Tertiary EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Graded Readers

Cevdet Yılmaz [5], Gökhan Hınız [6]

Abstract: Many research articles, reviews, and dissertations investigated the use of different literary texts in foreign language learning. Previous studies have indicated the effectiveness of literature in language learning. One of the literary texts utilized in foreign language teaching is graded readers, simplified versions of original texts. This qualitative case study investigates a group of foreign language learners' attitudes towards using graded readers in language learning. Participants of the study were eleven English preparatory class students at a Turkish state university. Data for the study were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach. Findings suggest that students have positive attitudes towards using graded readers, and they think these texts help them improve their language skills: reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar. Interview data also indicated that learners use reading strategies and 21st-century learning skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication during graded reader activity.

Keywords: Graded Readers, Literature in ELT, Extensive Reading, 21st Century Skills

[5] **Cevdet Yılmaz,** Assoc. Prof. Dr., English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education, ORCID: 0000-0003-4713-6565

Correspondence: cyilmaz@comu.edu.tr

[6] **Gökhan Hınız,** Instructor, English Language Teaching, School of Foreign Languages

INTRODUCTION

The use of literary texts in English language teaching (ELT) is usually associated with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). In this method, students learn grammar rules and apply them while translating texts from their native language to the target one (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). With the emergence of communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, literary texts were abandoned for a long time as it was associated with the GTM. However, after the 1990s, foreign language research began to view literary texts as an authentic source to teach grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing, as well as communicative and pragmatic language skills (Hall, 2005, pp. 47-57).

Today technology provides language teachers with new opportunities, authentic materials and insights for better teaching. The internet offers various resources to practice reading in English, ranging from everyday reading activities such as emails and social media posts to scientific articles. While the amount and range of texts available are much higher than in the past, literature is still a valuable tool to improve foreign language learners' language skills, particularly in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings where authentic input for language is limited because literary texts expose learners to complex themes and a variety of authentic language input (Lazar, 1993). One of the language inputs that teachers use to support the development of reading skills in EFL classrooms is graded readers, simplified stories designed to address learners of different foreign language levels.

The majority of previous research on graded readers has focused on their effectiveness in learning vocabulary, reading fluency and reading comprehension (e.g., Ateek, 2021; Chang & Renandya, 2019; Vu & Peters, 2020; Webb et al., 2013). However, further studies are needed to fully understand how new generation students perceive the use of literature in language teaching. These studies will contribute to the integration of the use of literary texts in 21st-century classrooms. The current study aims to understand a group of EFL learners' attitudes and perceptions of graded readers concerning foreign language reading strategies and critical thinking. The study further investigates the participants' overall experience of the graded reader task. Findings from the study offer implications concerning the effective use of graded readers in EFL classrooms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Use of Literature and Graded Readers in ELT

Previous research showed the utility of literary texts in providing EFL learners with authentic language usages beyond the mechanical aspects of foreign languages (Ateek, 2021; Carter & Long, 1991; Collie & Slater, 1987; Maley & Duff, 1989; Widdowson, 1984). Akyel and Yalçın (1990) suggest that teachers use literary text in the EFL classroom to broaden students' horizons, improve their cultural awareness, and stimulate their creativity and knowledge of the world. Lazar (1993, pp. 14-15) provided a comprehensive list of reasons for using literature in the second language (L2) teaching as follows:

- It is very motivating.
- It is authentic material.

- It has general educational value.

- It helps to understand another culture.

- It is a stimulus for language acquisition.

- It develops interpretative abilities.

- It expands language awareness.

- It encourages to talk about opinions and feelings.

The literature on the use of literary texts in ELT suggests that literary texts such as short stories, novels, poetry and plays can facilitate language learning and provide a rich resource of stimulating language activities (Ateek, 2021; Chang & Renandya, 2019). One of the literary texts used in ELT is graded readers. Graded readers are simplified or adapted versions of literary texts used to teach L2 learners with limited grammatical and lexical knowledge (Nation & Wang, 1999). Studies have shown the positive impact of using simplified literary texts and graded readers in language teaching (Crossley et al., 2007; Johnson, 1981; Shook, 1996, 1997; Young, 1999). Hedge (1985) states that graded readers eliminate the issues related to the complexity of literary texts by providing learners with a familiar language based on lexical, structural and information control. Lexical control refers to the simplification of lexis and word frequency. Structural control is related to sentence length and complexity. On the other hand, information control pertains to shortening the texts using techniques such as minimizing the number or descriptions of the characters in the text.

