derived from a set of strategies prepared by Block and Israel (2004). A sample of the transcripts is in Appendix B.

Block and Israel's (2004) think-aloud matrix classifying strategies that experienced readers use was employed as the data-gathering instrument. The transcription procedures recommended by Richards (2003) were followed to provide a record of the think-alouds detailing the spoken data as well as the pauses, overlaps and non-verbal features. In order to provide a detailed representation, as Richards states, "only a transcript allows the sort of focused attention on the minutiae of talk that promotes insights into technique and content" (p. 81). Ko (2005) also used a taxonomy of strategies in her think-aloud investigation of how different gloss conditions affected the reading comprehension of her 106 Korean undergraduate participants. For the think-alouds, she selected 12 participants who read a glossed text as the think-aloud stimulus. Ko (2005) finds that the think-alouds revealed significant information that was not available from the statistical analyses she also conducted. These analyses had not found any comprehension effect between non-glossed material and first language glosses. However, the think-aloud interviews indicated that glosses enabled the participants to comprehend more easily while reading. So think-aloud protocols were particularly useful in the validation of gloss usage.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to develop the validity of think-alouds, however the over-arching consideration is that the validity of this approach "is questioned because it is not known whether the act of verbalizing while completing a task is reactive, acting as an additional task and altering the cognitive processes rather than providing a true reflection of thoughts" (Bowles, 2010, p. 14). A significant difference between this think-aloud situation described by Bowles (2010) and that followed in the current study is that no task completion was required in this study. Rather, it compared the think-alouds expressed by the two participants and there was no intervention or task to interrupt the flow of thoughts.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data were collected from pre- and post-tests which were administered before the ER research began and immediately after. On each occasion, the participants were allowed 45 minutes to complete the EPER Placement Test and 15 minutes for the Stokmans' Attitude Scale. Concerning qualitative data, there were two think-aloud stimulus readings in the case studies; one with an intermediate level participant and another with a simplified-intermediate level reader. The think-aloud interviews were conducted immediately after the conclusion of the research; audio-recordings provided

the data for the case studies. In order to analyse this raw data, the following reduction procedures occurred.

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis.

Data gathered from the EPER Placement Test and Stokmans' Attitude Scale were subjected to the same statistical analysis after the raw scores were coded and assembled into a descriptive statistics table. Separate tables dealt with the pre-test arithmetic means and standard deviations and with the means and standard deviations based on post-tests and gains. The number of words read by each ER participant was also listed in these tables. These data indicated (i) substantial gains for the ER participants as a whole (Groups A and B); and (ii), while the Group B readers of simplified-intermediate ER comprised a smaller group, they read the least number of words but still made gains close to the mean gains of the entire group. Therefore, in order to generalize these findings to other similar language learners, parametric and non-parametric techniques were used to address finding (i) about overall ER gains. To interpret finding (ii) concerning the different types of ER, it was felt that some form of constant comparison process could investigate possible connections between the data and the conceptualization of a more effective form of ER (Richards, 2003). The products of ER were available in the form of factual information from the descriptive statistics but it was the processes that were also of interest, as participants responded to the two different types of ER. Several process assessment methods were considered including interviews, questionnaires, error-detection and think-alouds. The conclusion was that think-alouds reflected a close interaction with the stimulus texts and a more complete understanding of the participants' processing skills (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Scott, 2008).

It was first necessary to check if the pre-test scores for each group were the same. The Wilcoxon rank sum test with continuity correction concluded that there were no differences ($p > 0.05$). The Shapiro-Wilk normality test with p-values above 0.05 then indicated that the ER and Control samples were normally distributed. This prepared the ground for addressing the research questions, RQ 1 and 2 concerning possible changes to learners' attitudes and proficiency. These were investigated with an F-test which found that the variances between the ER and Control groups were not the same at p-value < 0.05. Welch Two Sample t-tests then found that there were significant differences for the Proficiency Test gains and Attitude Scale gains each at a $p < 0.01$ level. This allowed the conclusion that ER gains were considerable. RQ 3 concerned possible differences between the two ER groups, Group A reading at the intermediate level and Group B at the simplified-intermediate level; however, there were insufficient data points to make a determination.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis.

Analysis of the think-aloud transcript data was therefore used to further investigate RQ 3 concerning possible differences in the processes of reading used by a participant from ER Group A and another from Group B. The thematic analysis progression was:

a. Transcribing the read-aloud interviews

b. Reading the transcripts to identify categories according to the Block and Israel (2004) matrix

c. Testing the category identification process to minimize anecdotal interpretation by following the (Cotton & Gresty, 2006) analytic induction method

d. Using final categories to code all responses

e. Drawing conclusions from the coded responses which, in these case studies, indicated that the ER modified to a simplified-intermediate level was more effective than that at the intermediate level.

The data from the participants' transcripts were grouped into thematic categories for comparison. In order to overcome the problem of purely anecdotal interpretation, the procedure of analytic induction was used. This involved focussing on each section of data after every think-aloud, to evaluate whether there was a match with any of the thematic propositions. The themes were then reformulated and matched again with the think-alouds to ensure that all relevant data expressed by the participants were considered (Cotton & Gresty, 2006).

3.5 Summary

This chapter has explained the processes used in this mixed-methods study to investigate proficiency and attitudinal differences between six participants undertaking ER and another six constituting a control group. After an explanation of the participants' profiles and their recruitment, the data collection instruments and their reliability and validity were described. The ethical considerations were also outlined. Additionally, a constant comparison procedure was detailed in which case studies of two participants were employed to investigate the processes of reading at the two levels of ER. The next chapter presents the results obtained from the participants' reading diaries, the researcher's field notes, and the pre- and post-tests of proficiency and attitudes. A reduction process grouping this information into characteristics that adequately describe the study sample, was then employed so as to move beyond this descriptive data to inferential statistics.

CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The current study examines the effectiveness of ER, in particular comparing two types of ER reading; for language growth at 95-97% lexical-coverage and reading for fluency development at 99-100% lexical-coverage. The development of fluency does not need a focus on new language items but instead helps learners become fluent with the language they already know. Previous research by Hu and Nation (2000) demonstrates the effectiveness of ER for language growth, that is, use of the language learners know plus a growth increment. This is a well-known outcome of ER, however the authors suggest more investigation of ER's value for reading fluency. In following this suggestion, the current study employed quantitative research. This information is organized according to the statistical methods that were used to answer the research questions, beginning with descriptive statistics then moving to inferential statistics. It then progresses from testing for initial group differences, through normality testing and on to investigating for variance between groups, then for differences between groups.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The following Table 4.0 describes the information gathered. These measurements were used for the analysis and interpretation of data. There were six ER participants in the experimental group which was further divided into those undertaking the two types of ER, four of whom were in Group A (A1-A4) and two in Group B (B1-B2). Control Group C had six participants (C1-C6). The pre- and post-tests were administered together to all participants in the first and last weeks of the program. The number of words each ER participant read was derived from reading diary logs which were managed by the students and overseen by the researcher during shared-reading sessions. A sample reading diary appears in Appendix C.

Table 4.0 Descriptive statistics

Participant	Group	Pre-test Placement Test scores	Post-test Placement Test scores	Placement Test results	Pre-test Attitude scores.	Post-test Attitude scores	Attitude score results	Number of ER words read
A1	ER A	51	93	+42	88	96	+8	64,820
A2	ER A	45	58	+13	84	97	+13	52,070
A3	ER A	58	88	+30	111	117	+6	123,500
A4	ER A	65	72	+7	81	93	+12	50,150
B1	ER B	37	55	+18	80	86	+6	30,040
B2	ER B	54	76	+22	103	118	+15	18,200
C1	Control	62	60	-2	112	112	0	n/a
C2	Control	35	38	+3	102	101	-1	n/a
C3	Control	49	45	-4	105	100	-5	n/a
C4	Control	68	73	+5	85	83	-2	n/a
C5	Control	65	65	0	78	72	-6	n/a
C6	Control	68	66	-2	54	56	+2	n/a

The following average scores and standard deviations provided a measure of the central tendency of the groups' proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading before and after treatments. It was apparent that the average proficiency scores for the group of six ER participants increased (by 22) whereas the Control group average increased by 1. The mean for attitude gain was 10. Table 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate these values and gains.

Table 4.1. Group comparison for pre-test reading attitude and proficiency

Pre-test	Experimental group (N = 6)		Control group (N = 6)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reading attitude	91.16	12.83	89.33	21.51
Reading proficiency	51.66	9.83	57.83	13.23

Table 4.2.Group comparison and gains for post-test reading attitude and proficiency

Post-test	Experimental group (N = 6)		Control group (N = 6)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reading attitude	101.16	13.22	87.33	20.93
Gains in attitude	10	3.85	-2	3.03
Reading proficiency	73.66	15.37	57.83	13.50
Gains in proficiency	22.0	12.54	0	3.41

4.2 Findings on Reading Proficiency

Non-parametric tests can be used with small or uneven sample sizes (Woodrow, 2014). The pre-test scores for each group were analysed with the Wilcoxon rank sum test with continuity correction resulting in W = 11.5, p-value = 0.335. The Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test was used as a non-parametric technique to determine whether the pre-test scores of the ER groups were significantly different from those of the control group. The test provided a W value and a related significance level as a p value as shown above. The test operated by ranking the absolute values of the differences between scores from the smallest to the largest, with the smallest being ranked at 1 followed by the next largest ranked at 2 and so on. Then the addition of all differences in one direction was compared with the additions in the other direction. The statistic W was then derived from the smaller of the additions. Unlike most test statistics, the smaller the value of $W,$ the less likely was the support for a null hypothesis. The test concluded that there is no difference between the initial scores ($p > 0.05$), therefore pre- and post-test scores can be reliably compared. However, before this, the normality of the scores required investigation.

