

TO THE MEMORY OF MY GRANDPARENTS

EXTENSIVE READING: AN ANALYSIS OF
STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

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ABSTRACT

EXTENSIVE READING: AN ANALYSIS OF
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The study investigated the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project implemented at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) by examining the students' and the teachers' perceptions of its strengths and weaknesses, and by examining the extent to which the teachers and the students think that the ERP achieves its goals and objectives.

Two types of data collection instruments were employed in this study. First, the teachers and the students were given questionnaires. Second, interviews with five randomly chosen teachers and students were carried out.

Analysis of data revealed that most of the teachers consider the exposure to the different text types as a strength of the ERP, whereas most of the students think that improving reading comprehension and vocabulary are the most important strengths of the project. The weaknesses of the ERP, such as the cheating factor, or

students' not taking the project seriously, seem to be associated with the fact that ERP is assessed. In addition, the students are generally satisfied with the ERP in terms of meeting its goals, which are improving reading comprehension and vocabulary, improving attitudes toward reading in English, and using the reading strategies taught in the class, whereas the teachers think that only the first three goals are achieved. The data also pointed to weaknesses such as the effect of assessment on the implementation of the ERP. The data gained from the interviews indicated that the assessment of ER may have a negative impact on achieving all of the goals of the ERP.

The results of this study suggest that the ERP, in its inclusion of assessment, as well as in its departure from the ideal implementation as described in the literature, may be failing to meet the goals of the project, in particular, improving attitudes toward reading; however, the project seems to be successful in developing reading comprehension and vocabulary, according to the students' and the teachers' perceptions.

Key Words: Extensive reading, goals and objectives, assessment

ÖZET

DERS DIŐI OKUMA: ÖĐRENCİLERİN VE ÖĐRETMENLERİN BAŐARILI VE BAŐARISIZ OLDUĐU NOKTALAR İLE AMAÇ EDİNME ALGILARI BAKIMINDAN BİR İNCELEME

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Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi

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Bu çalışma, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda yürütölen Ders Dışı Okuma Projesi (DDOP)' nin başarılı olduđu ve eksik olduđu noktalar bakımından öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin algılarını araőtırmıőtır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin DDOP' nin amaçlarını ne kadar geliőtirdiđi bakımından algılarını incelemiőtir.

Bu çalışmada iki veri toplama aracı kullanılmıőtır. İlk önce öğretmenlere ve öğrencilere anketler verilmiőtir. İkinci olarak da rastgele seçilen beő öğrenci ve beő öğretmenle mülakat yapılmıőtır.

Yapılan veri analizi, öğrencilerin, DDOP' nin en önemli başarılı olduđu noktaları okuma becerilerini ve kelime hazinesini geliőtirmesi olduđunu düşündüklerini gösterirken, öğretmenlerin çođunun, DDOP' nin, öğrencileri farklı

metin türleriyle buluşturması özelliğini en başarılı olduğu nokta olarak düşündüklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. DDOP'nin kopya faktörü ve projenin ciddiye alınmaması gibi başarısız olduğu noktalar, projenin değerlendirme özelliğiyle bağlantılı olarak görünmektedir. Buna ek olarak, öğrenciler, projenin, okuma becerilerini ve kelime hazinesini geliştirmek, İngilizce okumaya karşı tutum geliştirmek ve derste öğretilen okuma stratejilerini kullanmak olan amaçlarını gerçekleştirmesi bakımından DDOP'yi başarılı bulmaktadırlar; öğretmenler ise bu amaçların ilk üçünün gerçekleştirildiğini düşünmektedirler. Veriler, ayrıca, DDOP'nin yürütülmesinde, değerlendirme özelliğinin etkisi gibi projenin başarısız olduğu noktalara da dikkat çekmektedir. Mülakatlardan elde edilen veriler, DDOP'nin değerlendirme özelliğinin, bütün amaçlarını gerçekleştirmesinde olumsuz bir etkisi olabileceğini göstermiştir.

Bu çalışmadan çıkan sonuçlar, DDOP'nin, değerlendirme özelliği ve literatürde açıklanan uygulamadan uzak olması nedeniyle, amaçlarını, özellikle okumaya karşı tutum geliştirmeyi, gerçekleştiremediğini savunmaktadır. Fakat, veriler, projenin, öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin algılarına göre okuma becerilerini ve kelime hazinesini gerçekleştirmede başarılı olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ders dışı okuma, amaçlar, değerlendirme

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	 1
Introduction	1
Key Terminology	2
Background of the Study	2
Statement of the Problem	6
Research Questions	8
Significance of the Study	8
Conclusion.....	9
 CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	 10
Introduction	10
Describing the Reading Process	10
Models of the Reading Process.....	11
Reading Fluency	13
Goals and Characteristics of ER	15
Benefits of ER	18
Benefits of ER for Reading Comprehension and Reading Speed	19

Benefits of ER for Vocabulary Development.....	21
Benefits of ER for Writing Skills.....	22
Benefits of ER in Attitudes toward Reading	23
Evaluation of ER Projects	24
Conclusion.....	29
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	31
Introduction	31
Setting	31
Participants	33
Instruments	34
Questionnaires	34
Students' Attitudes toward Reading in English	34
Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP.....	35
Interviews	36
Data Collection Procedures	37
Data Analysis.....	39
Conclusion.....	40
CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS	41
Overview of the Study	41
Data Analysis Procedures.....	41
Results.....	43
The Teachers' Perceptions of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project.....	43

General Ideas about the ERP	44
The Teachers' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP	48
The Teachers' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP	52
The Students' Perceptions of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project.....	57
General Ideas about the ERP	57
The Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP	60
Students' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP	64
Perceptions of Teachers and Students of Achievement of Goals of ERP	67
Students' Perceptions of Improved Attitudes toward Reading and Reading Comprehension Ability	69
Students' Attitudes toward Reading in English Questionnaire	69
Students' Perceptions of Reading Ability and Improvement	75
Conclusion.....	77
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	78
Introduction	78
Overview of the Study	78
General Results.....	79
Discussion of the Results	84
The Teachers' and the Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP.....	84
The Teachers' and the Students' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP ..	87
Perceptions about the Achievement of the Goals of the ERP	88
Students' Perceptions of Improved Attitudes toward Reading and Reading Comprehension Ability	90

The Implementation of the ERP	91
Limitations.....	93
Pedagogical Implications	93
Suggestions for Further Research	98
Conclusion.....	99
REFERENCES	101
APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS FOR TEXT TYPES.....	105
APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION).....	107
APPENDIX C: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE (TURKISH VERSION)	110
APPENDIX D: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSIVE READING PROJECT (ENGLISH VERSION)	113
APPENDIX E: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSIVE READING PROJECT (TURKISH VERSION)	118
APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ERP QUESTIONNAIRE	122
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS	127
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS.....	128
APPENDIX I: SAMPLE INTERVIEW (STUDENT)	129
APPENDIX J: SAMPLE INTERVIEW (TEACHER).....	131

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - The teachers participating in the study	33
Table 2 - The students participating in the study	34
Table 3 - Descriptive statistics of the teachers' perceptions of the ERP	45
Table 4 - Teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP	48
Table 5 - Teachers' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP	52
Table 6 - Descriptive statistics of the students' perceptions of the ERP	58
Table 7 - Students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP.....	60
Table 8 - The students' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP	64
Table 9 - Questionnaire items related to the goals of the ERP	68
Table 10 - Comparison of the means of 30 questions with the mean of question 31.	70
Table 11 - Overall mean for each student, attitudes toward reading	71
Table 12 - Paired samples t-test - mean scores of students' attitudes	72
Table 13 - Paired samples t-test results, attitude questions.....	73
Table 14 - Descriptive statistics, students' attitudes toward reading in English.....	74
Table 15 - Students' perceptions of reading comprehension ability	75
Table 16 - Students' perceptions, effect of ERP on reading comprehension ability ..	76

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Reading is the cognitive ability to draw meaning from the text and interpret this information appropriately with different strategies for different purposes (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). A reader uses a combination of different strategies in various types of reading, with a different purpose in mind. For the specific purpose of reading, the reader can make use of these skills and strategies in different ways to facilitate overall reading comprehension.

Not only is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately, i.e., reading for comprehension, challenging, but also reading fluency is difficult to achieve (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Thus, the development of reading fluency needs to be supported in as many alternative ways as possible.

Extensive Reading (ER) is one of the possible ways of enhancing reading fluency, and contributing to reading comprehension. In ER programs, learners read, for pleasure, large quantities of reading materials within their actual levels of competence. They are free to choose the material they want to read, thus supporting learner autonomy. They usually read outside the class and are not evaluated for what they have read. The teacher may prepare some follow-up exercises (Day & Bamford, 2002) if s/he finds it necessary, but the aim is overall understanding, not detailed reading.