Like any language teaching tool, literary texts have limitations and drawbacks. Students might have different interests regarding the type of literary texts and genres they would like to read. While selecting texts for language learning, teachers should consider students' interests, language levels, and cultural and literary backgrounds (Collie & Slater). Addressing the needs and interests of all students during the selection of literary texts can be difficult to overcome in the language classroom. Other issues related to the use of literary texts in ELT might be the complexity of literary language, the difficulty of understanding cultural issues, and the difference between literary and real-life discourse (Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000). Opponents of simplified literary texts claim that simplified texts do not reflect authentic language use and, therefore, they may cause learners to misconceive authentic language use (Bernhardt, 2011).

Reading Strategies

Studies done in the 1970s and 1980s indicated the significant role of background knowledge (or 'content schemata') in L2 reading (Carrell & Grabe, 2010, p. 225). Traditionally, reading was viewed as passive progress in which our brains were the passive receivers of information. In the 1980s, researchers pointed out the importance of background knowledge, knowledge of the genre, contextual analysis, meta-cognition, and reading strategies (Carrell & Grabe, 2010).

Reading strategies refer to the actions performed by readers to comprehend the meaning of a text (Garner, 1987). Readers try to overcome comprehension problems using these strategies. Studies indicated the effectiveness of reading strategies in improving the understanding of texts (Anderson, 1991; Brantmeier, 2005; Kletzien, 1991; Razı, 2014; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). While several classifications exist, reading strategies can be broadly categorized as cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective reading strategies (Garner, 1987).

Cross and Paris (1988) define metacognition as the "knowledge and control over their thinking and learning and the monitoring and control of thought" (p. 131). Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, refer to the integration of new knowledge into existing knowledge. Students acquire, learn, remember, retrieve and understand knowledge or information using certain strategies. Cognitive strategies are used while performing the task, whereas metacognitive strategies are used consciously by the readers to understand how the task is performed (Garner, 1987).

Another reading strategy good readers should possess is critical reading (Bosley, 2008). The Institute of Academic Excellence Report (Institute for Academic Excellence Inc., 1997) stresses the relationship between critical thinking and literature. The report states that "literature-based reading improves learners' critical thinking skills because readers recognize patterns within a text, fit details into them, and then relate them to other texts and remembered experiences" (p. 2). Reading literary texts is different from other types of readings because the understanding of literary texts requires more complex critical thinking skills and involves the retrieval of information, explaining, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, evaluating, problem-solving, inferring, logical reasoning, and applying (Facione, 2011; Hall, 2005; Marin & Halpern, 2011). Critical reading requires readers to interact with the text, which means the reader asks questions, makes assumptions or predictions, forms connections with prior knowledge and constructs new knowledge. Critical readers make use of the new information. They also can make meaning from the text considering their own sociocultural "situatedness" (Bosley, 2008, p. 286).

Readers also use socio-affective strategies to improve their understanding of the text. Language is a social phenomenon in which people communicate. Social strategies are used to compensate for the gaps in knowledge using social skills like collaboration (Rubin, 1987). Learners ask questions, cooperate, empathize with others, and try to understand the target culture to improve their language skills (Oxford, 1990).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs a descriptive case study design with an emic perspective. An emic perspective of case study design provides holistic and detailed information about the behaviours, performance, knowledge, or perspectives of a limited group of subjects or participants (Duff, 2008; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Setting and Participants

In this study, the case was a group of English Preparatory Program (EPP) students at a Turkish state university. The participants were pre-intermediate and intermediate-level English Preparatory Class (pre-sectional level) students (7 females, 4 males) at a Turkish state university. Their ages ranged from

18 to 23. EPP offers students 24 hours of weekly intensive English courses for 28 weeks. Successful completion of the program is a requirement for the students of English-medium departments. The participant students read graded readers in their reading course as an assignment in the 2018/2019 academic year fall semester. They were taught reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and using context clues and background knowledge as a part of their intensive reading course in which they read short non-fiction texts related to different topic areas. However, they were not taught any reading strategies for extensive reading. The graded reader task was a part of their performance grade, comprising 20% of the course assessment. In this task, they were required to prepare a list of unknown vocabulary, a plot summary of the readers and a reflection paper. Students also gave an oral presentation about the stories they had read.