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was then used to determine if the differences in the test scores were normally distributed between the ER groups and the control. For the ER, group the test result was: W = 0.9712, p-value = 0.9004. For the control group: W = 0.9357, p-value = 0.6247. It was therefore

concluded that both samples were normally distributed. The test was based on the null hypothesis that the differences in the scores within each group would be normally distributed. Therefore, should the p-value be less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis would be rejected due to evidence that the scores were not normally distributed. However, as the p value was greater than 0.05 in both cases, the normality of distribution was confirmed.

One research aim was to determine any overall differences between all participants undertaking ER (Groups A and B) and the control participants. Having established that there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the groups, and that the scores of each group were normally distributed, the F-test was used to determine if the variances between the ER groups and the Control group were the same. The resulting p-value of 0.01247 was less than 0.05, at a 95 percent confidence level; it was therefore determined that there was a difference in variance between the two groups.

Having established this difference, several tests were employed to account for the variance and determine if the differences were statistically significant. The Welch Two Sample t-test is known to be effective when two samples have unequal variance and it confirmed a significant difference between the two groups with p-value = 0.006649 which is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. These tests confirm that the differences between the ER groups and the control group are significant. Figure 4.1 below illustrates this analysis with a graph of the group differences in proficiency placement test scores.

**Figure 4.1 Differences in placement test scores**
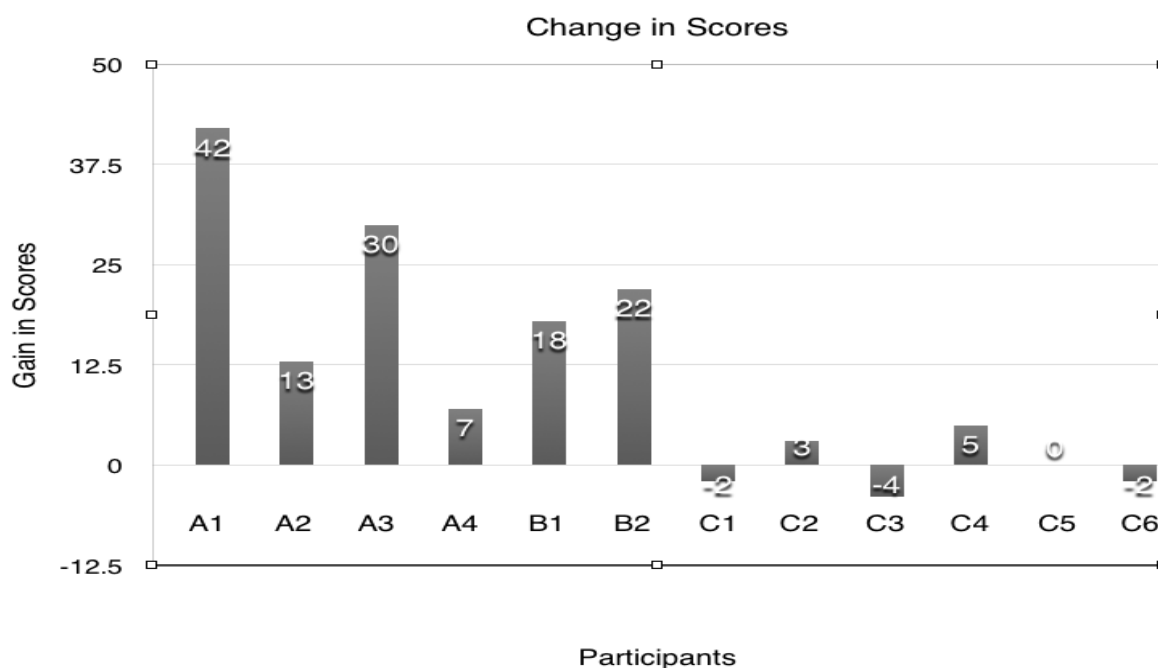
Another aim of the study was to test the proposition that those reading at the simplified-intermediate 99-100% range of known words, Group B, would experience a more effective form of ER. Therefore readers at this level, it was proposed, would experience more gains in language proficiency and affect measures. The Welch Two Sample t-tests were used to test for differences between the two ER groups, however at a p-value = 0.7375, it was concluded that there was no significant difference.

4.3 Findings on Reading Attitude

Using the same testing procedures as for the proficiency scores, it was found that the differences in attitude score for both ER groups and the control group were normally distributed. The normality of distribution determined what type of testing could be used to analyse differences between the groups. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was used to determine if the differences in the test scores were normally distributed between the ER groups and the control. For the ER group the test result was W = 0.8877, p-value = 0.3061; and for the control group: W = 0.9572, p-value = 0.7979. As the p-values for both groups were above 0.05, it was concluded that both samples were normally distributed.

The F-test was then used to determine if the variance between the two groups was the same. The resulting p-value of 0.6146 being greater than 0.05 at a 95 percent confidence level, it was determined that the variances were approximately the same. It was next necessary to determine if these differences were of consequence. The Welch Two Sample t-test found a statistical difference between the two groups with a p-value = 0.0001321 which is significant at the $p < 0.0005$ level. It was therefore found that there was a significant difference in the mean of the experimental ER Group A-B and the Control Group C. Figure 4.2 below illustrates this.

Figure 4.2 Differences in attitude scores
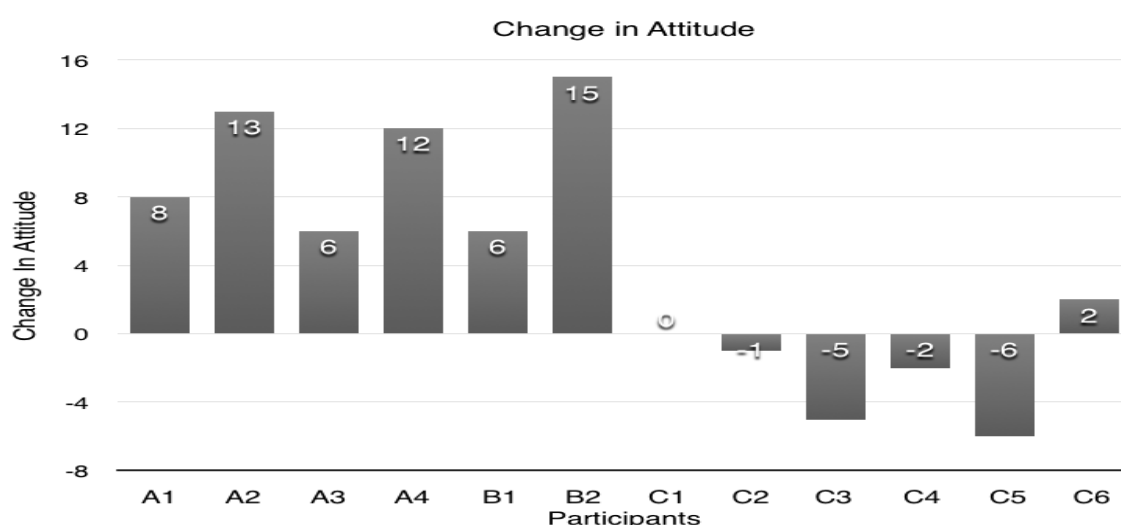
It was then necessary to analyse the data for differences between the two ER groups, A and B. As with the proficiency scores data there were not sufficient data points to establish significant differences. It is therefore concluded that there were no significant attitude differences between the subjects in ER group A and ER group B.

4.4 Summary

This research finds that the participants undertaking ER experienced considerable gains in language proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading. It is well accepted that small groups of ER learners, such as in this study, with an instructor who is able to take a close interest in individuals' reading, can make greater progress than those involved in an across the curriculum course (Robb & Kano, 2013). However, this result will assist further understanding of the effectiveness of ER in one-on-one instruction at a distance and enable the transfer of this effectiveness to group instruction in shared reading ER with adults.

No determination was made concerning differences between those undertaking intermediate reading at the 95-97% lexical-coverage and those undertaking simplified-intermediate reading at the 99-100% lexical-coverage level. This was due to the small number of participants in the simplified-intermediate group. However, the descriptive statistics indicated that simplified-intermediate texts modified with elaborations may be a more effective form of ER than other forms, because the two participants at this level read the least but achieved close to the mean gains of the ER group. This is investigated further in the next chapter with qualitative analysis; where the verbal reporting strategy known as think-aloud is employed to uncover the mental processes of reading by revealing problem solving and thinking processes used by two participants.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The statistical analysis reported in Chapter 4 was based on a snapshot of the participants' language proficiency and attitudes to reading at the beginning and end of the research; while this provided some information about the possible value of ER as a teaching method, it did not illuminate the process of learning with ER. The statistical analysis provided some detail of what learning happened, but it would also be beneficial to have some knowledge of how it happened. In a mixed methods study such as this, a range of data-collecting and analysing strategies is utilized to observe and deeply probe the phenomena of a construct (Nunan, 2002). In these case studies ER was the phenomenon under review. Among these available research methods were think-aloud verbal report studies, which have been applied in the field of language learner strategies as 'measures to provide mentalistic data regarding cognitive processing' (Cohen, 1996). Think-alouds were employed in these case studies to investigate how learning differed between two participants.

5.1 Overview of the Case Studies

This research activity was motivated by something of a puzzle. The participants had just completed the 5-week ER project. In one case a male reader, 'Ken', from ER Group A read in excess of 123,000 words at the intermediate graded reader level and achieved a 21% proficiency gain. The other, a female, 'Lin', from ER Group B read just 18,000 words at the simplified-intermediate level and achieved a gain of 16%. Both were considerable gains for an ER program of just 5 weeks. However, the difference in the number of words each read was vast: 123,000 as against 18,000 respectively. The rank ordering of proficiency scores shows that these two participants, Ken (A3) and Lin (B2) maintained their relative rankings pre- and post-testing. The question was whether the different types of ER (intermediate or simplified-intermediate), could result in differing qualities of learning. In both case studies, the think-aloud reading stimulus was from the same 464-word intermediate level extract from a graded reader short story. The intermediate level, read by Ken, has previously been described as one at which an intermediate learner can be expected to understand 95-97% of the vocabulary. This text, however, was then modified to the simplified-intermediate level for Lin. This level has been previously described as being at 99-100% lexical-coverage.