Because numerous benefits of ER programs have been discovered, the implementation of ER is worldwide. However, investigating implementations in terms of how well the goals and objectives of ER are being met will lead the implementation of the ER program to greater success. This study investigates the

implementation of an institution-wide ER program in an EFL setting. This research will find out how well the implementation of ER is achieving the goals and objectives which were set in the 2003-2004 fall term at Anadolu University, when ER was instituted as a part of assessment of the reading skill in the curriculum in Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL). The current ER project (ERP) at AUSFL will be evaluated to demonstrate the effectiveness of ER in terms of meeting its goals and objectives.

Key Terminology

The following key terms are used throughout this study:

Extensive Reading: The reading of large amounts of material in the second language (L2) over time for personal pleasure or interest, and without productive tasks or follow-up activities (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989).

Goals and Objectives: Statements about what the learners are expected to learn and be able to do at the end of the course (Davies & Pearse, 2000).

Background of the Study

In order to understand the meaning in a text and draw conclusions out of the text appropriately, a reader must choose the skills and strategies that she/he has been taught while reading a text. When reading a text takes place in the class, in other words in Intensive Reading (IR), the aim is detailed understanding and skills practice, which is important for learning vocabulary and understanding the text organization (Waring, 1997), whereas in ER, students read the text they want at their own pace and level for general understanding, and outside the class (Powell, 2005). Thus, as ER is practiced more naturally, i.e. more like the reading that native speakers do, its effects are both cognitive and affective. As Asraf and Ahmad (2003)

state, ER both leads to improvement in reading, writing and language use, and creates a positive attitude toward reading, which would help to develop students' language learning in the long term.

Long-term learning is the ultimate aim of educators. Teachers desire to have learners who perceive learning as pleasure. However, learners who have never experienced the benefits of ER read to understand the details in the text and most of them do not know what reading for pleasure means. Research conducted so far supports the idea that encouraging students to read extensively is one of the most efficient ways of helping students develop their language proficiency (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). ER has proven to be beneficial in terms of developing vocabulary and reading skills, which are the primary goals of a reading course.

An ER program can be implemented as a separate program, as a part of an existing reading course, or as an extracurricular activity (Day & Bamford, 1998). The benefits of ER have been widely investigated in implementations conducted as separate programs (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Leung, 2002; Lituanas, Jacobs & Renandya, 1999; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Yamashita, 2004). These studies and others have shown different language gains from ER. For example, Hafiz and Tudor (1990) describe linguistic gains in both fluency and accuracy of expression, though not in range of structures used; Robb and Susser (1989) report writing ability improvement in writing summaries of the books read. As for vocabulary gains, several studies have been conducted, among which are Pigada and Schmitt (2006), which demonstrates the improvement in knowledge of spelling, meaning and grammatical properties, and Lai (1993), which points out vocabulary gains in reading proficiency, and increased reading speed. Bell (2001) also states that reading speed

and comprehension are enhanced as a result of ER. In addition to its effects on language development, ER's positive effect on motivation is commonly reported in some papers (Asraf & Ahmad, 2005; Greenberg, Rodrigo, Berry, Brinck & Joseph, 2006; Leung, 2002; Mason & Krashen, 1997).

Although there are many benefits of ER programs, as stated above, the implementation of ER is an issue which requires careful attention, for some obstacles may appear even before the implementation. Jacobs and Gallo (2002) describe many problems encountered in implementing ER. Especially in lower income countries, due to the need for different types of books from which the students will choose according to their interests, ER implementation is less than a complete success (Jacobs & Gallo, 2002). Another obstacle might be stated as the teachers' perceptions of ER. Traditionally, teachers should lead the class and what is going on in the class. As the students will mostly read outside the class, some teachers may see ER as out of their control, and do not feel they are doing their job. This attitude sometimes can be related to the administration's attitude. If the administration does not have a positive attitude toward the benefits of ER, there may not be an effort to include ER in the curriculum. However, Leung (2002) points out that if the learners are provided the chance to read extensively, they have the passion to read, and become eager to learn the necessary reading skills and vocabulary required to understand the text, which will help them gain more control over and confidence in their own learning. For all of these reasons, incorporating ER into the reading curriculum is worth trying.

After incorporating an ER program into the curriculum, the implementation must be evaluated, as sometimes problems with the implementation may occur.

According to Kiely (2003), evaluating a program refers to evaluating the people, processes and things involved in the process; that constitutes a process of mutual enlightenment, adaptation and betterment. The purpose of a language program evaluation is to enable the program to suit its purposes better (Kiely, 1998, cited in Kiely, 2003). Thus, once the ER program is implemented, the results of the implementation in terms of how well it meets its goals and objectives should be investigated in order to determine the success of the program. The evaluation of the ER program may lead to changes in the current implementation and a search for ways of enhancing its effectiveness. In addition, Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that seeing what other results the current program might have had, besides the intended ones, may cause change in the implementation.

Moreover, when a program implementation includes features which are not typically included, such as assessment, it is even more important to evaluate the program, to determine whether the deviation from standard practice is affecting the ER program's ability to achieve its goals. The idea that has been accepted so far in the nature of ER is that "reading is its own reward" (Day & Bamford, 2002, p. 138). It depends on the course teacher to assess what the students comprehended from what they read. It can be a follow-up activity, but not a test, as the students read for pleasure. Thus, evaluating a program which includes a feature that the ideal implementation does not have may lead to gaining new insights about the program.

In the evaluation of the program, each component of the program must be taken into consideration as they may provide different insights in determining the effectiveness of the program. For example, if the teachers do not believe the view that ER is beneficial in promoting English language development for their students,

they will not exert their efforts to make an ER program effective, which will affect the effectiveness of the ER program. When evaluating an ER program, it is crucial to involve the perceptions of both the teachers and students, who will play an important role in determining its effectiveness.

Research in the studies stated above support the need for more research on the evaluation of an ongoing ER program in terms of how well it is meeting its goals. Although there are numerous studies undertaken to show the benefits of ER in classrooms or as separate programs, there is no research which shows the evaluation of an institution-wide program in terms of how well it is achieving its goals and objectives.

Statement of the Problem

There are many studies promoting the benefits of an ER program (Asraf & Ahmad, 2005; Bell, 2001; Greenberg et al., 2006; Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Leung, 2002; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Robb & Susser, 1989). In all of these studies, taking the findings of these studies into consideration, ER was found to be as effective as any other outside- or inside-class activity in terms of developing reading skills. As the benefits of ER have been realized, it has been integrated into the curricula in many schools. However, ER has not been evaluated for its effectiveness in achieving the goals and objectives that have been set for its implementation, particularly in an institution-wide ER program.

At Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in Turkey, ER is implemented as a part of reading assessment. There are two midterms in each term, the components of which are 15% quizzes, 60% midterms and 25% ER. ER is applied to different types of reading; that is, the students have to read three different

types of texts such as biography, short story, and department related article. The types of the texts that the students are supposed to read are assigned by the teacher for each midterm. The students select the texts themselves. They may go to the school's library, or use the Internet to find the text type. The students are evaluated for their understanding of the readings they do in the reports they write in the class by answering five questions appropriate for the text type they have read, prepared by the teachers beforehand. However, although the goals and objectives of ER, set in the 2003-2004 fall term at the university, which started to go through a curriculum renewal project at the same time, aimed to help learners improve their reading skills, apply the reading strategies they learned in the classes, and make reading a pleasure for students, teachers have some complaints about the implementation of ER. They do not think the reports assess the comprehension of the texts, and they do not want their students to read texts which are at a lower level than their actual levels; they are also concerned that the students will try to understand each word in the texts. Similarly, from oral and informal feedback received from the students, the students seem to view the ERP just as an assignment and do not see it as useful for improving their reading skill and attitudes toward reading in English. The feedback from both teachers and students points out that there is a problem with the implementation of the ER project at AUSFL. Thus, this study aims to cast light on whether the ER project has achieved the goals and objectives which were set in the 2003-2004 fall term. In the process, the study aims to find out what the instructors and students think about the implementation of ER.

Research Questions

1. How effective is the Extensive Reading Project (ERP) implemented at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL)?
 - a. What are the perceptions of the instructors and the students about the strengths and the weaknesses in the implementation of the ERP?
 - b. To what extent does the ERP achieve its goals and objectives?
 - i. To what extent do the instructors and the students think that the implementation of ER meets its goals and objectives?
 - ii. Does the ER project result in improved attitudes toward reading and perceptions of improved reading comprehension ability?

Significance of the Study

This study addresses the lack of research into the evaluation of an ER program, particularly evaluation of an institution-wide ER program, in terms of how well it is meeting its goals and objectives. The results of this study may also provide information about whether the particular implementation of ER in this setting matches the nature of ER. This, in turn, may help people who are interested in ER gain a new insight of ER in the EFL setting.