Data for this study was gathered in the 2018/2019 academic year spring term. The program where this study was conducted consisted of 128 students. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who could share rich and in-depth information (Patton, 2014). The classes that used graded readers in their syllabuses were determined, and the course instructors identified students who fulfilled all course requirements. 11 students who met the criteria were invited to face-to-face interviews. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Code	Age	Gender	Level	Department
P1	20	Female	Intermediate	Environmental Engineering
P2	20	Female	Intermediate	International Relations
P3	18	Male	Intermediate	International Relations
P4	18	Female	Pre-Intermediate	Environmental Engineering
P5	23	Male	Pre-Intermediate	Environmental Engineering
P6	20	Male	Pre-Intermediate	Biology
P7	18	Female	Pre-Intermediate	Molecular Biology and Genetics
P8	18	Male	Pre-Intermediate	International Relations
P9	18	Female	Pre-Intermediate	Molecular Biology and Genetics
P10	18	Female	Pre-Intermediate	International Relations
P11	18	Female	Pre-Intermediate	Biology

Research Questions

This qualitative case study aimed to understand a group of EFL students' attitudes towards a graded reader task. In qualitative inquiry, research questions (RSQs) are not determined according to operationalizing variables. Instead, they are formulated to clarify issues in all their complexity in context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This study addresses the following research questions to explore participant students' experiences and perceptions of the graded reader task.

RSQ1. What are the participant students' attitudes towards the graded reader task's contribution to their foreign language learning?

RSQ2. What reading strategies do participant students use to understand graded readers?

RSQ3. What are the challenges that participant students experience while reading graded readers?

Data Collection Tools

Descriptive data are particularly useful when the research intends to study what people take for granted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The study gathered data through face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews to investigate the EFL learners' attitudes towards graded readers and present in-depth answers to research questions. Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to develop further questions naturally when unexpected directions or responses appear during the interview (Richard, 2011).

Procedure

The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, Turkish, to allow them to express themselves fully and correctly. Before interviews, participants were informed about the study and voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. The interviews (see Appendix A) with the participants were held face-to-face at the second researcher's office and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The same interview protocol was used for all participants to maintain methodological consistency (Cohen et al., 2008).

Analysis

Data gathered through interviews were analyzed using a general thematic content analysis approach (Riessman, 2007) with a constructivist research orientation. After the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and filed, any information that could reveal the identity of participants and research setting was removed from the dataset. Participant codes were used to identify the participant students. Using an inductive coding approach, the second author coded the data by identifying meaningful segments relevant to our research questions over the period of two months using the software package NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software. Finally, candidate themes were identified in relation to the research questions.

FINDINGS

Upon the analysis of interview data, themes and subcategories were identified inductively based on participants' responses. The main themes were identified as follows:

- meta-cognitive reading strategies

- critical reading strategies

- socio-affective reading strategies

- language development

- overall attitudes towards graded readers

- suggestions

- challenges

RSQ1. What are the participant students' attitudes towards the graded reader task's contribution to their foreign language learning?

Participants' answers to the interview questions indicated that the overall attitudes of learners towards the use of graded readers in the EFL classroom were positive (see table 1). However, three participants expressed negative attitudes towards the graded reader task. P1, P2 and P4 believed that they benefited more from audio-visual activities like watching TV series or films while learning a foreign language (see table 3).

Table 2: Overall Attitudes Towards Graded Readers

Main Theme	Subcategory	Identifier
Overall attitudes towards graded readers	Positive	P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Negative	P1, P2, P4

Participants' accounts showed that students found graded readers as useful tools for language learning, and they stated they would continue reading graded readers in their further studies even when it is not a course requirement. For example, P11 states that:

When you start learning a new language, these books are very effective because they enable you to start from the beginner level and improve your proficiency every time you read another level. As lower-level students cannot understand original novels, these graded readers make it easier for you. I will continue reading these books even after I graduate from the English preparatory program.