These think-aloud case studies investigated the possibility that the simplified-intermediate material as read by Lin of Group B was a more effective form of ER. So the proportion of difficulties might be much less and the reading strategy use much more for Lin. Furthermore, it was possible that the

elaboration in Lin's reading might result in a greater number of more-detailed think-alouds. In these case-studies, an established scheme for evaluating think-aloud strategies was employed to analyse and compare the transcripts of the two participants according to a 7-point scale.

5.2 Materials

The stimulus reading was an extract from the Oxford Storylines series (Oxford University Press, 2009), intermediate level story 'Strawberry and the Sensations' (Viney, 2009). The copyright notice is in Appendix E. For Ken, the intermediate level reader, the text was unmodified. Examples of text chosen for modification in Lin's simplified-intermediate text were: *microphone, amplifier, concert hall, end of the tour, towel* and *cokes.* So while the term *concert hall,* for example, had to be understood or deduced from context by the intermediate level reader, Ken, for the simplified-intermediate level, the elaboration style used was overt in that the reader's attention was directed to the modification. The target term was highlighted with Italics and followed by the underlined elaboration as follows: '*concert hall,* the building where we used to enjoy music shows and stage plays'. There were 18 modifications by elaboration in Lin's simplified-intermediate stimulus reading. Readers were not encouraged to search for mental connections, but rather were asked to talk spontaneously about what came to mind during their reading. Samples of the think-aloud transcripts for Ken and Lin appear in the appendices.

5.3 Participants

Ken is a 39-year-old man from Vietnam, just arrived in Australia on a student visa to attend the ELC. He is a self-funded student supported by his part-time work as a cleaner and his wife's employment as a manicurist; they have a 3-year-old child, and share child-care duties around their work and study commitments. Ken studied English as part of his Vietnamese primary and secondary education where he estimated the time devoted to English lessons at about 3 hours per week. Ken stated that his present situation of having a considerable English vocabulary but a low level of speaking competence was perhaps the result of an education system focussing on form and the rote learning of vocabulary. In Vietnam, he found few opportunities for conversational practice in English and was only able to chat in his high school years with some native French speakers who had some English. His present circumstance also offers little interaction other than formulaic shopping and occupational language usage. He stated that he has no time to become involved in university or community activities and has not yet met any Australian Vietnamese. Ken received post-secondary education in the area of automotive engineering and this enabled him to join his family's taxi business. His interest in further education in Australia is vague. He is firstly focused on achieving tertiary entry level, and will decide

on his subject area later. Nevertheless, he spoke of wanting to undertake media studies. Ken was a leisure reader in his mother tongue with a preference for fantasy fiction; he mentions having read Vietnamese translations of the *Eragon Inheritance Cycle* (Paoline, 2004), in which a 15-year-old believes that he is merely a poor farm boy until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Other books he has read include *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 2014) and the *Harry Potter* series (Rowling, 1997). He was also influenced by Chinese fantasy books obtained from Vietnamese websites and from the exchange of some books amongst friends sharing his interest.

Lin is a 25-year-old Chinese woman who was also new to Australia and undertaking the same ELC course as Ken. She is from Southern China where her family operates a building supplies business in the Guangdong Province. She had some family support from a younger cousin who had been in Australia for about a year studying at another university. Lin's English learning experiences were similar to Ken's, learning secondary school English through the grammar translation method. As with Ken, Lin had only limited opportunities to effectively practise her target language. Lin said that class numbers at the ELC prevented much within-class interaction but a recent friendship with an Indian student had allowed for enjoyable conversations, and she had become used to the 'Indian-English' accent and was now benefiting from the fellowship. Other commonalities with Ken were that they are both self-funded students and both work part-time. Lin works in a butcher shop where most customers are of Vietnamese origin. She recounted a recent work-place learning experience: she was already familiar with the main meaning of the word 'sharp' as in the sharp butchers' knives in her work place, but was surprised when one of the rare English native speaker customers to the business used 'sharp' to describe an angry comment. She is now more aware of alternative word meanings and the derivative nature of English; therefore we discussed the adverb 'sharply' and the phrase 'a sharp dresser' in our conversation about this profile. Both participants had a particular interest in reading fiction in their first languages. In Lin's case it was romance stories, but she did not seem to have been as engrossed as Ken, because she was now not particularly interested in romance genre ER books. Like Ken, Lin also had previous professional training and work experience in her homeland where she trained as an auditor and worked for 2 years in that capacity for a chain of hotels; she hopes to continue with accountancy study at the conclusion of her course.

5.4 Reporting Results

From a study of 1,200 primary school children in the USA, Block and Israel (2004) find that a strategy for using think-alouds in reading instruction significantly increased students' reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension on standardized tests. This strategy can also be used for evaluating

think-alouds and consequently has formed the basis of analysis in this study. Think-aloud strategies are comparable to learning strategies, which Griffiths (2007) describes as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning" (p.91). Block and Israel's (2004) insights were derived from studies of what expert readers think as they read; this led to the development of the Think-Aloud Matrix. They observe that **"**expert readers use several decoding strategies to infer unknown words and learn new vocabulary terms" (p.161). For example, Block and Israel (2004) used this decoding strategy as the basis for Strategy F, 'determining word meanings', in the Think-Aloud Matrix shown in Table 5.1 below. The results from the thematic analysis of the transcripts of Ken and Lin were reported according to this plan.

Table 5.1 The Think-Aloud Matrix

Code	Strategies
A.	Connecting to the author's big idea
B.	Recall, activating relevant knowledge
C.	Relating self to the story
D.	Revising prior knowledge and predicting
E.	Recognizing the author's writing style
F.	Determining word meanings
G.	Asking questions

Source: Block and Israel (2004, p.156)

The results reported in Table 5.2 below are derived from processing the participant's transcripts with the constant comparison method of analysis.

Table 5.2 Think-Aloud Matrix responses

Code	Think-Aloud Strategies (Block & Israel 2004)	Comparisons	
		Used by Ken	Used by Lin
A	Connecting to the author's big idea	9	20
B	Recall, activating relevant knowledge	9	14
C	Relating self to the story	5	2
D	Revising prior knowledge and predicting	8	11
E	Recognizing the author's writing style	2	0
F	Determining word meanings	3	17
G	Asking questions	7	9
	Strategies Total Use	**43**	**73**

However, a more practical illustration of the determination of results is the following examples from the transcripts accompanied by descriptions of how the formal generalizations were developed. The excerpts were transcribed verbatim and contain grammatical inconsistencies. The stimulus text is highlighted in bold. The modifications through elaboration in Lin's text are shown below for Strategy F only, where the elaboration is underlined. These types of modification were described more fully in Section 5.2 on Materials and they appear in the transcripts in the appendices.

First with reference to strategy A: 'Connecting to the author's big idea', Ken was coded as doing this on 9 occasions whereas Lin did so 20 times. The differences are apparent in the following responses to the name of the first chapter.

> **Chapter 1: Nobody speaks to Cyndi.** Ken's response was: 'Cyndi is the name maybe of one character in this book. Cyndi singing' (13 words). Lin's response was: 'I look at this one maybe I will think about why they are not talking speak to Cyndi. Are there any reasons, special reasons for this and err maybe the story will tell us' (34 words).

Lin's response is more detailed; she explores the issues and she realizes that the author has a responsibility to explain, because she says, 'maybe the story will tell us'. Ken is transacting information rather than looking for the reason for this chapter heading.

Concerning strategy B: 'Recall activating relevant knowledge' - Ken used this strategy 9 times and Lin on 14 occasions. An example of the differing uses comes from a section of the story where a road-manager is protecting Cyndi from a fan seeking an autograph:

> **'It doesn't matter. She's very tired. You can't have her autograph,' said the road manager, 'but I can give you a photograph. Here you are**. Ken's think-aloud was - 'Oh my! Why I can't see … he doesn't want her photograph' (11 words). Lin's response was: 'It means that some fans like to take photo with their their famous people, they don't want to get … they almost get a little autograph because if they shout for the other one, the picture of their famous people is better than the name' (44 words).

As well as being more expressive, Lin's response indicates that she has tapped some background knowledge about how fans acquire autographs and their preference for a photograph over an autograph. Ken is concerned about the facts of the story and reprimands himself for not correctly identifying the

intentions of the characters. Lin, however, is using some background knowledge and playing with possibilities as she deduces that photographs are preferable to autographs.

In relation to strategy C, Relating self to the story - neither participant made extensive use of this strategy, but Ken at 5 coded incidences made more use of it than Lin, at 2 incidences:

> **Suddenly there were no lights.** Ken's response was: 'Woah! I feel a little maybe because I like some fantasy story so I think maybe some danger will be …' (20 words). Lin's response was: 'Why there is no lights? Or are there no electricity? Or any other?' (13 words).

Ken makes connections here to his personal preference for fantasy fiction thinking that a lack of light portends danger. Lin also finds a connection but a more mundane one.

Now with reference to strategy D**:** Revising prior knowledge and predicting - Ken was coded at using this strategy on 8 occasions with Lin on 11:

> **Everybody stood up in the dark concert hall.** Ken: 'Ahrr maybe I'm right … (laughs) …' (4 words). This line in the story follows the line from strategy C, **Suddenly there were no lights.** Lin responds: 'There are some music shows take place in the building and maybe the electricity is too much energy, it use too much electricity show the electricity. The light of the electricity is much too too cost. If they use too much electricity the cost is much too much. It is maybe the reason why there is suddenly it will no lights.' (61 words).

Just like Ken, Lin is trying to justify and rationalize her first thought about the loss of the lights, however her reflections are much more extensive and varied than Ken's. Ken refers to his prior assumption that these lines are about danger or fantasy, but he does so very briefly in comparison to Lin and he is still focussed on the facts. Lin, however, explores and decides that the issue is the expense of electricity, so she constructs an argument around this theory.