At the local level this study will be the first on ER at Anadolu University. Thus, this evaluation of ER at Anadolu University will give valuable feedback for understanding the effectiveness of the way that ER is implemented in this particular setting. This information is valuable for the institution, which has been undergoing a curriculum renewal project for four years now, because the results may lead to making new decisions about how the reading skill is taught. If the ER project achieves its goals and objectives in the institution, it will remain an integral part of

the school's curriculum. Evaluation of the implementation of the ER project is also valuable for teachers and students because they will have the opportunity to contribute to reading skill decisions by expressing their opinions about the current ER project.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief summary of the issues related to reading and ER was given. The statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, and key terms of the study were covered. The second chapter of the study is a review of the literature on reading, models of reading, teaching reading, ER, studies conducted on ER, integrating ER into foreign language programs, and evaluation of ER programs including teachers' and students' perceptions. In the third chapter, information about the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis are presented. In the fourth chapter, the data analysis procedures and the results are presented. In the fifth chapter, an overview of the study, the discussion of findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research are presented.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study explores the effectiveness of the ER project at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in terms of meeting its goals and objectives, which were set in the 2003-2004 fall term. This study also investigates the perceptions of teachers and students of the strengths and the weaknesses of the implementation of the ER project.

In this study, the goals and characteristics of ER will be the significant reference points to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of the ER project. As a basis for the study, the reading process, models of reading and reading fluency will be described first to provide background information for describing ER. Within ER, the goals and characteristics of ER will be explained. The benefits of ER for comprehension and reading speed, vocabulary, writing and attitude toward reading will also be explored to provide a basis for describing the aspects which are of great importance in evaluating the ER project. Finally, evaluation of programs in general and the ER project in particular will be discussed.

Describing the Reading Process

There are many definitions intended to describe “reading” and what reading involves. Reading is an interactive, sociocognitive process (Bernhardt, 1991), which involves a text, a reader, and a social context in which reading takes place. The reader, reading the text, builds a bridge between himself/herself and the text. This bridge is constructed on a transaction (Hudelson, 1994), which involves the reader’s reading and interpreting the text, and this interpretation is affected by the reader’s past experiences, language background and cultural framework, as well as the

reader's purpose for reading. However, when the learner reads a text, the ultimate aim of the learner is to comprehend what he/she reads. Thus,

reading is a process of matching information in a text to internally activated information. Reading is not information processing but rather information interpreting - what is understood from a text depends in part on what is known previously, as well as on how the text is allowed to extend and refine what is already known about the topic. (Grabe, 1986, p. 28)

The activity of reading is anywhere in life, that is, on the bus reading the signs of shops, reading messages on mobile phones, reading the subtitles while watching a film, reading the price of a shirt while shopping, and so on. Cognitive psychologists have been investigating how a reader can create meaning out of what she/he reads (Day & Bamford, 1998). They have created some models, by the help of which the explanation for how the reader makes meaning out of what she/he reads is demonstrated.

Models of the Reading Process

Interactive models try to explain the process of reading. They assume that skills at all levels help the learners process and interpret the text (Grabe, 1998). Thus, even a beginner level learner can interpret what the text means. Intentionally or unintentionally, she/he is able to use top-down or bottom-up strategies, which are some of the ways that the learner interacts with the text. Baker and Boonkit (2004) also indicate that reading is an interactive, top-down and bottom-up process. Depending on the purpose of reading, the reader forms the meaning of the text through the interaction of a variety of her/his mental processes to work at different levels. She/he can use the bottom-up processes to identify the meaning and grammatical category of the word, the sentence syntax, and the text details. Goodman (1967) states that reading is a distinct process including exact, detailed,

sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and larger language units. This is a definition which describes how readers move from the word basis to comprehension while reading a text. Readers can also use top-down processes to draw meaning out of the text based on their existing linguistic and schematic knowledge as well as the input provided by the text. Goodman (1967) also describes the top-down model in the following way:

Reading is a selective process. It involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader's expectation. As this partial information is processed, tentative decisions are made, to be confirmed, rejected or refined as reading processes. More simply stated, reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. (p. 108)

Adams (1990, 1994), Perfetti (1985), Samuels (1994), and Stanovich (1992)

describe the reading process as follows (all cited in Day & Bamford, 1998):

1. The accurate, swift, and automatic visual recognition of vocabulary independent of the context in which it occurs is the first step in the reading process.

They suggest that an inefficient system, resulting in a slow rate of word recognition, could hinder the individual's ability to hold large units of text in working memory, which, in turn, would affect comprehension and recall. Thus, if the reader is not successful in recognizing the words in the reading text, the reading process will be slow, which will result in less comprehension.

2. Automatic recognition of a word results in lexical access. Lexical access means the automatic calling up from memory of the word's meanings and its phonological representation.

Costa, Colomé and Caramazza (2000) point out that one of the most widely accepted principles of lexical access assumes that in the process of picture

recognition several semantic representations are activated. When the process is reading, the orthographic representations of the words with some semantic and syntactic interpretations are activated (Harris & Spay, 1990, pp. 436-437).

3. The phonological representations of the words in a sentence enhance holding the words in the memory long enough for comprehension to occur.

If the reader is able to retrieve words from their phonological representations, she/he will succeed in keeping them in her/his mind until comprehension occurs. If the reader cannot hold the clause or sentence in working memory long enough to construct the meaning out of what she/he reads, comprehension will be seriously damaged (Day & Bamford, 1998).

4. Comprehension draws on the reader's prior knowledge of the language, of the world, of text types, and of the topic.

The meaning of the text is built by the reader depending on how much information she/he has about what she/he reads. In the reading process, the background knowledge of the reader, the text type and the topic interact with each other.

Reading Fluency

The cognitive processes stated above are crucial in order to develop fluent reading. Reading fluency refers to accurate and rapid reading of connected text (Chafouleas et al., 2004). Fluent readers are believed to engage in nearly automatic processing of connected text, thereby devoting more attention to comprehension (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).

Fluent readers are, therefore, better than less skilled readers in terms of seeing a word in a single eye fixation. The placement and overlap of the eye fixations are

more efficient than those of less skilled readers (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). Fluent readers will also be faster in comprehending the text than non-fluent readers. Because fluency requires the rapid use of punctuation and the determination of where to place emphasis or where to pause to make sense of a text, fluent readers carry out these aspects of interpretation rapidly—and usually without conscious attention. Thus, fluency enables reading comprehension by freeing cognitive resources for interpretation, but it is also implicated in the process of comprehension as it necessarily includes preliminary interpretive steps of automatic word recognition and knowledge of sentence structures (NICHD, 2000).

In teaching reading skills, one of the goals which must be included in the curriculum is developing students' reading fluency, which will help the students become fluent readers. To enable students to read without help unfamiliar authentic texts, at appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding (Nuttall, 1982, p. 21) is the aim of a reading program. The teacher promotes the ability in the student to read unfamiliar texts on his/her own when the teacher is not around, not only in the class but also in real life. While reading, the reader should decide on his/her purpose in order to decide how much she/he needs to understand in the text and his/her speed to be effective in reading silently, which is the natural way of reading. Deciding on the type of reading will determine if the reader is reading for accuracy, which is the aim of Intensive Reading (IR), or reading for fluency, which is the aim of Extensive Reading (ER) (Brumfit, 1977). Palmer (1968, cited in Day & Bamford, 1997) selected the term ER to distinguish it from IR. According to him, IR is often used to define the careful reading of shorter, more difficult foreign language texts

with the goal of complete and detailed understanding. IR is also associated with the teaching of reading in terms of its component skills. Texts are studied in a detailed way in order to teach and practice reading skills such as distinguishing the main idea of a text from the detail, finding pronoun referents, or guessing the meaning of unknown words. ER is often associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting general understanding of the material. Readers are more interested in the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words or sentences.

Although IR and ER are complementary, they represent different classroom procedures and purposes. Intensive Reading (IR) is approaching the text under the guidance of the teacher, and with a task which forces the learner to read carefully. The aim of IR is to arrive at a detailed understanding of the text; not only of its meaning, but also of how the meaning is produced in the text. A lesson which focuses on IR aims to train students in reading strategies particularly (Nuttall, 1982). However, in ER, readers only focus on gaining a general understanding of the text, which leads them to read for pleasure. The goals and characteristics of ER will be described in the next section.

Goals and Characteristics of ER

Day and Bamford (1998) list the following as the aims of an ideal ER project.

The students will:

- have a positive attitude toward reading in the second language,
- have confidence in reading,
- have motivation to read in the second language,
- read without constantly using a dictionary to find the meaning of unknown or difficult words,

- increase their word recognition ability,
- know for what purpose they are reading,
- read at an appropriate rate for their purpose in reading,
- know how to choose appropriate reading materials for their interests and language ability. (p. 45)

Simply encouraging students to read outside of the classroom is not enough to ensure that the goals of an ER project will be met. If the ER project has the following ideal characteristics posited by Day and Bamford (2002) to describe the nature of ER, it will most likely achieve the goals stated above, and will result in success.