The participants mentioned that the graded reader course activity helped them improve their vocabulary, speaking, grammar, writing and reading (see table 4). Most participants echoed the view that graded reader tasks mainly contributed to their speaking skills in the target language. They found the presentation tasks based on the graded readers a highly effective way to improve their speaking skills. Some participants also explained that they were able to transfer the structures and vocabulary they had learnt from the readers to their speaking (P1, P3, P4). It was apparent in the interviews that students did not perform presentations in other courses; therefore, they regarded graded reader tasks as an opportunity to learn and improve presentation skills and public speaking.

Table 3: Language Development

Main Theme	Subcategory	Identifier
Language development	Vocabulary	P1, P3, P4, P6, P8
	Speaking	P1, P10, P11, P3, P8
	Grammar	P11, P5
	Writing	P3, P8
	Reading	P9

RSQ2. What reading strategies do participant students use to understand graded readers?

It became evident from the analysis of interview data that students used various reading strategies as they read graded readers, although they were not instructed how to use these strategies for extensive reading activities (see table 4). Thematic analysis of interview data generated three reading strategies and subcategories: meta-cognitive reading strategies, critical reading strategies and socio-affective reading strategies.

Table 4: Reading Strategies

Main Themes	Subcategories			Identifier
Meta-cognitive reading strategies	Planning	Pre-Reading Activities	Doing Research	P1, P9, P6
			Scanning the Book	P3, P8
			Studying Vocabulary	P4
			Studying Grammar	P8
		Book Selection	Exchange with a Friend	P1
			Advised by Teacher	P3, P5, P10
			According to Level	P4, P11
			Personal Interests	P2, P6, P8, P9
	Monitoring	Focus of Reading	Sentence Structure	P1, P3, P6
			Vocabulary	P2
		Note-taking		P1, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11
		Re-reading		P1, P2, P3, P5, P8
		Translation		P5, P6, P8, P10, P11
		Underlining		P4
		Use of context clues		P1, P2, P6, P7, P9, P11
		Using pictures		P10
	Evaluating	Answering questions		P2
		Presentation		P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
		Reaction paper		P3
		Summary		P1, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
		Video making		P1, P2, P3
Critical reading strategies	Making inferences			P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Constructing new knowledge			P1, P5, P6, P7, P10
	Truth-seeking			P5, P7, P9, P11
	Open-mindedness			P6, P9, P11
Socio-affective reading strategies	Teacher assistance			P1, P3, P8
	Cooperating with peers			P1, P3, P4, P8, P10
	Developing cultural understanding			P1, P3, P4, P5, P10
	Empathy with book characters			P1, P3

Interview data suggested that most of the participant students used pre-reading strategies like researching, scanning the book, studying vocabulary and studying grammar despite not being instructed by the teachers. Findings from the study imply that participants developed individual coping reading strategies to deal with the difficulty of reading in the target language.

Participants' accounts revealed that the book selection was based on the availability and level of books, teachers' suggestions, and personal interests. As shown in table 4, most students' decisions about book selection were determined by external factors, and four students selected the books according to their interests.

When students were asked what type of activities they were doing as they read the graded readers, it was apparent that the most preferred monitoring strategies were note-taking, re-reading, translation and

the use of context clues to predict the meaning of unknown vocabulary. Less frequent monitoring strategies were underlining and the use of pictures to improve comprehension. They said that they avoided underlining the books since they borrowed them from the school library.

Answers to interview questions related to post-reading activities revealed that students only fulfilled the course requirements such as summarising the story, writing reaction papers, video making and answering questions. No participants did individual or post-reading activities following the graded reader task.

Whether students made inferences, judgments, or drew conclusions from the text was investigated with pre-determined interview questions and probing questions during the interviews. For example, they were asked whether they felt sceptical about the things being told in the stories, realized hidden or political messages, and whether stories had changed their worldviews. Answers to these questions suggested that they used critical reading strategies while reading graded readers. While their primary focus was linguistic structures and language learning, it was clear that they were also interested in the contents. Most participants mentioned making inferences and learning new things from the books. More careful analysis of interview data indicated that learners interacted with these texts by making judgements about the things they learned in the stories, questioning the author's ideas and the characters, and were not indifferent to political and cultural messages in the stories.