Strategy E is now addressed: Recognizing the author's writing style - neither participant employed this strategy extensively, however Ken was coded with 2 uses and Lin with none.

> **'Right. I need a drink,'** said Cyndi. Ken: 'maybe because she sings in the long time ... she need to drink' (12 words).

The coding of this response acknowledges that Ken realizes that the author is informing the reader about the behavior of the main character, Cyndi, who does all of the singing in the band and needs to drink something after performances. He goes beyond the facts and states a reason for Cyndi's need. Lin chose not to respond.

Strategy F**:** Determining word meanings - this strategy is particularly important in this study because it serves two roles. It establishes the effectiveness or otherwise of the modifications to Lin's stimulus reading. It also establishes whether the two stimulus readings were at their nominated lexical-coverage levels. Ken's responses for this category were coded as occurring 3 times whereas Lin's were noted 17 times. This number of occasions in which Lin used the modifications to resolve difficulties resulted in her understanding 100% of the stimulus reading, which is significant evidence of the effectiveness of ER modified to the 99-100% lexical-coverage level.

> **A road manager gave Cyndi a towel for her face.** Ken - ' a towel, a towel
> for her face. I don't know these words. A towel?' (14 words) (Researcher explains:
> 'What you use in a bathroom to dry your body'). Ken: 'maybe she had to (remove)
> make-up for the show?' Lin had the assistance of an elaboration as underlined: **A**
> **road manager gave Cyndi a** *towel* **to clean and dry her face.** Lin: 'Because
> Cyndi's face is a little dirty and they give something to him to clean her face. Yeah
> yeah yeah' (18 words).

Ken needed the researcher's assistance to understand this sentence but the elaboration allowed Lin to understand of her own accord. Both participants find a reason for Cyndi needing a towel, but Ken needed assistance.

The final think-aloud strategy is G, Asking questions: - Lin used this slightly more than Ken. For both of them, many questions were rhetorical, asking themselves, 'What's this mean?' then answering either from the context (Ken), or with the help of the elaborated modifications in the case of Lin. However, overall there were no occasions in which Lin was unable to resolve her difficulties whereas Ken had at least 8 unresolved difficulties.

5.5 Summary

There was a noticeable difference in overall think-aloud strategy usage between Ken at 43 coded incidences and Lin, almost double, at 73. The total number of words expressed by Ken in think-alouds was 652 whereas Lin expressed almost double at 1240. This data and the patterns emerging from the seven comparison categories of the 2 participants' think-alouds when combined with that from the quantitative findings constitute a state of constant comparison. In this process connections between the data and conceptualizations about ER emerge as formal generalizations. Therefore, from this qualitative research it can be asserted that ER modified with overt elaborations to a lexical-coverage level of 99-100% is likely to be significant when compared with ER at a lexical coverage level of 95-97%. An advantage of strategies such as think-alouds is that they can be fine-tuned to the "investigation and description of a relatively finite aspect of reading" (Afflerbach, 2000, p.166). This was the case in this study where the method was used to focus on differences resulting from overt modifications by elaboration.

This chapter has described the experiences of participants undertaking different types of ER and concluded in short, that ER is more effective when modified to the extent that it is fully comprehensible. The implications of this claim will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In discussion of the research questions, this chapter refers to the main research findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Relevant previous research is also reviewed. The first section discusses the conditions underlining statistical analysis of data, followed by an exemplification of the case studies presenting qualitative data.

This study proposes that while ER is generally effective, the 99-100% lexical-coverage range of known words (also referred to in this study as simplified-intermediate level), is a more efficient form of ER than other forms in that learners at this level will experience more gains in language proficiency and in affect. The research of Hu and Nation (2000) is particularly relevant to this study because they suggest that research is needed into the effect of ER at the 99-100% lexical-coverage range where students can achieve unassisted comprehension; hence the topic of the current study. Hu (2013) also adds relevant knowledge with her discussion on the contribution of reading to second language vocabulary acquisition and clarification of ER lexical-range measurements. Shared reading has been a core teaching method in this current study; it was intrinsic to Elley and Mangubhai's (1983) seminal paper combining shared reading and ER, although their program was at a primary school level rather than the adult level of this study. A mixed-methods design required that this project employ quantitative data collection with pre- and post-tests, experimental and control groups, and the random selection of participants. Furthermore in two case studies, participants were interviewed in shared-reading sessions in which they used think-aloud protocols.

6.1 Discussion of Research Questions

In this study three research questions were asked.

RQ 1. How do language learners' attitudes to leisure reading change after 5 weeks of ER?

RQ 2. How does language learners' reading proficiency change after 5 weeks of ER?

RQ 3. Are there proficiency and attitudinal differences between students in the intermediate reading ER Group A and the simplified-intermediate ER Group B?

Considerable improvements in English language proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading were found in the participants who undertook ER, in comparison with the control group. This supports the contention that ER can be effective when employing shared reading and one-to-one interaction.

Improvements were also found in the quantity and quality of think-aloud reports expressed by the simplified-intermediate reader in case studies where an intermediate range reader and a simplified-intermediate reader were compared. This supports the contention that reading texts modified to a 99-100% lexical-coverage range is a more effective form of ER than other approaches.

RQ 1 employed Stokmans' Reading Attitude Scale (1999) and RQ 2 employed the EPER Proficiency Test (2012), the data analysis being the same for each, producing the results listed above. RQ 3 was also initially addressed with the same data analysis, but due to the small number of Group B participants, no statistically significant difference could be established. Quantitative analysis employing case studies with a participant from each of Groups A and B then revealed the result shown above.

While participants undertaking ER demonstrated considerable gains in attitude and proficiency, the control group participants made no proficiency gains and recorded negative (-2) means with regard to attitudes. Differences in motivation may account for these results. The control group members did not undertake ER, but continued with their intensive language preparation program. Field notes from the shared-reading sessions recorded ER participants being frequently asked if they felt their target language skills were improving and they mostly responded in the affirmative. In some cases this may have become a self-fulfilling prophesy and enhanced their motivation towards ER, if not their actual proficiency. Another motivational prompt was the author asking participants to choose the shared-reading strategy which they felt most benefited their learning: 'researcher's reading'; 'repeat/follow-along reading' or 'participant's reading'. Consequently they were involved in their own learning. Furthermore, it is notable that whilst 'researcher reading' was initially the most popular choice, towards the end of the program most preferred to read to the researcher as their confidence developed. This interest and involvement in the program is suggested as being an indication of motivation. A further indication of developing motivation was the frequency of shared reading: each participant was scheduled for two sessions per week and the researcher usually offered additional sessions to interested participants. It is an observation from the statistical data that those who demonstrated most enthusiasm by booking extra sessions, made the highest gains. The final ER post-test occurred on the afternoon of the last day of the 5-week ELC course. The ER participants readily agreed to make themselves available for the testing. However, great effort had to be expended to persuade the control participants to return for the final test. As well as appeals from the researcher, their teachers were asked to encourage their

attendance and in the event, several were late. Although the control group completed the testing, they may have been poorly motivated and quite disinterested; this may have been reflected in their results.

Concerning the effect of ER on reading proficiency, this study reported a significant difference (p < .01) between the experimental ER group (M = 73.66, SD = 15.37) and the control group (M = 57.83, SD = 13.50), while Chen et al. (2013), using the same proficiency test also reported a significant difference (p <. 05). This was found between their experimental group (M = 55.78, SD = 23.88) and the control group (M = 43.78, SD = 14.21). Additionally, Chen et al. report a positive significance of the post-test on learners' overall attitude rating. Takase and Otsuke (2012) also employed the EPER Proficiency Test in pre-and post-tests in their study of 81 remedial university students over one semester; as with the present study, the participants undertook SSR and kept reading logs, however the SSR was within-class for 80 minutes per week. Another similarity is that the students read what were judged to be easily comprehensible books. As the participants were treated in three groups based on their pre-test scores, a direct comparison is not possible, however the authors report that ER was effective with all levels improving their proficiency scores and a significant main effect for the EPER test at p = .000 . The findings in the current study are also consistent with those in other previous studies (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Takase, 2008; & Yamashita, 2008) suggesting that ER is effective for developing readers' attitudes to leisure reading and language proficiency. Furthermore, Broeder and Stokmans' (2012) investigation of the leisure reading of adolescents in three regions, Beijing, the Netherlands and Cape Town, is of particular interest because of its cultural diversity, a characteristic shared with the current study. Overall, their study finds that it is the pleasure function which contributes most to the amount of leisure reading undertaken in each culture. These positive effects were reinforced in this study by the case studies investigating possible differences between two types of ER.

Research Question 3 asks whether there are differences between learners reading at an intermediate ER level and those at a simplified-intermediate level. To investigate, two case studies employing think-aloud protocols were conducted with a participant undertaking ER at each level. The think-aloud ER stimulus for each participant was from the same 464-word intermediate level extract from a graded reader short story. The intermediate level, read by Ken, has previously been described as one at which an intermediate learner can be expected to understand 95-97% of the vocabulary. This text, however, was then modified to the simplified-intermediate level for Lin; this level has been previously described as being at 99-100% lexical-coverage.

Lin and Ken had just finished their first 5-week block at the ELC and their 5-week ER course when the researcher asked them to separately undertake a think-aloud interview. Think-alouds can take

several forms and Cohen (1996) describes how each type of verbal report is time-referenced to the activity being investigated. In the case of the current study, immediacy was paramount because the learners' stream-of-consciousness during their reading was sought. Therefore, these think-aloud reports were styled as *self-revelation* because the "data are only available at the time the language learning or language use events are taking place" (Cohen, 1996, p.13). Therefore the think-alouds occurred simultaneously with the ER.