1. The materials that the learners read are easy.

Simple reading materials are texts with a high percentage of known words appropriate to the reader's proficiency level. If the reading material is simple, understanding the text will be easy for the learner. Reading easy materials will contribute to the reader's comprehension. The reader will be able to guess meaning from context, which will facilitate reading comprehension. Therefore, graded readers are generally used as materials for extensive reading. Waring and Takaki (2002) suggest that the optimal rate of known vocabulary seems to be about 96% to 99% coverage of the words in the text, in order to support the learners to guess the unknown words which they encounter while reading.

2. The variety of the topics and types of the texts should attract different students in the program.

Different topics will help learners to have a desire to read (Hitosugi and Day, 2004), and different types of texts will encourage students to read for different

purposes, such as to learn to find specific information, to get the gist of the text, and so on.

3. Learners decide what they want to read.

As learners choose what they want to read, ER supports learner autonomy. Self-selection of the reading text is the essence of ER. If the readers need the teachers' guidance to choose the reading materials, the teacher provides the students with different materials, from which the students choose for themselves.

4. Learners read as much as possible.

Reading a book a week is the minimum amount of reading in order to achieve the benefits of ER. The more the learners read, the greater the benefits of ER will be achieved. Practice makes perfect.

5. The aim of reading is usually pleasure, information, and general understanding.

In ER, 100% comprehension is not the goal (Hitosugi & Day, 2004); on the contrary, the students read for just enjoyment and general understanding.

6. Reading is its own reward.

In an ER project, students are not assessed for what they read. However, there may be some exceptions, in that the teacher may prepare some follow-up activities (Hitosugi & Day, 2004):

- a. to discover what the students have understood from the text they read,
- b. to have an idea of what the students read,
- c. to monitor the attitudes of students toward reading,
- d. to relate reading with the curriculum.

7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.

As the reading material is easier to understand, the more the students read, the faster they become in reading. Reading L2 gradually becomes automatic, as it is in L1 reading. Bell (2001) points out that reading speed will improve naturally if learners are encouraged to read interesting simplified materials.

8. Reading is individual and silent.

The students realize that there is an interaction between the text they read and themselves. In addition, the students read independently, whether in the class, at home or any other place, as they read silently (Hitosugi & Day, 2004).

9. Teachers orient and guide their students.

As students may not be used to an ER process, at the beginning of the program, the goals and objectives and the benefits of the program should be announced to the students. If the learners are informed about the benefits of ER, they will be motivated intrinsically to read extensively.

10. Teacher is a role model of a reader.

If the teacher reads the same material that the students read, shares his/her ideas with the students, and discusses with them, they will enjoy the experience of reading together (Hitosugi & Day, 2004).

Benefits of ER

The benefits of ER projects have been studied widely, and it has been seen that, although the types of the students and the type of the implementation change, ER is beneficial in developing different skills. Research conducted so far with ER projects that have the previously listed characteristics shows that one of the ways to help students develop their language proficiency is to guide them to read extensively

(Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). Not only does it lead to improvement in reading and writing skills, but it also leads to a positive attitude toward reading.

Benefits of ER for Reading Comprehension and Reading Speed

One study, the results of which showed an improvement in reading skills, was carried out by Hafiz and Tudor (1989). The findings of their research support the idea that ER has a positive effect on gains in reading proficiency. Sixteen ESL students in the UK were given a three month extensive reading program involving graded readers. Hafiz and Tudor wanted to test the idea that input given in an ER project had some effects on L2 competence. The findings of the study indicated that the participants improved significantly in reading. Another study which reveals gains in reading proficiency was carried out by Robb and Susser (1989). In this case study, the participants were four intact groups of freshman English majors in Japan. The results of this study demonstrated that the experimental group which was exposed to ER improved their reading proficiency when compared with the other groups. There are also other studies which support the idea that ER results in improved reading comprehension. Bell (2001) conducted a study which measured reading comprehension in two groups of learners exposed to intensive and extensive reading programs. The extensive group students read graded readers whereas intensive group students read short texts followed by comprehension questions. The results showed that the participants exposed to extensive reading achieved significantly higher scores on reading comprehension tests. Lituanas, Jacobs and Renendya (2001) also carried out a study which reports the effectiveness of ER, with 60 remedial students in a Philippines secondary school. The majority, 90% of the students, were from lower income families, which was an obstacle for those students to find reading

materials. There were two groups of students, both of which received forty minutes of English instruction each day, in addition to an extra, remedial class. In the control group's remedial class, a traditional approach to reading instruction was used, emphasizing intensive reading and phonics, whereas the experimental group's remedial class included reading self-selected materials (ER), along with many post-reading activities. The results of the Informal Reading Inventory and the Gray Standardized Oral Reading Test indicated that the ER group achieved significantly higher scores than the control group. The findings showed that ER led to greater achievements in reading comprehension than traditional reading instruction.

Lai (1993) demonstrates the effects of a four-week summer reading program on learners' reading comprehension. Graded readers and short passages were used to supply comprehensible input to 226 subjects (grades 7–9) from Hong Kong secondary schools. Results show that there was improvement in reading for those subjects who had reached a certain level of proficiency. Depending on the teacher's emphasis on reading, the quantity of reading done had a significant relationship with reading comprehension gains in one course, and reading speed in another course, which is another benefit of ER. In the findings of Bell's previously mentioned study (2002), it was also revealed that the participants exposed to extensive reading were significantly faster in reading. As the learners were free to select material according to their interests, they were highly motivated to read more, and these learners not only achieved concrete improvements in their reading speeds, they were also more successful at a greater understanding of the material.

Benefits of ER for Vocabulary Development

The leading approach to developing L2 lexis through implicit ways is ER, which is an approach that not only has affective but also cognitive benefits. In addition, ER is highly motivating, especially for learners who have positive attitudes toward reading in their L1 (Yamashita, 2004). As Yamashita suggests, ER has crucial effects in improving vocabulary. Vocabulary gains in terms of improvement of knowledge of spelling, meaning and grammatical properties were observed in a case study carried out by Pigada and Schmitt (2006). The study aimed to investigate if lexical knowledge can be enhanced in an ER project. The spelling, meaning, and grammatical features of the target words were examined in the study. The participant was a learner of French. The results revealed that knowledge of more of the words intended to be learnt was enhanced, and spelling was enhanced the most. Perhaps that was because the language that the learner was trying to improve was French, which is difficult to spell. However, meaning and grammatical knowledge, while showing significant improvement, were not improved to the same extent. In the study by Hafiz and Tudor (1989), mentioned previously, the participants showed only a slight increase in vocabulary base. This result may be related to the nature of graded readers, which the students read generally for just general comprehension, not for learning new words.

Horst (2005) states that many extensive ER projects indicate general language gains, but few examine vocabulary growth, and none of the studies identify the words available for learning in an entire ER project. Moreover, those studies do not measure the extent to which participants learn them. In her study, she demonstrates vocabulary growth in an ER project using electronic scanning, lexical

frequency profiling, and individualized checklist testing. Twenty one ESL learners participated in the pilot study, in which they were free to choose books that they found interesting. The rates of vocabulary growth were higher than those found in earlier studies. The performance of the students on both measures in the pilot study indicated that participants gained new knowledge of more than half of the unfamiliar words that occurred in the ER materials they selected. These were the words which the participants did not know before the study, and at the end of the study it was revealed that the participants had learnt the words as they came across them in the materials they chose.

Hunt and Beglar (2005) suggest that although there is a need to undertake longitudinal studies to understand the process of implicit L2 vocabulary acquisition better, implicit learning, as occurs during ER, is one way of improving and consolidating vocabulary breadth, and is probably the primary means of elaborating and developing fluency with vocabulary.

Benefits of ER for Writing Skills

Writing is another skill which can be improved with the help of ER. A surprising result in the study of Robb and Susser (1989), mentioned previously, was that although the aim was to enhance reading skills, the most significant difference between the two groups occurred in writing. This may have resulted from the fact that the experimental group was expected to write summaries of the texts they read. Although ER is in essence intended to improve reading skills, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) demonstrated that their participants improved significantly in writing. In another study by Hafiz and Tudor (1990), they undertook a 90 hour extensive reading program using graded readers to investigate its effects on the language

development of 25 learners of English. The results reveal significant gains in both fluency and accuracy of expression, as was seen in Robb and Susser. Moreover, in Lai's study (1993), described previously, the findings supported the idea that ER improves writing skills as well.

Benefits of ER in Attitudes toward Reading

In addition to benefits for writing skills, vocabulary, spelling and reading comprehension, positive attitudes toward reading emerge as a benefit in many studies. Mason and Krashen (1997) report the idea that an ER project is not only beneficial in improving reading comprehension, writing and reading speed but also in improving attitudes toward reading. Similarly, in an investigation carried out by Leung (2002), the adult participants kept learner diaries in the ER project for the books they read. The diaries demonstrated that ER promotes a positive attitude toward reading. Another study in which positive attitudes toward reading were revealed was conducted by Greenberg, et al. (2006). Survey results indicated that the students enjoyed ER. By the end of the class, most students reported that they were more confident in reading. Furthermore, in the studies by Hafiz and Tudor (1989) and Robb and Susser (1989), a positive attitude toward reading was one of the profound results that occurred as a result of the ER implementations.