Although extensive reading does not directly require social interaction, participants stated that they had actively communicated with their peers and the teachers during the graded reader task. Students exchanged the books with classmates, collaborated, discussed the stories with peers and asked for help from teachers. It can be inferred from interview data that these socio-affective strategies helped them overcome the difficulty of reading a graded reader.

Students' comments and responses about the stories pointed out that graded readers contributed to developing the cultural understanding of learners. It seems that some learners acquired cultural and general knowledge about the target culture though they did not give conscious attention to these issues.

Responses to interview questions concerning reading strategies illustrated that they used reading strategies while reading graded readers. However, the effectiveness and quality of using these strategies were questionable since their use of reading strategies seemed incidental. An in-depth analysis of the interview data clarified that learners' awareness of reading strategies was weak, and they were not knowledgeable enough about literary devices such as irony, metaphor, and references.

RSQ3. What are the challenges that participant students experience while reading graded readers?

Responses to questions related to challenges the participants faced during the graded reader task included simplicity of the story content, unknown vocabulary and grammar (see table 5). Some asserted that graded readers lacked the joy and quality of the original stories' content. Others stated that they had

difficulty understanding unknown grammar structures and vocabulary. They also noted that using a dictionary and checking grammar prevented students from taking pleasure in reading.

Table 5: Challenges in Graded Reader Tasks

Main Theme	Subcategory	Identifier
Challenges	The simplicity of the story content	P1, P2, P6
	Vocabulary	P2, P7, P8, P9, P10
	Grammar	P2, P5, P8, P11

Participants were asked to offer some suggestions to make graded reader tasks more effective and interesting (see table 6). Some students stated that they did not have the reading habit even in their mother tongue; therefore, reading in a foreign language became even more difficult for them since they had to cope with linguistic issues and comprehension at the same time. They also stated that they needed to read more challenging texts, which were one level ahead of their current level. Other suggestions were increasing the percentage of the graded readers in the course assessment, more group work and increasing the number of reader tasks completed in a semester.

Table 6: Learners' Suggestions for Graded Readers

Main Theme	Subcategory	Identifier
Suggestions	Student-led book selection	P1
	Developing a reading habit	P1, P6, P3
	Reading more challenging levels	P1, P3, P9, P11
	Increasing the assessment percentage	P3
	More group work	P4
	Increasing the number of readers	P7

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand EFL students' attitudes towards the use of graded readers. Findings from the study accord with the previous research (Crossley et al., 2007; Johnson, 1981; Shook, 1996, 1997; Young, 1999) that indicated the utility of graded readers in promoting the learning of foreign language skills. Findings suggest that participants have positive attitudes towards the use of graded readers. They perceived graded readers as an effective way to practice and improve foreign language skills. Findings also indicated that apart from facilitating reading skills, graded readers helped participant students improve other language skills, including speaking. Their positive attitudes towards the experience of graded reader tasks seemed to impact their future learning goals. Some participants said they would continue reading the graded readers even after graduating from the EPP.

Although interview data indicated learners' positive attitudes towards graded readers, some participants' responses about graded readers were not entirely distant from criticism. Some learners said they would prefer watching films and TV series to graded readers because they found these stories boring as they lost their originality when simplified. Another finding worth mentioning was that participants struggled with vocabulary and grammar while reading these texts. It could be partly because they were not taught reading strategies for extensive reading.

To use graded readers more effectively, teachers must follow learners' development carefully and teach learners how to use graded readers systematically through the levels (Nation, 2009). In this case study, participants were partly able to transfer what they had learnt in intensive reading courses to the reading of graded readers. However, more systematic guidance for learners, including book selection, the pacing of reading and ways of dealing with difficult grammar and vocabulary, is needed to increase the effectiveness of the use of graded readers to enhance learners' L2 development. Students' responses indicated that they did not get assistance and guidance from the teachers. The graded reading course activity interrogated in this study was an independent self-learning activity in which learners were assisted only when they requested help. Therefore, some learners selected graded readers that were not suitable for their level. They found it either too easy or too difficult to read. While they believed they benefited from graded readers in many ways, they were not totally pleased with the outcome of the activity and their achievement.