Think-aloud protocols were also employed by Ko (2005) in her study, referred to earlier describing, how glosses affected her Korean students' reading. Another feature of her study relevant to this discussion is how the transcribed think-aloud protocols showed that the participants used more high-level strategies such as making inferences, rather than low level strategies such as skipping and guessing. However, of even more significance to this study is her finding that the think-aloud strategies revealed that those using glossed texts read at a faster rate and more smoothly; these are the qualities of fluency, which is the expected outcome of reading at the simplified-intermediate level.

Employing a constant comparison analysis of the participants' transcripts according to a think-aloud matrix of strategies used by experienced readers (Block & Israel, 2004), links were formed between the participants' verbal statements and the think-aloud strategies. These connections emerged as formal generalizations supporting the claim that the simplified-intermediate reading by Lin was a significantly more effective form of ER, particularly in the area of fluency, than that undertaken by Ken, the intermediate level reader. These results were based on the seven think-aloud strategies in Block and Israel's (2004) matrix and the amount of use of these strategies by Ken and Lin as derived from constant comparison.

6.2 Summary

This chapter has summarized the study's results and discussed them with reference to the research questions. The quantitative and qualitative results have complemented each other in that the quantitative data showed that Ken read so much more than Lin, yet she achieved similar gains. This gave rise to the qualitative studies which then provided some detail of how and why Lin had more complex responses to her modified ER. Previous studies that were particularly significant to the findings have also been described here. The study confirmed the overall effectiveness of ER and found that within ER, material modified to be completely comprehensible is even more effective than other approaches. The results of this study have pointed to a number of future research topics which could investigate the

generalization of these findings as discussed in the next chapter. As well as discussing possible extensions to ER through input modifications found to be effective in this study, the next chapter also considers the limitations encountered in the hope they can be avoided in future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter begins by presenting an outline of the main findings of the research followed by a discussion of the pedagogical implications for ER teachers and ESL administrators. This leads to considerations of future research, taking account of the limitations of this study. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the preceding sections.

7.1 Contributions of this Study

The research was undertaken with low-intermediate international students undertaking language study for entry to Macquarie University. The primary purpose has been to investigate the effectiveness of ER texts modified to a level where all of the material is easily understood, but still enjoyable for these students. A secondary aim was to investigate the effectiveness of ER texts that had been modified to a level where most of the material is easily understood, but still enjoyable for such students. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data through the use of multiple instruments – field notes from shared-reading sessions, participants' reading diaries, a language proficiency test, a reading attitudes survey and two think-aloud case studies.

Quantitative analysis addressed possible changes in attitudes to leisure reading and reading proficiency gains for those undertaking ER. Considerable gains were found for the ER participants in comparison to the control group. An insufficient number of data points constrained the comparison between the intermediate level ER and the simplified-intermediate ER. However case studies of two participants, one undertaking intermediate level ER and the other undertaking simplified-intermediate level ER, revealed noticeable gains for the simplified-intermediate participant.

It is apparent, then, that noteworthy gains have been found both for ER participants in comparison with the control group participants through quantitative analysis, and for simplified-intermediate ER when compared with intermediate ER through qualitative analysis. However, these gains apply to small groups in one-to-one instruction. Previous studies have indicated that ER can be effective for language growth through gains in vocabulary and proficiency (Hu & Nation, 2000; Krashen, 2003; & Hu, 2013). Furthermore, researchers believe that additional effectiveness can be expected from small-group instruction with a dedicated teacher (Robb & Kano, 2013). However, the points of difference established in this study are that one-to-one interaction in ER is also beneficial and that modification to a

simplified-intermediate level with virtually total comprehensibility is particularly effective in developing fluency and achieving proficiency gains.

7.2 Pedagogical Implications

The outcomes of the current study confirm that modifying input in ER can result in the growth of language features such as vocabulary and comprehension, and additional modifications can then lead to improvements in the speed and fluency of reading. There is also strong evidence of improvements in attitudes to reading. Further research is required to generalize these benefits to the wider ESL community.

The findings of this study confirm the common assertion that one-to-one tutoring is more effective than traditional classroom teaching (Graesser, 1995; Katz & Albacate, 2013). For ER to be delivered as shared reading across the curriculum to class-sized groups, research will be necessary to identify transferable one-to-one strategies. Katz and Albacate (2013) suggest that "the effectiveness of human tutoring might well lie in the language of tutoring itself" (p.1126), that is, in the kinds of discourse relationships learners and instructors co-construct during interactions. This process is evident in the following elements of the present study.

One-to-one Shared-Reading Sessions Procedures:

1) **Setting up the session**. Establish contact, greetings, make computer connections.
2) **Housekeeping**. Check private (SSR) reading, inquire about current book being read: where are we up to; is it still enjoyable; dialogic questioning. Check that reading log entry is completed.
3) **Book selection**. Current shared reading suitable? Any private progress in shared-reading book? Next title selection? What seems interesting?
4) **One-to-one shared reading.** Aim is for aesthetic responses. Strategies: researcher-modelled reading, participant reading, think-aloud and metacognitive strategies, repeat reading, dialogic questioning and inquiry dialogue. Involve participants in the learning by offering strategy choices.
5) **The conclusion**. Next session? Personal exchanges. Positive reinforcement. Reminders: reading log, SSR.

These processes were illustrated when the learners in this study read the book, 'A Picture to Remember' (Scott-Malden, 2005), an intermediate level book which was further modified for the

simplified-intermediate group. It was simplified to a range within the first 800 words of the most frequently used words in English. This much restricted vocabulary still provided many possibilities for the development of aesthetic appreciation by the low-intermediate participants. Claude Monet's impressionist painting, 'Poppies, Near Argenteuil (1873)' is used as a theme in the book. It may have seemed to these students to be counter-intuitive that as novice language learners, they were still asked to develop consciousness of a 19th century painting from an unfamiliar culture. The theme of red poppies was used throughout the book to build suspense and a sense of foreboding: for example, the main character's feelings are described as she views 'a photograph of the painting with the red poppies, the same painting that Cristina had in her office and her bedroom. Cristina took the photograph in her hand. Suddenly she felt cold and sick. She didn't know why. This was her favourite painting. It was strange that it was making her feel like this' (p.35). Earlier in the story a violent thief is described: 'he turned his head and she saw a tattoo of a flower, a red poppy, on his neck' (p.7). Then, through dialogic conversations in shared reading, questions were posed by the researcher, such as 'why do you think Christina felt cold and sick?' and 'what do you think Christina thought about the red flower tattoo?' Participants were then able to experience the power of suggestion and recognize the heightening of tensions in the author's plot development. On the other hand, transactional questions such as 'what colour were the flowers?' were avoided. Future studies will need to investigate strategies for class-sized groups to explore possibilities and issues using dialogic reading as just described above rather than simply transacting opinions and information.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, shared reading has been an effective early education practice for over half a century. Enguidanos and Ruiz (2008) in their study of shared reading for older emergent readers, comment that the challenge for educators is to provide "effective early reading instruction to older students whose interests and motivation often widely differ from those of 5- and 6-year olds" (p.4). The shared reading program these teachers devised for their culturally and linguistically diverse older students in Mexico did not involve text modifications or any particular text input (some teachers focussed on poetry). However it was based on pedagogical principles derived from Vygotsky's observations (Harmer, 2007) and applicable to any shared-reading program for adults. These observations are that literacy development such as ER should occur first on an interpersonal plane with the assistance of a more expert person before progressing to an intrapersonal and on to an independent level of a self-sustained reading habit. This is the broad direction of the current study. Therefore, continuing the example from 'A Picture to Remember', the theme relating to red poppies began from the participant and researcher discussing the cover of the book which features a picture of Monet's impressionist painting, 'Poppies, Near Argenteuil (1873)'. It continues with the building of tension by

the author relating successive incidents to 'redness' and to red flowers. As the word 'impressionist' is a low frequency word for low-intermediate readers and the concept of threading this unfamiliar theme throughout the story would be equally puzzling, the assistance of the researcher was usually required for the participant to enjoy the achievement of connecting with the author's strategy. Dialogic reading was employed in this process.

Dialogic reading is a development within early education shared reading; it involves the use by teachers of strategic questioning and thoughtful responses to learners' interests and initiations during shared-reading sessions. A similar development has occurred within Dogme ELT (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009), a movement stressing the importance of the language created by learners during meaningful communicative exchanges such as ER. Chappell (2014) describes Dogme interactions as "talk, reflecting 'natural' conversation, characterized by spontaneous spoken language taking place in real time and in a shared context" (p.2). A pedagogical implication is that these developments provide fertile ground for future research into the development of shared-reading dialogic strategies for adult international ESL students.

In addition, one-to-one mentoring sessions may be an effective adjunct strategy to shared reading ER teaching of classes. A mentor can be an accomplished and experienced practitioner who takes a special, personal interest in helping to guide and develop a junior or more inexperienced person (Hussain, 2009). Continuing with the example from 'A Picture to Remember', the nature of the assistance of a 'more expert person' (the researcher in this study), often takes the form of mentoring rather than instruction because there are always individual differences in the background knowledge amongst participants. For example one participant in this study had visited a number of art galleries, so being familiar with impressionism, he rapidly grasped the author's intentions. Others needed lengthy conversations to grasp the abstract nature of impressionism. In the case of the simplified-intermediate readers (Group B), a modification in the form of a drop-down gloss explanation of 'impressionism' was available: 'A photograph of something shows correctly what it looks like, but an impression can be just a quick idea or suggestion of something. For example different people have different impressions of clouds in the sky.' It is difficult for a class teacher, often with up to 24 students, to be a source of guidance for each reader's development of personal growth. An implication from this situation is that research into the use of regular but brief one-to-one mentoring as an adjunct to within-class shared-reading ER, may show how class-sized groups could be afforded the benefits of one-to-one instruction.