Taking all the benefits of ER into consideration, it can be concluded that incorporating ER into the curriculum is worth trying. As Green (2005) suggests, the benefits of integrating ER into the curriculum are crucial, as this integration will result in not only specific reading skills, but also critical thinking skills, cognitive development and promoting learning through interaction with a text, and with peers, as students share their reading materials, or with the teacher, when they read the

same reading material and share their ideas about it. In addition, Waring (2003) suggests that the ER project will be functional if it is an integral part of the curriculum. If the ER project that will be implemented at school does not match the goals and objectives of the school, it will not achieve its goals and objectives.

Evaluation of ER Projects

Evaluation is a process or cluster of processes that people perform in order to gather data that will enable them to decide whether to accept, change, or eliminate something-the curriculum in general or an educational textbook in particular. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 320)

Determining the relative value of whatever is being judged is of interest in evaluation. Information that can be used to make statements of worth regarding the focus of the evaluation is accumulated. The focus of the evaluation is on deciding whether the expected or the planned for has been achieved or is occurring in relation to what was intended. When it is applied to curriculum, evaluation focuses on identifying whether the curriculum as designed, developed, and implemented is producing or can produce the desired results. Evaluation aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum before implementation, and the effectiveness of its delivery after implementation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). After evaluating the implementation, the program is reorganized, or redeveloped if the need occurs, in order to meet the desired goals and objectives of the program.

Evaluations may have different purposes for investigating the implementation. Richards (2001) suggests three different purposes of program evaluation. Evaluation may be carried out as illuminative evaluation, which refers to evaluation that seeks to find out how different aspects of the program work or are being implemented. It looks to provide a deeper understanding of the processes of teaching and learning that occur in the program and does not aim to change the

program in any way as a result. Another type of evaluation is summative evaluation, which is concerned with deciding the effectiveness of the program, its efficiency, and its acceptability after it is implemented. The last purpose of evaluation mentioned by Richards is formative evaluation, in which what is going on well, and what is not and what problems need to be addressed are aimed to be discovered (Richards, 2001).

Thus, when evaluation of an ER project is taken into consideration, the most appropriate type of evaluation is formative evaluation, as the ER project to be evaluated is in progress.

Evaluation of a program may include different aspects of a language program, such as the following, mentioned by Sanders (1992), and Weir and Roberts (1994, cited in Richards, 2001).

- *curriculum design*: to provide insights about how effective the program planning and organization are,
- *the syllabus and program content*: how relevant, engaging, easy or difficult the program was, how successful tests and assessment procedures were,
- *classroom processes*: to have an idea about the extent to which a program is being implemented appropriately,
- *materials of instruction*: to provide insights about whether specific materials are supporting student learning,
- *the teachers*: how they conducted their teaching, what perceptions they had toward the program, what they taught,
- *teacher training*: to evaluate whether the training that teachers have received is adequate,

- *the students*: what they learnt from the program, their perceptions of it, and how they participated in the program,
- *monitoring of pupil progress*: to employ formative (in-progress) evaluations of student learning,
- *learner motivation*: to provide insights about the effectiveness of teachers in supporting students to achieve goals and objectives of the school,
- *the institution*: what administrative support was provided, which resources were used, what communication networks were employed,
- *learning environment*: to provide insights about the extent to which students are provided with an appropriate environment in terms of their educational needs,
- *staff development*: to provide insights about the extent to which the administration provides the staff opportunities to increase their effectiveness,
- *decision making*: to provide insights about how well the school staff - principals, teachers, and others - make decisions that affect learner benefits.

The aspects stated above should be considered carefully when the ER project is evaluated. Especially, the syllabus, program content, classroom processes, materials, teachers, and students are of great importance, as they are particularly relevant to an ER project.

When the implementation of a program is added to the syllabus and the program, it is crucial to determine how relevant, involving, easy or difficult the

project is to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. In order to provide useful and effective insight about how well the project is organized, the syllabus and the program must be analyzed carefully. What the program includes may change its effectiveness to some extent; moreover, if the program has a feature which is not in the ideal implementation, it may cause a great difference in the results. For example, ordinarily, ER is not assessed, as the aim is to read for general understanding and pleasure. Thus, if an ER project includes assessment in its implementation, the effectiveness of the program in terms of meeting its goals and objectives may change.

Materials are other aspects which must be evaluated to find out if they support student learning. Hence, materials are of great value in the evaluation of a project in terms of achieving its goals and objectives. An ER project is only as good as its materials.

In determining the effectiveness of the implementation of an ER project, students' perceptions also must be taken into consideration. There are many studies which have revealed positive perceptions about the implementation of an ER project. Zhang (2004) shows how grouping the students in ER practice helps them work collaboratively and thus affects their improving reading skills and motivation toward reading, which is one of the goals of ER. The change in students' perceptions toward the reading class, i.e. feeling motivated rather than sleepy or bored, as a result of grouping, points out the effectiveness of the program implemented. Another study was carried out by Greenberg et al. (2006), in which the students who were exposed to the program reported that they read more and were confident readers. Being confident and highly motivated to read, which are goals of ER, affect the perceptions

of students in a positive way. In addition, these perceptions also demonstrate the effectiveness of the implementation when it is evaluated.

Day and Bamford (1998) state that the most essential prerequisite for developing effective, efficient and independent second language readers through ER has always been the individual, committed teacher. They took all the studies that have been conducted so far into account and concluded that cutting across all of the differences the programs had - in resources, student age, cultural background, purpose of study, and program organization - there was one inevitable similarity. They report that in schools where large numbers of books were read, one or more teachers were behind the difference. There is no doubt, therefore, that the essential conditions for extensive reading are a teacher's enthusiasm and excitement for reading and encouragement of students to read. Thus, integrating the perceptions of teachers into the evaluation of ER projects will help the results be more valuable in terms of determining the effectiveness of the program.

There are three crucial issues in a formal evaluation of the ER project (Day & Bamford, 1998):

Purpose: Three common reasons for evaluating an ER project are to have an idea about whether the ER project has met its goals, to discover what other results of the program might have had, in addition to the results aimed at, and to find out the aspects of the program that might need change or improvement.

Audience: The audience for the evaluation might be teachers, students, administrators, or funding agencies. The evaluation should match the intended audience. Sharing the result of the evaluation with school administrators will help to turn the weak points into achievements in the program. Revealing only the

weaknesses of the program might have a negative impact, whereas making the school administrators aware of the program's achievements might have a more positive result.

Method: The method of the evaluation will normally be a test or a questionnaire or both, depending on the purpose of the evaluation. Many goals of ER are related to attitude and behavior, and a questionnaire is an appropriate measurement for identifying development in these two areas.

In order to effectively evaluate an ER project, these three aspects should be identified beforehand. After determining purpose, audience and method for the evaluation, the goals of the program must be studied carefully in order to determine whether the program is meeting its goals and objectives. When the ER project is evaluated in terms of achieving its goals and objectives at Anadolu University, improving reading comprehension and vocabulary, improving attitudes toward reading in English, and using the strategies learnt in the class are the most vital goals. Syllabus, program, materials, and the perceptions of students and teachers in the program which are being evaluated must also be studied to discover the success of the program in terms of meeting its goals and objectives.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature on describing the reading process, models of reading process, and reading fluency. Next, goals and characteristics of ER and benefits of ER for comprehension and reading speed, vocabulary, writing skills and attitudes toward reading were discussed. The studies conducted on the benefits of ER were presented. Finally, the evaluation of ER programs was discussed.

This thesis describes a study that aims to determine the effectiveness of an institution-wide ER project in an EFL setting, in terms of achieving its goals and objectives. This study also aims to investigate the perceptions of the students and teachers about the implementation of the program. The next chapter presents the methodology of this study, especially by giving information about the setting, participants, instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the ER program at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in terms of how it meets its goals and objectives, which were set in the 2003-2004 fall term. This study also investigates the perceptions of teachers and students of the strengths and the weaknesses of the implementation of the ER project. The research questions addressed for the study were as follows:

1. How effective is the Extensive Reading Project (ERP) implemented at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL)?
 - a. What are the perceptions of the instructors and the students about the strengths and the weaknesses in the implementation of the ERP?
 - b. To what extent does the ERP achieve its goals and objectives?
 - i. To what extent do the instructors and the students think that the implementation of ER meets its goals and objectives?
 - ii. Does the ER project result in improved attitudes toward reading and perceptions of improved reading comprehension ability?

This chapter covers the setting, participants, instruments, procedure and data analysis.