Findings from the study suggest that graded readers can also be used in the language classroom to improve students' 21st-century learning skills: collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills. It can be inferred from the findings that students benefited from graded readers not only as a tool to enhance their reading and foreign language proficiency but also to improve higher-order thinking skills. It was apparent throughout interviews that learners used these skills during graded reader tasks, although they were not asked or instructed to use them. They also used metacognitive, critical and socio-affective reading strategies. However, the quality of how they used these strategies is questionable because they used these skills and strategies unconsciously without knowing what they really were.

CONCLUSION

The 21st century offers teachers many opportunities and resources that can be used in the foreign language classroom. Developments in technology and communication have made access to language teaching and learning materials much faster and easier than in the past. Despite the availability of new materials and digital tools, EFL teachers and researchers should not overlook the utility of traditional methods, such as the use of literary texts. The findings of this study suggest that literature can still be a valuable tool to support EFL learners' linguistic development as well as provide them with opportunities to practice 21st-century skills. Future studies can explore how literature and graded readers can be integrated into technology, and current ELT approaches to improve learners' language abilities and other skills relevant to the 21st century.

LIMITATIONS

As this was a small-scale descriptive qualitative case study with a limited number of participants, findings from the study should be interpreted cautiously considering the scope of the study. The findings of this case study are context dependent and limited to the self-reports of 11 EFL students at a Turkish state university. Further research studies conducted in diverse research settings can contribute to the development of a better understanding of contextual factors influencing EFL learners' perceptions of

graded readers and the effectiveness of graded reader tasks in promoting the acquisition of foreign language skills.

REFERENCES

Akyel, A., & Yalçın, E. (1990). Literature in the EFL class: A study of goal-achievement incongruence. *ELT Journal*, *44*(3), 174-180. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/44.3.174

Anderson, N. J. (1991). Individual differences in strategy use in second language reading and testing. *Modern Language Journal, 75*, 460-472.

Ateek, M. (2021). Extensive reading in an EFL classroom: Impact and learners' perceptions. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 109–131. https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911195

Bernhardt, E. (2011). Understanding advanced second-language reading. Routledge.

Bosley, L. (2008). "I don't teach reading": Critical reading instruction in composition courses. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *47*(4), 285–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/19388070802332861

Brantmeier, C. I. N. D. Y. (2005). Effects of reader's knowledge, text type, and test type on L1 and L2 reading comprehension in Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, *89*(1), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0026-7902.2005.00264.x

Brumfit C. & Carter R. (1986). *Literature and language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Bogdan dan SK. Biklen. (1992). *Qualitative Research for Education, an Introduction to Theory and Methods.* Allyn and Bacon Inc.

Carrell, P., & Grabe, W. (2010). Reading. In N. Schmitt, *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics* (2nd ed., pp. 215-231). Hodder Education.

Carter, R. & M. N. Long. 1991. *Teaching Literature.* Longman.

Chang, A. C.-S., & Renandya, W. A. (2019). The effect of narrow reading on L2 learners' vocabulary acquisition. *RELC Journal*, *52*(3), 493–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688219871387

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrisson, K. (2008). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.

Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge University Press.

Crossley, S., Louwerse, M., McCarthy, P., & McNamara, D. (2007). A Linguistic Analysis of Simplified and Authentic Texts. *The Modern Language Journal*, *91*(1), 15-30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.15404781.2007.00507.x

Cross, D. R., & Paris, S. G. (1988). Developmental and instructional analyses of children's metacognition and reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(2), 131–142. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.80.2.131

Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates - Taylor & Francis Group.

Facione, P. A. (2011). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. *Insight assessment*, *2007*(1), 1-23.

Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist, 34*(10), 906–911. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906

Garner, R. (1987). *Metacognition and reading comprehension*. Ablex publishing.

Hall, G. (2005). *Literature in Language Education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

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

Heigham, J., & Croker, R. A. (2009). *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* Palgrave Macmillan.