7.3 Limitations

This research has identified a number of aspects that may make ER a more effective teaching strategy. These are all input modifications either to ER texts through simplification; or to ER methods where an interactive teacher involved in shared reading is substituted for the passive teacher role in within-class sustained silent reading. An implication of this is that further research is needed to scale these activities up to class and across-curriculum proportions. The limitations met in this study may facilitate this process.

First as Waring (2014) comments, the benefits of ER are best realized over an extended period of time and some researchers warn that it is problematic to attempt to realize such benefits in a relatively short period of time (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). ER treatment over one semester is a commonly followed time-line, however the program structure of the ELC participants limited this study to 5 weeks. It is possible that extending beyond 5 weeks would have been more effective. As well, the intensive nature of the participants' ELC course limited their availability for the study and led to a one-to-one telephonic delivery. A number of recruits withdrew just before the program began. This resulted in ER Group B having only two participants and a limited number of data points for analysis. It was an oversight not to have over-recruited in order to allow for volunteers' early change of mind.

Another limitation relates to the thematic analysis process used to interpret the think-aloud responses as was described in Chapter 3. Confidence in this process could have been improved with additional raters and the calculation of inter-rater reliability according to the degree of agreement on rating scales. Furthermore, the inclusion of control participants reading an unmodified or original version of the think-aloud reading stimulus text would have added to the construct validity of the process.

The type of modification was also a limitation in the case studies. Three types of modification relating to simplification were used in this study: (i) linguistic simplification; (ii) elaboration; and (iii) glossing. All three of these were used alone or in combination in the intuitively simplified material available to the Group B readers at 99-100% lexical-coverage level. However, the stimulus text used in the think-aloud reading was modified by overt elaboration alone; this is modification which is brought to the notice of the reader. Grace (1998) hypothesises that the increased number of associations or interconnectedness provided in elaboration leads to greater retention because of added redundancy, the defining of low frequency words, and the expansion of original information through repetition and paraphrasing, and the clearer signalling of thematic structure by use of examples. This form of

simplification has been previously illustrated in this report. The case study findings therefore relate exclusively to this particular form of modification by elaboration. It may well be that other types of modification (glossing, linguistic-simplification) are similarly efficacious. Further research is needed to resolve this.

7.4 Future Study

Overt modifications by elaboration were effective in making material simplified to a 99-100% lexical-coverage more effective for achieving ER gains than intermediate material at a 95-97% lexical-coverage. Further research involving large numbers of participants is needed to confirm this observation using experimental research. In addition, it would be useful to compare other types of simplification such as glossing and linguistic simplification when also used to achieve the 99-100% lexical-coverage range. Several other areas for potential study have arisen from the current project. One focus should be on extending the use of adult shared reading to class-sized groups; also the strategies of dialogic reading and one-to-one interactions will need to be applied to larger groups of adult learners. Some form of one-to-one mentoring in conjunction with shared-reading would further improve the effectiveness of ER, however considerations of cost-effectiveness would suggest trials to determine the minimum effective mentoring period for ER.

7.5 Conclusion

This project has been conducted in relation to input modifications used with ER. As well as modifications to ER texts, shared reading was a modification to the non-instructional nature of within-class SSR, and the instructional method was modified to a one-to-one telephonic approach with adult readers synchronously sharing e-book reading with the researcher. These modifications allowed different levels of simplification to be compared in participants' reading. It is new knowledge that this can be done in a non-contact one-to-one situation; this may have relevance to distance education instructional modes. Other new knowledge is that the two students undertaking the simplified-intermediate reading should have read the least, yet still achieved gains close to the group gain mean. These apparent differences led to two case studies which confirmed the greater effectiveness of ER when modified to a 99-100% lexical-coverage level. This suggests the potential for some mix of one-to-one mentoring and class shared reading of easily comprehended texts to be used as an efficient and effective form of ER for university entry level second language learners. Finally, this project was initiated by Hu and Nation's (2000) suggestion that more research was needed into ER for fluency development where learners encounter texts with no unknown language features. The implicit question

in their suggestion is 'why is there not more research into ER modifications to the simplified-intermediate level of 99-100% lexical-coverage?' It is asserted that this project has responded to the above question. It has shown that ER readers at a simplified-intermediate level can enjoy full comprehension along with the development of noteworthy gains in reading proficiency and attitudes to leisure reading.

Reference List

Afflerbach, P. (2000). Verbal reports and protocol analysis. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research, Volume III* (pp. 163-1179). London, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Albright, L. K., & Ariail, M. (2005). Tapping the potential of teacher read-alouds in middle schools. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(7), 582-593.

Allen. D. (2009). A study of the role of relative clauses in the simplification of news texts for learners of English. *System*, 37, 585-599.

Azmuddin, R. A., Ali, Z., Ngah, E., Tamili, L. M., & Ruslim, N. M. (2014). Extensive reading using graded readers. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 3(8), 109-113.

Block, C. C., & Israel, S. E. (2004). The ABCs of performing highly effective think-alouds. *The Reading Teacher,* 58 (2), 154-169.

Bowles, M. A. (2010). *The think-aloud controversy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Broeder, P., & Stokmans, M. (2013). Why should I read? A cross-cultural investigation into adolescents' reading socialisation and reading attitude. *Int Rev Educ,* 59, 87–112.

Brown, J.D., & Rodgers, T., S. (2002) Doing Second Language Research. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Burton, B., & Bartlett, S. (2005). *Practitioner.research for teachers*. London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Chappell, P. (2014). Engaging learners: Conversation - or dialogic-driven pedagogy? *ELT Journal,* 68 (1), 1-13.

Chen, C., Chen, S., Chen, S. E., & Wey, S. (2013). The effects of extensive reading via e-books on tertiary level EFL students' reading attitude, reading comprehension and vocabulary. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology,* 12 (2), 303-311.

Claridge, G. (2011). *What makes a good graded reader: Engaging with graded readers in the context of extensive reading in L2*. Ph.D. dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, N.Z.

Claridge, G. (2012). Graded readers: How the publishers make the grade. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 24 (1), 106-119.

Cohen, A. D. (1996). Verbal reports as a source of insights into second language learner strategies. *Applied Linguistics and Learning*, 7 (1 & 2), 5-25.

Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. London, UK: Longman.

Cotton, C. R. E., & Gresty, K. (2006). Reflecting on the think-aloud method for evaluating e-learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 37 (1), 44-55.

Crossley, S. A., Allen, D., & McNamara, D. S. (2011). Text readability and intuitive simplification: A comparison of readability formulas. *Rea ding In a Foreign Language*, 23 (1), 84-101.

Crossley, S. A., Allen, D., & McNamara, D. S. (2012). Text simplification and comprehensible input: A case for an intuitive approach. *Language Learning Research,* 16 (1), 89-108.

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (2010). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Doyle, G. B , & Bramwell, W. (2006).Promoting emergent literacy and social–emotional learning through dialogic reading. *The Reading Teacher*. (59) 6, 554-565

Dykes, G. A. (2011). *Hong Kong Chinese secondary school English language learners' vocabulary uptake using simplified readers with and without associated reading tasks*. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Leicester University, UK.

EPER Placement Test (2012)*:. Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading.* Retrieved from http://www.ed.ac.uk

Edmondson, J., & Shannon, P. (2002). The will of the people. *The Reading Teacher,* 55 (5), 452-454.

Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1983). The Impact of reading on second language learning. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 19 (1), 53-67.

Ellis, R. (1999). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

English Language Centre (ELC). (2015). Book Club Café. Macquarie University, NSW.

Enguidanos, T., & Ruiz, N. T. (2008). Shared reading for older emergent readers in bilingual classrooms. *Focus on Exceptional Children,* 40 (5), 4. Retrieved from http://www.lovepublishing.com/journals.html

Ericsson, K. A., & Simon, H. A. (1993). *Protocol Analysis*. London, UK: MIT Press.

Fenton-Smith, B. (2010). A debate on the desired effects of output activities for extensive reading. In B. Tomlinson & H. Masuhara (Eds.), *Research for materials development in language learning: Evidence for best practice*, (pp. 50-60). London, UK: Continuum.

Figueiredo-Silva, M.I.R. (2001). *Teaching academic reading: Some initial findings from a session on hedging*. Proceedings of the Postgraduate Conference, Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. University of Edinburgh: Edinburgh.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Improving Adolescent Literacy*. (2nd ed.). New Jersey, Ohio: Pearson Education.

Gass, S., & Mackey, A. (2006). Input, interaction and output. *AILA Review*, 19, 3-17.

Grabe, W. (1991). Current developments in second language reading research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 375-406.

Grabe, W. (2010). Reading in a second language moving from theory to practice. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Reading*. New York, NY: Longman.

Grace, C. A. (1998). Retention of word meanings inferred from context and sentence-level translations: Implications for the design of beginning-level CALL software. *The Modern Language Journal,* 82 (iv), 533-546.

Graesser, A. C. (1995). Collaborative dialogue patterns in naturalistic one-to-one tutoring. *Applied Cognitive Psychology,* 9, 495-522.

Griffiths, C. (2007). Language learning strategies: Students' and teachers' perceptions. *ELT Journal,* 61 (2), 91-99.

Harmer, J. (2009). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

Hong-Nam, K., & Leavell, A. G. (2006). Language learning strategy: Use of ESL students in an intensive English learning context. *System,* 34, 399–415.

Hussain, Z. (2009). The good mentoring guide. *Global Synergy Solutions* (0.1), 1-44. Retrieved from: www.gssuk.net

Hill, D. R. (2008). Graded Readers in English. *ELT Journal,* 62 (2), 184-205.

Hirsh, D. & Nation, P. (1992). What vocabulary size is needed to read unsimplified texts for pleasure? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 8 (2), 689-697.

Holdaway, D. (1979). Shared book experience: Teaching reading using favorite books: *Theory Into Practice*, 21(4), 293-300. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476355

Hu, H., & Nation, P. (2000). Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 13 (1), 403-430.

Hu, H.M. (2013). The effects of word frequency and contextual types on vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading: A case study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 4 (3), 487-495.