Setting

The study was carried out at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL), Eskisehir, Turkey, which is a mixed medium instruction university. Some departments of the university use English, and other departments use Turkish as a medium of instruction. AUSFL provides compulsory intensive

English language education for students. The school is administered by the school director and the vice director. Because there are a large number of students attending AUSFL, a placement test is given to the students at the beginning of both Fall and Spring terms, and according to the results students are placed in an appropriate level among the five levels: Beginner, Elementary, Lower-intermediate, Intermediate, and Upper-intermediate in the first term, and according to the results of the placement test, they are placed in Elementary, Lower-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate, and Advanced levels for the second term. Grammar, Reading, Writing, and Listening/Speaking are four different courses taught at each level. The assessment of each course differs from one another in terms of the assessment techniques. For example, ER is implemented as a part of the reading assessment. There are two midterms in each term, the components of which are 15% quizzes, 60% midterms and 25% ER. ER is applied to different types of reading texts - that is, the students have to read three different types of texts, such as biography, short story, a department related article, and so on. The types of the texts that the students are supposed to read are assigned by the reading teachers beforehand for each midterm. The students select the texts themselves. They may go to the school's library, or use the Internet to find the text type. The students are evaluated for their understanding of the readings they do in the reports they write in the class. The reports consist of their answers to five questions appropriate for the text type they have read. These questions, a sample of which can be found in Appendix A, are prepared by the reading teachers beforehand.

Participants

Forty-eight lower intermediate level students and twenty instructors participated in this study, and they were randomly selected. The lower intermediate level students were selected because the students were at beginner or elementary levels in the first term, which did not include ER in the assessment of the reading course. In order to see the change in the students' attitudes toward reading as a result of ER in the second term, the students at this level were chosen because they were exposed to the ERP for the first time. The twenty instructors were reading teachers teaching at five different levels (elementary, lower intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced). The reason for choosing instructors from all the levels was that teachers at different levels may have different views about the implementation of ER.

Table 1 presents background information about the instructors who participated in the study.

Gender	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>		
	17	3		
Years of experience	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>13-16</u>
	7	8	3	2
Degree Programs	<u>BA</u>	<u>MA</u>	<u>PhD</u>	
	12	7	1	
Having taught reading before	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>		
	16	4		

Table 1 - The teachers participating in the study

Table 2 displays information about the students who participated in the study.

Gender	<u>Female</u> 25	<u>Male</u> 23	
Age	<u>16-18</u> 9	<u>19-21</u> 34	<u>22-24</u> 5
First Term Level	<u>Beginner</u> 11	<u>Elementary</u> 37	

Table 2 - The students participating in the study

Instruments

In this study two types of data collection instruments, questionnaires and interviews, were used. Each instrument will be explained in different sections.

Questionnaires

Two parallel questionnaires and a separate questionnaire were employed in this study. Oppenheim (1992) states that questionnaires are often used since little time is required for their implementation, and they are easy to process. In addition, the questionnaire technique is an effective and practical way of gathering data from a large population of participants.

Students' Attitudes toward Reading in English

In order to find out the attitudes of students toward reading in English, the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire was prepared in English but administered in Turkish so as not to have a language barrier for the students. This questionnaire was administered before and after the implementation of the ER project. The items on the questionnaire were written by the researcher to reveal the attitudes of students toward reading in the foreign language. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part includes questions about personal

background information. In the second part, there are items regarding attitudes toward reading in English, such as feelings about reading in English, reading in English in the reading course, and what the students do to read in English. The third part of the questionnaire includes only one item, asking about reading in English in general. The questionnaire was translated from English into Turkish by the researcher, and then an instructor with near-native proficiency in English was asked to translate the Turkish version back into English, to ensure that the meanings of the items were maintained. After piloting the questionnaire, it was found out that some of the items in the questionnaire were repetitive, and thus, they were eliminated. The English and Turkish versions of the questionnaire can be found in Appendices B and C, respectively.

Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP

Two questionnaires were prepared, one for the students and one for the teachers, to discover these participants' perceptions of the ERP. The "Students' Perceptions of the ERP" and the "Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP" questionnaires were aimed to reveal the opinions of the students and the teachers about the implementation of ER. These post-questionnaires were written by the researcher, making use of the items in Camiciottoli's study (2001). The students' questionnaire included items about how ER is incorporated into their learning in the reading course and was administered in Turkish, and the teachers' questionnaire consisted of items about how the ERP is integrated into their teaching in the reading course and was administered in English.

The first section of the students' questionnaire was comprised of 22 Likert scale items in which the participants were asked to mark the alternative that best

corresponds to their opinion. The alternatives were ‘Strongly Disagree’ (SD), ‘Disagree’ (D), ‘Uncertain’ (U), ‘Agree’ (A) and ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA), whereas the second section of the teachers’ questionnaire consisted of 22 Likert scale items, in which the participants were expected to choose among four alternatives, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree(D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), to give their opinions. The reason that the teachers’ questionnaire did not include an “Uncertain” alternative was to encourage the teachers to express their opinions about the ERP, since the ERP has been implemented for 5 years at AUSFL. The students’ questionnaire was translated into Turkish, using the same technique as with the attitudes questionnaire: The questionnaire was first translated from English into Turkish by the researcher, and then an instructor with near-native proficiency in English translated the Turkish version back into English, to ensure that the meanings of the items were maintained. The English and Turkish versions of the students’ questionnaire and the teachers’ questionnaire can be seen in Appendices D, E and F, respectively.

Interviews

In order to extend the survey data, a schedule of interview questions and prompts were prepared. Five students and five instructors teaching at different levels were randomly selected. The purpose of interviewing teachers teaching at different levels was to get a wide variety of experiences with the ERP. The aim of semi-structured interviews in this study was to explore the opinions about the implementation of ER in depth. The semi-structured interviews were “guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). This approach

enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions according to the responses received from the participants. This helped the researcher gain in-depth insights about the participants' perceptions.

Similar interview schedules were drawn up for the students (see Appendix G), and the teachers (see Appendix H). The interviewees were asked "how" and "why" questions addressing the ERP in order to gather more detailed information. These questions were prepared by taking the research questions into consideration. The participants' responses to the interview questions were tape-recorded and transcribed, and also translated. Sample interview transcriptions can be found for the students and the teachers in Appendices I and J respectively.

Data Collection Procedures

Preparations before conducting the study were as follows: The questionnaire for students' attitudes toward reading in English was prepared. Next, permission to conduct the pilot study was requested from the Head of the Anadolu University's School of Foreign Languages. After the permission was granted, data collection procedures started. First, the questionnaire for students' attitudes toward reading in English was piloted on January 18, 2007, which was the last week of the first term at school. All the participants signed the consent forms before they filled out the questionnaires. The aim of piloting the questionnaire was to see if any changes were required. After piloting the questionnaires, the responses to the questionnaire were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire was .869. The findings of the pilot study resulted in minor changes in the questionnaires. The structures of some sentences were changed and some items were eliminated.

The “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire was administered on February 19 to 23 with 48 students just before the ER project was started, in order to reveal the attitudes of the students toward reading in English. The students were informed about the goals of the ER project and the implementation of the ER project in the same week. The students were required to read three text types in the following four weeks, February 26 to March 26: a short story, a biography and a department related article respectively. At the end of each ERP week, in the last class of the week, they were required to write a report by answering five questions, related to the text type, prepared by reading teachers beforehand. The questions related to these text types can be found in Appendix A. After this four week process, in the class students chose the text type to be evaluated by the teacher out of 50, according to the criteria prepared by reading teachers beforehand. The other two reports were evaluated quantitatively, out of 50, 25 points for each. The total score of the reports, which is the final score of their ER project, made up 25% of their first midterm grade.

After this process, the students were again given the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire on 11th April, and the “Students’ Perceptions of the ERP” questionnaire on 12th April. The aim of conducting the first questionnaire a second time was to see if the ER project had any effects on attitudes toward reading comprehension ability or attitudes toward reading. The teachers were also given the “Teachers’ Perceptions of the ERP” questionnaire on 12th April.

The last step in collecting data for the study was interviewing five teachers and five students who participated in the study, in the second week of April. The interviews were held in order to see the attitudes of both the instructors and the

students toward the effectiveness of the implementation of the ER project. The interviews were semi-structured. To determine the interview times, the interviewees' preferences and teaching schedules were considered. Once the interview time was set, the interviews were carried out in approximately 20-minute slots in Turkish in order to make the participants more comfortable. All of the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and translated into English.

Data Analysis

In this study, different data analysis procedures were followed for the questionnaires and the interviews. The questionnaires were analyzed using quantitative data analysis procedures, and the interviews were analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures.

After the actual study was conducted, the means for each response for the "Teachers' and the Students' Perceptions of the ERP" questionnaires were computed using SPSS 13.0 in order to reveal the common perceptions of the ERP. The same procedure was carried out for the "Students' Attitudes toward Reading in English" questionnaire, to discover overall attitudes to reading and perceptions of improved reading ability as a result of ER. Then, the means of the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaires were compared by using a paired samples t-test to see if there were any changes in attitudes toward reading and perceptions of improved reading ability. Finally, the mean of each item in the questionnaire for each student was calculated, and a paired samples t-test was done to see if there was any difference in terms of the students' attitudes toward reading on any particular questionnaire item between the pre- and the post- questionnaire.