Hirvela, A. (1996). Reader-response theory and ELT. *ELT Journal*, *50*(2), 127–134. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/50.2.127

Huang, H.-chou, Chern, C.-lan, & Lin, C.-cheng. (2009). EFL learners' use of online reading strategies and comprehension of texts: An exploratory study. *Computers & Education*, *52*(1), 13–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2008.06.003

Institute for Academic Excellence Inc. (1997). *Critical thinking and literature-based reading*. Madison: Advantage Learning Systems, Inc. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED421688.pdf

Johnson, P. (1981). Effects on reading comprehension of language complexity and cultural background of a text. *TESOL Quarterly*, *15*(2), 169. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586408

Kletzien, S. B. (1991). Strategy use by good and poor comprehenders reading expository text of differing levels. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *26*(1), 67. https://doi.org/10.2307/747732

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2013). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers.* Cambridge University.

Long, M. (1997). *Teaching literature*. Longman.

Marin, L. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2011). Pedagogy for developing critical thinking in adolescents: Explicit instruction produces greatest gains. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *6*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2010.08.002

Maley, A. and A. Duff. 1989. *The Inward Ear.* Cambridge University Press.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey Bass.

Nation, P., & Wang, K. (1999) Graded readers and vocabulary. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *12*, 355-380. (http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/).

Nation, I. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. Routledge.

Oxford, R. 1990. *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Hinle & Hinle.

Parkinson, B. & Reid Thomas, H. (2000). *Teaching literature in a second language.* Edinburg University Press

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Razı, S. (2014). Metacognitive reading strategy training of advanced level EFL learners in Turkey. *Reading*, *14*(2), 337-360.

Richards, K. (2011). Interviews. In Heigham, J. & Croker, R. A. (Eds), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics* (pp. 182-199). Palgrave Macmillan.

Riessman, C. K. (2007). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. SAGE.

Rubin, J. 1987. Learner strategy: Theoretical assumptions, research history, and typology. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin. (Eds). *Learner strategies and language learner*. 2nd Edition. Hinle & Hinle.

Sheorey, R., & Mokhtari, K. (2001). Differences in the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies among native and non-native readers. *System*, 29, 431–449.

Shook, D. J. (1996). Foreign language literature and the beginning learner-reader. *Foreign Language Annals*, *29*(2), 201–215. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb02327.x

Shook, D. J. (1997). Identifying and overcoming possible mismatches in the beginning reader-literary text interaction. *Hispania*, *80*(2), 234. https://doi.org/10.2307/345882

Young, D. N. (1999). Linguistic simplification of SL reading material: Effective instructional practice? *The Modern Language Journal*, *83*(3), 350–366. https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00027

Webb, S., Newton, J., & Chang, A. (2012). Incidental learning of collocation. *Language Learning*, *63*(1), 91–120. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00729.x

Widdowson, H.G. (1984). *Aspects of Language Teaching.* Oxford University Press

Vu, D. V., & Peters, E. (2020). Learning vocabulary from reading-only, reading-while-listening, and reading with textual input enhancement: Insights from Vietnamese EFL learners. *RELC Journal*, *53*(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220911485

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW FORM

Preliminary Information

Participant Id:
Age:
Gender:
Department:
Level:
Date and Hour:

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me your overall experience of the graded read task.

Possible probes:

a. What kind of things did you focus on while reading?

b. How did you cope with difficult vocabulary and grammar?

c. Did you try to understand what messages did the author try to give? Why?

d. Is there anything that you agree or disagree with?

e. Do you think there are any hidden messages?

f. Did you realize any political messages?

g. Did it change anything about your worldview?

h. Did you make judgements about the cultural information provided in the stories you read?

i. Did you learn anything about the target culture?

j. While graded readers are fiction, they may also include some facts. Did you do any further research on facts?

2. What do you do before you start reading graded readers?

3. What do you do while you are reading?

4. What did you do after reading?

5. Do you think graded readers helped you to improve your English?

a. If yes, how?

b. If no, why?

6. Did you experience any difficulties while reading graded readers?

a. If yes, what were the difficulties that you experienced as you studied graded readers?

7. How can graded readers be used more effectively in language learning?

8. Will you read graded readers to improve your English after preparatory class?