Huffman, J. (2014). Reading rate gains during a one-semester extensive reading course. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 26 (2), 17-33.

Irvine, A. (1993). The design and validation of a multi-level reading comprehension test. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics,* 4, 81-86.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L.A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 1(2), 112-133.

Katz, S., & Albacete, L. (2013). Tutoring system that simulates the highly interactive nature of human tutoring. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105 (4), 1126-1141.

Koda, K. (2005). *Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ko, M. H. (2005). Glosses, comprehension, and strategy use. *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 17 (2).

Kozel, W. (2008) VanPatten & Williams/Kozel *TESL-EJ* 12 (2), 1- 5

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practices in second language acquisition.* London, UK: Pergamon.

Krashen, S. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and implications.* New York, NY: Longman.

Krashen, S. D. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use*. Portsmouth, USA: Heinemann.

Krashen, S. D. (2004*). The Power of reading: Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, USA: Heinemann.

Lake, J. (2014). Curious readers and interesting reads: Developing a positive L2 reading self and motivation through extensive reading. *Journal of Extensive Reading,* 2, 13-28.

Laufer, B., & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, G. C. (2010). Lexical threshold revisited: Lexical text coverage, learners' vocabulary size and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 22 (1), 15-30.*

Law, B. (2001). *New thinking for connexions and citizenship*. Cambridge, UK: The Career Learning Network.

Long, M. H. (1985). Input and second language acquisition theory. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition (pp.* 377-393). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Long, M. H. (1990). The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24 (4), 649-668.

Lu, X. (2009). *The real story of Ah-Q and other tales of China*. London UK: Penguin Classics.

Macquarie University English Language Requirements. Retrieved February 16, 2015, from www.mq.edu.au/study/international/how-to-apply/English language requirements. (2), 267-286.

Magliano, J. P., Millis, K. K., The R-SAT Development Team1, & Levinstein, I. (2011). Assessing comprehension during reading with the reading strategy assessment tool (RSAT). *Metacogn Learn,* 6 (2), 131–154.

Mason, B. & Krashen, S. D. (1997). Extensive reading in English as a foreign language. *System*, 25 (1), 99-102.

McMaugh, A., Sumsion, J., Symes, C., & Saltmarsh, D. (2006). From ethics in research to ethics in writing: Not entirely separate matters. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 34, (1), 1–3.

Meddings, L. & S. Thornbury. (2009). *Teaching unplugged*. Peaslake: Delta Publishing.

Mikulecky, B. S. & Jeffries. L. (2003). *More reading power* (2nd. ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson
 Education.

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

Nunan, D. (2002). *Research methods in language learning.* Shanghi, PRC: Shanghai Foreign Language
 Education Press.

Oh, S. Y. (2001). Two types of input modification and EFL reading comprehension: Simplification
 versus elaboration. *TESOL Quarterly,* 35, (1), 69-97.

Oxford University Press Catalogue. (2009) *Graded Readers Storylines*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University
 Press.

Paolini, C. (2004). *Eragon*. London, UK: Random House.

Pigada, M., & Schmitt, N. (2006). Vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading: A case study.
 Reading in a Foreign Language, 18, 1-28.

Read, J. (2007). Second language vocabulary assessment: Current practices and new directions.
 International Journal of English Studies, 7, (2), 105-125.

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richards, J. C., Schmidt, R., Hendricks, & Kim, Y. (2003). *Longman dictionary of language teaching &
 applied linguistics* (2nd ed.). Beijing, PRC: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Robb, T., & Kano, M. (2013). Effective extensive reading outside the classroom: A large-scale
 experiment. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 25, 234–247.

Rowling, J. K. (1997). *Harry and the Philosopher's Stone. London, UK:* Bloomsberry Publishing.

Sadoski, M., McTigue, E. M., & Paivio, A. (2012). A dual coding theoretical model of decoding in
 reading: Subsuming the LaBerge and Samuel's model. *Reading Psychology*, 33, 465–496.

 Scott, B. A. (2008). Assessing text processing: A comparison of four methods. *Journal of Literacy
 Research*, 40, 290–316.

Scott-Malden, S. (2005). *A picture to remember*. Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press.

Siah, P., & Kwok, W. (2010). The value of reading and the effectiveness of sustained silent reading. *The Clearing House*, 83, 168–174.

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.

Smith, K. (2011). Integrating one hour of in-school weekly SSR: Effects on proficiency and spelling. *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching,* November, 1-7. Retrieved from www.tprstories.com/ijflt/articles-winter-2011/smith_ssrspelling_ijflt

Stokmans, M. J. W. (1999). Reading attitude and its effect on leisure time reading. *Poetics,* 26, 245-261.

Swain, M. (2000). *The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue.* Retrieved from Google Scholar.

Takase, A. (2007). Japanese high school students' motivation for extensive L2 reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 19, (1),   1-18.

Takase, A. (2008). The two most critical tips for a successful extensive reading program. *Kinki University English Journal, 1 (Feb.), 119-135.*

Takase, A., & Otsuki, K. (2012). New challenges to motivate remedial EFL students to read extensively. *Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 6 (2), 75-94.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (2014). *The Lord of the Rings.* Glasgow, UK: Harper Collins.

University of Edinburgh, Institute for Applied Language Studies. (2010). *Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading Progress/Placement Test*, Edinburgh, UK.

VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (2014). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition : An Introduction New York*, NY: Routledge.

Vasquez, E., & Slocum, T. A. (2012). Evaluation of synchronous online tutoring for students at risk of reading failure. *Exceptional Children*, 78(2), 221-235.

Viney, P. (2009). *Strawberry and the Sensations*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Wang, F. Y. & Lee, S. Y. (2007). Storytelling is the bridge. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 2 (2), 30-35.

Waring, R. (2014). The Future of Extensive Reading: Going places in Korea. In *2014 KEERA Conference on Extensive Reading*. Retrieved from www.robwaring.org/presentations

Waring, R., & Takaki, M. (2003). At what rate do learners learn and retain new vocabulary from reading a graded reader? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15, (2), 130-164.

Westergaard, J. (2012). Career guidance and therapeutic counselling: Sharing 'what works' in practice with young people. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 40, 327–339.

Westergaard, J. (2013). Group work: Pleasure or pain? An effective guidance activity or a poor substitute for one-to-one interactions with young people? *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 13, 173-186.

Woodrow, L. (2014). *Writing about quantitative research in applied linguistics*. New York, NY: Pelgrave Macmillan.

Woodward-Kron, R. (2007). Negotiating meanings and scaffolding learning: Writing support for non-English speaking background postgraduate students. *Higher Education Research & Development,* 26 (3), 253-268.

Yamashita, J. (2008). Extensive reading and development of different aspects of L2 proficiency. *System,* 26, 661-672.

Yamashita, J. (2013). Effects of extensive reading on reading attitudes in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 25 (2), 248-263.

Zamanian, M., & Heydari, P. (2012). Readability of texts: State of the art. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(1), 43-53.

Appendix A

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

School of Education
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109

Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8766
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 8674

Email: alice.chik@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator: Dr Alice Chik

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Modifying Input in Extensive Reading: intuitive simplification, elaboration and glossing.

You are invited to participate in a study about reading for pleasure for 30 minutes a day for 12 weeks. The study is being conducted by Paul Brigg as a part of his Master of Research study. Paul can be contacted through the Higher Research Degree Office or by phone on 0404556646 or email: paul.brigg@students.mq.edu.au. The study is being conducted to meet the requirements of the Master of Research course under the supervision of Dr Alice Chik of the Department of Education. Dr Chik can be contacted on 98508766 or alice.chik @mq.edu.au.

If you decide to participate, you will (a) complete two proficiency tests in Week 1 and 12; (b) complete a background survey; (c) do extensive reading at home; (d) keep a reading journal; and (e) discuss reading with Paul Brigg. The discussion will be audio-recorded. Any information or personal details gathered, from forms or interviews, or in any other way, in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Dr Chik and Paul will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request; an overview of the results will be presented one week after the course finishes.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I,   *(participant's name)*   have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____

  (Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____

  (Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ ___ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201500163)

Dear Dr Chik,

RE: 'Modifying Input in Extensive Reading: intuitive simplifying, elaborating and glossing' (Ref No: 5201500163)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 1st April 2015. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Alice Chik
Mr Paul Andrew Brigg

Appendix B

Samples of Think-Aloud Transcripts and Marking Code.

The original text of the short story is shown in **bold**.

The participants' responses are transcribed verbatim, and each exchange is boxed.

The overt modifications by elaboration in the stimulus reading of Lin are structured in two ways; first the target word or phrase is highlighted by Italics then the elaboration is underlined.

The coding in the right hand column is the result of the researcher's constant comparison and use of the 7 strategies (A to G) from Block and Israel's (2004) Think-Aloud Matrix.