In the last step, the data from the interviews were analyzed by means of qualitative data analysis procedures. After transcribing and translating the interviews, the transcriptions were read thoroughly, and the key concepts that occurred frequently in the interviews were highlighted and coded. Then, the links between the codes were used to form common themes. All the interviewees were given pseudonyms in the transcripts, and the pronoun 'she' was consistently used in the study in order to keep the participants' identities confidential.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the educational setting in which the researcher conducted this study was explained. Then, the participants involved in the study were described. The instruments in the study, and the data collection procedures were presented. At the end of the chapter, data analysis procedures for the study were briefly explained. In the next chapter, the data gained from the questionnaires and the interviews will be presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Overview of the Study

The study was conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project implemented at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL), by examining the students' and the teachers' perceptions of its strengths and weaknesses, and by examining the extent to which the teachers and the students think that the ERP achieves its goals and objectives.

The research questions posed for the study were as follows:

1. How effective is the Extensive Reading Project (ERP) implemented at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL)?
 - a. What are the perceptions of the instructors and the students about the strengths and the weaknesses in the implementation of the ERP?
 - b. To what extent does the ERP achieve its goals and objectives?
 - i. To what extent do the instructors and the students think that the implementation of ER meets its goals and objectives?
 - ii. Does the ER project result in improved attitudes toward reading and perceptions of improved reading comprehension ability?

Data Analysis Procedures

In this study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures. Three sets of data were used in the data analysis procedures. The first set of data, which was gathered from Likert scale questions in the three questionnaires, was analyzed quantitatively. The second set of data, which was collected through open-ended questions in two questionnaires, was analyzed

qualitatively. The third set of data, which is composed of the interview data, was also analyzed qualitatively.

The first phase of the data analysis procedure was the analysis of the Likert scale questions in three questionnaires. The data from the 30 Likert scale questions in the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire, which was used as both a pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire, and 22 items in both the “Teachers’ and the Students’ Perceptions of the ERP” questionnaires, which were used only as post-questionnaires, were entered into SPSS 13.00. For the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire, the means of all questions for each student were calculated, and then the means for all the questions, which are all related to attitudes toward reading, were averaged. A paired samples t-test was done in order to find out if there was any significant difference between the pre- and post-questionnaires in terms of attitudes toward reading in English. As for the Perceptions of the ERP questionnaires, which were completed by both the teachers and students, frequencies and percentages for each Likert-scale response for each question were calculated.

The second phase of the procedure was to analyze the data gathered from the open-ended questions in the last section of the teachers’ questionnaire and the students’ questionnaire about the Extensive Reading Project. The participants’ responses were analyzed based on the interpretation of the patterns that emerged in reference to the research questions.

The last phase in the data analysis procedure was the interpretation of the interview data. After the interviews were transcribed and translated into English, the responses of each participant were entered in a matrix. Each response which referred

to the data from the questionnaires and to the research questions was highlighted, and coded.

This chapter is made up of three sections, which are organized with reference to the one main and four sub research questions. In the first section, an analysis of the questionnaires about the perceptions of teachers and the students about the strengths and weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages will be used to answer sub research question a. The second section presents data from the questionnaires and the interviews about the perceptions of achieving the goals of the ERP in reference to sub research question b and its sub question i. Finally, the third section presents both quantitative data gathered from the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire and qualitative data gathered from the “Students’ Perceptions of the Extensive Reading Project” questionnaire, in order to address research question ii. In each section, interview data (see Appendices H and I for sample interview transcripts for students and teachers, respectively) and the data gained from the open-ended questions in the last section of both teachers’ and students’ questionnaires are presented with the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires, in order to clarify the participants’ responses to the questions.

Results

The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project

The items in the “Teachers’ Perceptions of the Extensive Reading Project” questionnaire sought to answer research question a, which was concerned with the the perceptions of the strengths and the weaknesses of the ERP. This section presents

the data from the teachers' perceptions about the ERP questionnaire under three headings: General Ideas about ER, Strengths of the ERP and Weaknesses of the ERP.

General Ideas about the ERP

In order to investigate the perceptions of the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project, the teachers were given the "Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP" questionnaire. In the teachers' questionnaire the second section consisted of Likert scale items in which the teachers were asked to mark the alternative that best corresponds to their opinion. In order to analyze the data, the following values were assigned to each response: 'Strongly Agree' (SA): 4, 'Agree' (A): 3, 'Disagree' (D): 2, 'Strongly Disagree' (SD):1.

Table 3 below shows the means and the standard deviations of the items in the "Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP" questionnaire.

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability.	3	4	3.40	.503
2. The reading text for extensive reading should include vocabulary that is appropriate to the students' level.	2	4	3.55	.686
3. Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies I teach in the class.	2	4	2.95	.759
4. The assessment questions related to the text type should focus on every detail in the reading text in assessing extensive reading.	1	4	1.95	.826
5. Students should decide the topics they want to read about out of the class.	2	4	3.55	.605
6. The teachers should guide students to find different texts about different topics to read extensively.	2	4	3.05	.605
7. Extensive reading material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels.	1	4	2.30	.733
8. The teacher should make it clear to the students that the purpose of reading a text extensively is to understand the general gist of the text.	3	4	3.55	.510
9. The reading teacher should do a post reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life.	1	4	3.00	.795
10. Extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level.	1	4	2.70	.979
11. In order to be a fluent reader, a student should read extensively.	3	4	3.60	.503
12. The students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively.	2	4	2.90	.788
13. Extensive reading is helpful in learning a foreign language.	3	4	3.75	.444
14. Extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class.	3	4	3.45	.510
15. Students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher.	1	4	2.45	1.050
16. Extensive reading should be guided by the teacher.	2	4	3.15	.671
17. Extensive reading is more helpful for students than intensive reading (reading in class) is.	2	4	2.60	.754
18. Extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary.	3	4	3.50	.513
19. Students should be given a purpose to read while reading a text extensively.	1	4	2.95	.887
20. The aim of extensive reading is to make students like reading, not a detailed reading.	3	4	3.65	.489
21. Students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries (bilingual or monolingual) while reading a text extensively.	1	4	2.55	.887
22. Assessing session of extensive reading is not very important part of extensive reading if the students understood the text.	1	4	2.90	.852

Table 3 - Descriptive statistics of the teachers' perceptions of the ERP

According to Table 3, there are several items which the teachers at AUSFL all agree on, mostly agree on, or have different ideas about. The responses to the items which all teachers agree on range from 3 to 4, which indicates unanimous agreement. For example, all the teachers agreed with the first item (reading

extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability), item 11 (in order to be a fluent reader, students should read extensively), item 13 (extensive reading is helpful in learning a foreign language), item 14 (extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class), and item 18 (ER helps the students improve their vocabulary). These are also the items that represent the benefits of ER. Item 8 (the teacher should explain the purpose of the ER to the students in order to make it clear in the students' minds) and item 20, (the aim of the ER is to make the students like reading, rather than a detailed reading) are the items which all the teachers agree on and which represent procedural issues. There are four items, items 2, 5, 6 and 16, whose means are over 3.0, and whose standard deviations are not too high. Even though their answers range from 2 (disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), it can be said that the teachers mostly agree that the reading texts for extensive reading should include vocabulary that is appropriate to the students' level, that the students should decide on the topics they want to read about out of the class, that the teachers should guide the students to find different texts about different topics to read extensively, and that ER should be guided by the teacher.

The teachers also have some mixed feelings about some of the items. The remainder of the items, the means of which are at or below 3.0 and most of which received the full range of responses, can be said to illustrate the mixed feelings of the teachers about these aspects of the ERP. "Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies I taught in the class", the third item, is an idea which the teachers have different ideas about. Although item 17 states another benefit of ER, some of the teachers disagree with the idea that ER is more helpful than Intensive Reading is. The remaining ideas are all about procedural issues. The ideas that

extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level, and that students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher, items 10 and 15 respectively, are ideas that some of the teachers agreed with, but that some of them disagreed with. Another idea about the implementation that the teachers have some mixed feelings about is that extensive reading material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels, which is item 7 in the questionnaire. Another item which caused some disagreements among the participants, is item 21.

According to 12 of the teachers, students should not be encouraged to use their dictionaries while reading a text extensively, although using dictionaries is another characteristic of the implementation of the ERP at AUSFL. There are also some other items about which the teachers show a difference of opinion. To illustrate, the teachers were not sure if the teacher should do a post-reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life, as mentioned in item 9, or whether the students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively, as stated in item 12. Item 19 (students should be given a purpose to read while reading a text extensively) and item 22 (the assessing session of ER is not a very important part of ER if the students understood the text) were also among the items that the teachers could not decide on.