SAMPLE OF THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL TEXT TRANSCRIPT

READ BY KEN

Strawberry and the Sensations*, **By Peter Viney**	**CODING**
Ken: I don't understand. What is Strawberry Strawberry? Researcher: OK a strawberry is a fruit. When you read the story you will find out that it is the name of the girl who is a singer. And this word, pointing to 'sensation' ? Ken: A feeling err some feeling ? Researcher: Yes, but the meaning here is 'something amazing'.	G, F

Chapter 1: Nobody speaks to Cyndi*

Ken: Cyndi is the name maybe of one character in this book. Cyndi singing.	E

Cyndi is singing: '... I just can't forget about the day we met, those days with you, when skies were blue!' *

Ken: This err a beautiful song, but I don't know this song.	C

Suddenly there were no lights.*

Ken: Woah! I feel a little maybe because I like some fantasy story so I think maybe some danger will be….	C, B

Everybody stood up in the dark concert hall.*

Ken: Ahrr maybe I'm right…(laughs)…	D

They were screaming and shouting, 'More! More! More!' *

Ken: More? Something wrong maybe ….	D

That's the end of the show, and it's "Goodnight" from Strawberry and the Sensations,' shouted Cyndi into the microphone.*

Ken: Woah! Its not..its not…danger?….. only, maybe in the show (realizes his misjudgment), it is not a dangerous situation, just a show. (Expresses embarrassment. Laughs at self.) Researcher: No problem. No problem.	C, D

SAMPLE OFTHE SIMPLIFIED-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL TRANSCRIPT TEXT READ BY LIN

Strawberry and the Sensations, by Peter Viney

<u>They are singers, this is the name of their band.</u> <u>A 'sensation' is something very amazing.</u> <u>So if some space-travellers arrived on earth it would be a sensation.</u> *

CODING

Lin: Maybe I am thinking about what is 'sensation' in Chinese, and another thing is what's the something, whet's err the things that are amazing when they travel around the earth.	C, G

Chapter1: Nobody speaks to Cyndi*

Lin: I look at this one, maybe I will think about why they are not talking speak to Cyndi. Are there any reasons special reasons for this and err maybe the story will tell us.	C, G, A

Cyndi was singing : '... I just can't forget, about the day we met, those days with you, when *skies were blue*! <u>If the sky is blue, then the weather is good and people are happy</u> *

Lin: In this I think about the sky is blue the weather is good and people are happy. Maybe if the weather is sunny and it is warmer (people) will go outside to have a good time and look around the place and that will be a happy thing, just sitting under the sun is another good thing.	B, B, B

Suddenly there were no lights.*

Lin: Why there is no lights? Or are there no electricity? Or any other?	G, G, D

Everybody stood up in the dark *concert hall* <u>the building where we used to enjoy music shows and stage plays</u>. *

Lin: There are some music shows take place in the building and maybe the electricity is too much energy, it use too much electricity show the electricity. The light of the electricity is much too too cost. If they use too much electricity the cost is much too much. It is maybe the reason why there is suddenly it will no lights.	F, D, D A, B, D

They were screaming and shouting, 'More! More! More!*

Lin: Maybe is; is even though there are no lights there the people inside the building also feel happy because it's a music show and they will like dark and err maybe it is more music or what? (addressing researcher) light? And singing!!!	G, D, G

That's the end of the show, and it's "Goodnight" from Strawberry and the Sensations,' shouted Cyndi into the *microphone*, <u>so that everyone could hear her</u>**.***

Lin: because his voice is very big and so everybody it is a kind of phone to that everybody can hear her and shout into the voice of the crowd	F, A

Appendix C

An average reading diary for a 5-week ER program participant

The books and stories that I have read. Group A

In the 'comments' please write: "Yes I read this by myself" or "Yes I read this with the researcher". If you want to you can make comments, they can be good or bad, does not matter. Just a few words would be good.

Name of book or story	My comments and notes
(Level 1) SS The Collector	I read this by myself, it is about a man collect packets. 2,500 words
(Level 1) SS The Locked Room	
(Level 1) A Picture to Remember	I read this with the researcher, it is a story about a girl named Christina who works in a museum. 11,800 words
(Level 2) Frankenstein	
(Level 2) Robinson Crusoe	I started to read this with the researcher, but we decided it was too difficult, so we changed.
(Level 2) SS Strawberry and the Sensations	I also read this by myself, it is about a singer named Strawberry. She sings in a band and some crazy person wants to kill her. 2,800 words
(Level 2) SS The Eyes of Montezuma	
(Level 2) SS The Visit	I started to read this with the researcher, it is a story about a policemen named Harry. On Monday 22nd we read up to Chapter 3. Harry's boss does not believe that Harry saw a spaceship. I will keep reading this with the researcher but he suggested I should try Dawson's Crossing, it is about teenage boys and girls. We will read again on Thursday at 4pm. 4,250 words
(Level 2) SS The Watchers	I read this by myself, it is about three people to find something. 2,050 words
(Level 2) The War of the Worlds	
(Level 2) Washington Square	
(Level 3) Dawson's Creek-Shifting into Overdrive	
(Level 3) Double Cross	I read it by myself. It is a story about spy named Monika. 9,000 words
(Level 3) NewYork	
(Level 3) Skyjack!	I read it with the researcher. We read it about four times. I will finish it by myself. 20,000

Note: Participant A4; **Total words read 50,150**

Appendix D

A sample of the Proficiency Test showing the first and last question set with answers provided in red. This shows the progression in syntax and semantics and the differences in background knowledge reference.

Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading Placement Test A

Introduction

Read each passage through carefully. Try to understand what the passage is about. Then look at each blank and fill in the word that has been left out. Each blank must be filled in with only ONE word. Write your answer on the ANSWER sheet.

Example:

Passage

"What are the two dogs doing in (1) road?" said Mary. "They (2) fighting," replied David. "Can (3) hear them, Mary?" "Yes, I can (4) them easily but I want to (5) them also."

Answers: (1) the (2) are (3) you (4) hear (5) see

[In (5) look at is wrong because you must fill each blank with only ONE word.]

You will find it more and more difficult to complete the passages as you go on. Do as many passages as you can. If you do not know a word, make a guess.

Do not write anything on the question paper. Use the answer sheet.

Sample questions 1 - 12 (beginning, and end) showing range of difficulty

1. There is an oak tree in Mary's garden. It (1) is a big tree. David liked (2) to climb the tree. One day (3) he climbed very high. He looked (4) over the garden wall and (5) saw/at all the fields around.

"I (6) can see some cows in the river," David called (7) to Mary.

"What else can (8) you see?" asked Mary.

"I can (9) see two dogs on the road."

"(10) what are they doing?" asked Mary. "(11) they are fighting."

12. The Air Hostess went away and came back with a (130) glass/bottle of whisky. She seemed (131) calm/cool/friendly etc. She had blue eyes. He wished he could be as calm (132) as she appeared to be. The plane's (133) engine(s) grew quieter. For a moment they (134) seemed to be stopped completely. The (135) plane dropped like a stone, and (136) then/suddenly dived into the grey clouds. He (137) could see nothing except a (138) thick/dense/fine/beautiful etc white mist outside the windows. (139) Everyone in the plane was talking to each (140) other. The plane seemed to fall (141) down and down.

Appendix E

Copyright notice appended to the modified texts and the short story 'Strawberry and the Sensations', by Peter Viney

This copy made under:

Sections 40- 43 and Section 103 of the Copyright Act allow some free use of copyright material. This is called 'fair dealing'. In the USA, it is called 'fair use'.

Fair dealing in Australia applies only to the following activities.

- Research and Study;

The fair dealing right most relevant to students and staff is fair dealing for research or study. It only applies to Paul Brigg's individual research and study at Macquarie University

Appendix F

The simplification of the story Knog Yiji by Lu Xun is used to illustrate the modification processes used in this study. Three types of modification relating to simplification are used: (i) linguistic simplification; (ii) elaboration; and (iii) glossing. First, simplification is the modification of texts or materials often using a word list and structure list to produce simplified reading for language learners (Richards et al., 2003). Linguistic simplification is a term used to more accurately describe this syntactic form of simplification; it involves the use of simple sentences, controlled vocabularies and contracted storylines. The second type of modification, elaboration, involves the simplification of context by the provision of extra information to give more substance to underlying thematic relations. Finally, glosses are a modification that can be useful when it is ineffectual to make inferences from context, often due to a lack of cues. Glosses are overt textual modifications requiring a conscious learning decision by the reader.

To follow the modification procedure used in this study, it is suggested that the reader should progressively read the original paragraph from Kong Yiji then compare sentence by sentence with the modified version.

The original first paragraph from Kong Yiji:

The taverns in Luzhen were rather particular in their layout. Facing out to the street was a substantial bar, squared off at the corners, behind which hot water was always ready for warming up wine. Lunchtime or evening, when they got off work, the town's labourers would drift in, each with their four coppers ready to buy a bowl of warmed wine; this was twenty years ago, remember, now it would cost them ten, then drink it at the bar, taking their ease. An extra copper would buy them a bowl of salted bamboo shoots, or of aniseed beans, to go with it. If their budgets stretched to ten copper coins or more, a meat dish would be within their reach. But such extravagance was generally beyond the means of short-jacketed manual labourers. Only those dressed in the long scholar's gowns that distinguished those who worked with their heads from those who worked with their hands made for a more sedate inner room, to enjoy their wine and food sitting down.

In the simplified-intermediate version example below linguistic simplification is indicated by the symbol 'LS'. Elaboration is indicated by the symbol 'E' and underlining of the elaboration. Glossing is indicated by the symbol 'G' and the gloss is bracketed.

The simplified-intermediate version
KONG YIJI by Lu Xun

The bar workers (LS) in Luzhen were very careful (LS) with the **layout of their bar-room** that is the organization of their tables, chairs and other furniture in the bar. (E) Facing out to the street was, a large strong bar, in the shape of a rectangle (LS), behind which hot water was always ready for warming up hot-wine. Lunch-time or evening, when they got off work, the town's workers would **drift in** walking in slowly and quietly (E), each with their four **pieces of copper** money (E) ready to buy a bowl of warmed wine {this was many years ago, but remember; today it would cost them much more} (G); then they would drink it at the bar, **taking their ease** and relaxing quietly (E). An extra {one more} (G) copper coin would buy them a bowl of salted bamboo shoots, or beans, to go with it {bamboo is a very long tropical plant used for building and its young plants or shoots are good to eat} (G). If they had enough money, maybe ten coppers or more, they could buy a dish of meat (LS). But such a large amount of money (LS) was generally too much for the workers with their strong hard bodies (LS) who wore **short workers' shirts** so their arms were free to do their hard work (E). Some others (E) were dressed in the long scholar's gowns {a long white shirt that goes down to the feet} (G) these gowns showed (LS) those who worked with their heads instead of those who worked with their hands. These scholars walked on into a more quiet and comfortable, inside room. (LS) Here they could enjoy their wine and food sitting down at the clean and polished tables (LS).