Moreover, the fourth item (the assessment questions related to the text type should focus on every detail in the reading text in assessing extensive reading) is the item that most of the teachers (16 out of 20) disagreed with.

In order to explore these items further, the items will be presented in two categories, those that represent the teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the program, and those that show their perceptions of the weaknesses of the program.

The teachers were asked two open-ended questions in the questionnaire: one question sought an answer to the teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP, and the second question was about the perceptions of the teachers of the weaknesses of the ERP.

The Teachers' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP

The answers to the first open-ended question revealed the teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP. Table 4 presents the number of teachers reporting each strength in their answers to this question.

Strengths of the ERP	Number of the Teachers
Exposure to different types of texts	10
Learning new vocabulary	4
Helping the students get higher grades	3
Helping the students improve their reading fluency	3
Encouraging the students to read outside the class	3
Increasing reading comprehension	2
Contributing to learner autonomy	1
Developing research skills	1
Making the students read something	1
Improving the students' attitudes towards reading	1
Motivating the students in the course	1

Table 4 - Teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP

The teachers think that the ERP implemented at AUSFL exposes the students to a variety of text types. In the project the students have to read different text types that are assigned by their teachers. These types are short story, biography, department related article, newspaper article and a free type of reading in which they can read lyrics, anecdotes and so on. Ten teachers consider this characteristic of the project as a strength. This idea goes in line with the answers that most of the teachers gave to item 6 in the questionnaire, which states that the teachers should guide students to find different texts about different topics to read extensively. Most of the

teachers agreed on this characteristic of the ERP. This is one of the ideas that occurred in the interviews as well:

(Participant 1)... They (the students) read **different types of texts, newspapers or articles, short story or biography; they come across different genres...**

(Participant 2)... **For the students who have not read any article from a magazine in their lives, this (ER) will be the first and the last chance.** In terms of creating an autonomous atmosphere, as they themselves prefer, find, and read something (the texts), it is good.

When they were asked what they think about the strengths of the ERP in the open-ended question, vocabulary improvement was among the answers. Four of the teachers point out that the ERP helps improve students' vocabulary. Item 18 in the questionnaire (extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary) supports the idea that this is one of the strengths of the ERP, according to the teachers' perceptions. Although this notion is supported by all of the teachers, the analysis of interview questions about the effect of the ERP on vocabulary improvement reveals that there are disagreements among the teachers about this effect: Two of the teachers are positive about the effects of ER on vocabulary development:

(Participant1)... **They learn many words and they use them in their reports. I think that they internalize these words as they both see them in the texts and use them in their reports.**

(Participant 2)... **They learn more words.** The level (of the texts) is higher, so challenging. In terms of these aspects, it is good.

However, another teacher is unsure about how well the students learn the new words they encounter:

(Participant 3)... I read the students extensive reports and evaluated them. **In their reports they underlined the unknown words and wrote the meaning next to them. They wrote the important words in the text. This week I used some of these words by chance in the class, but nobody seemed to know the**

meaning of these words. They saw these words while reading a newspaper article but they behaved as if it was the first time they saw those words...

That the students get higher grades in their reading course was revealed as another strength by the teachers' responses. As the students' reports consist of 25% of their reading course grades, the teachers consider the ERP helpful in increasing the students' grades.

Being a fluent reader was another answer to which all the teachers agreed in the questionnaire (item 11) and which was revealed in the open-ended question in the last section of the teachers' questionnaire as a strength. However, in the interview, one of the participants (P5) stated that even this project is not effective to make the students fluent readers, and they need more reading.

(Participant 5)... ER may be implemented more often. The students read three reading texts in two months. It is a burden for students, to me, it is not. **Why don't they read a text a week? They cannot be fluent readers in this way. But I do not know if we increase the number of the texts will it be beneficial for the students? Do they find it very boring? I am confused in this point.**

In the open-ended question, the effect of the ERP on helping the students get the habit of reading for fun outside the class, which leads to learner autonomy and motivation to read more, also mentioned by teachers as strengths, was found as a strength of the ERP:

(Participant 1)...one of my students read in Turkish a lot. He read something about psychology and philosophy, but when I came across him, he told me that he did not like reading in English and found all those short stories boring. I gave him a story related to his interests. **He sent me an e mail and told that he liked the story and used it in the ERP report and asked where he could find more stories. I know that he is reading more now...**

However, Participant 3 was a bit pessimistic about the effect of ERP on the students' motivation:

(Participant 3)...**one of my students told me that she wanted to read more outside the class and asked for some graded readers.** This was the only student...

The effect of the ERP on improving reading comprehension ability was another idea mentioned as a strength. This is also the idea shown by item 1 in the questionnaire. All twenty teachers agreed that the ERP improves students' reading comprehension ability, but the data gained from the interviews showed that the teachers are not sure about the extent to which the ERP develops reading comprehension ability. When the teachers were asked if the ERP had any effect on students' reading comprehension ability, one participant (P3) indicated her ideas about this:

(Participant 3)...I cannot give drastic examples...**I am not aware of the effect of ERP on the students reading comprehension, if it has.**

According to one teacher in the open-ended question about the strengths of the ERP, the ERP has an effect on developing students' research skills while looking for reading materials. This was also mentioned in the interviews:

(Participant 3)...they (the students) themselves find the material. Most of them find the material on the Internet. **Their research skills are perhaps developed.**

According to the perceptions of one teacher, the ERP helps the students to improve their attitudes toward reading. Improved attitudes toward reading are also related to improved confidence in reading, since if the students are confident about what they read; they may also feel better about reading in English. Item 14 (extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class) is also related

to being confident as a result of ER, with which all of the teachers agreed. When one participant was asked about the effect of ERP on students' confidence, she said that the more the students read the more they felt that they are better in understanding what they read:

(Participant 5)... **They see that they can read something in English better than they expected...**

According to the perceptions of the teachers at AUSFL, exposure to different types of texts, learning new vocabulary, helping the students be fluent readers, and encouraging the students to read outside the class are the strengths of the ERP. Moreover, the teachers feel that the ERP' positive effect on improving the students' research skills, reading comprehension skills and motivation to read more are also strengths of the project.

The Teachers' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP

The following discussion is about the weaknesses of the ERP, which was the focus of the second open-ended question. Table 5 demonstrates the number of the various responses to this question.

Weaknesses of the ERP	Number of the Teachers
The implementation procedure (Giving the questions to the students beforehand, letting the students use their dictionaries when they write their reports, difficulty in finding the right level of texts etc.)	9
Assessing the ERP	6
ERP being obligatory	2
Quality of the assessment questions	2
The weight of the ERP in the students' reading course grades	1
No choice for types of texts to read extensively	1
Burden for teachers	1

Table 5 - Teachers' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP

According to the teachers' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP, there are many problems with the implementation of the project. For example, as the

students are given the report questions ahead of time, before writing their reports in the class, the students may prepare some notes and cheat in the class, or the students may ask their friends from other classes for a ready-made extensive report rather than reading the text themselves.

In addition, item 21, which is about dictionary use, is also regarded as a weakness of the ERP. The students are free to use their dictionaries when they read extensively outside the class. As the participants agree with the idea that ER should be for general understanding of the text (item 20), most of the participants are not in favor of the idea of dictionary use. This goes in line with the problems with the implementation procedure which emerged in the open-ended question. The teachers think that the students should not be allowed to use their dictionaries while they are writing their reports in the class. Therefore, the teachers believe that the use of dictionaries, both while reading the text and writing the reports in the class, is a weakness of the project.

One teacher identified students' having difficulty in finding the right level of the text, appropriate to their level, as a weakness, and this was also revealed in the interview with Participant 2:

(Participant 2)... **Our first aim was to create an autonomous learner profile.** I can say that for some levels we achieved this, but I cannot tell this for all levels. We have been implementing this for five years, but we couldn't achieve our aim at lower levels. **At higher levels, we had positive results.** The students are exposed to real language. **The problem with the lower levels is perhaps that they cannot find appropriate materials for their levels...**

In the past years, all the students in the first term were assigned to do the ERP, no matter what their levels were. However, Beginner and Elementary levels could not read extensively as it was hard for them to find materials appropriate to

their level. Thus, ERP was replaced by the vocabulary file for the beginner and elementary levels in the first term. In the second term all the students are doing the project, but, as Participant 2 states, it is still a problem for the lower levels, even though it is the second term.

In the project, after the students read the type of the text they are assigned, they have to write a report in the class, answering five questions. Assessment was also revealed as a weakness in both the open-ended questions and the interviews. Some of the teachers were not satisfied with the procedure of the assessment of the ERP:

(Participant 2)... **The other problem is assessing ER in the class. It must be evaluated out of the class,** but when we did it, there was the cheating factor.

As stated in items 4 and 22 in the questionnaire, the teachers have some mixed feelings about the evaluation of the ERP. This is the idea gathered also from the interviews:

(Participant 2)... To me, **it should not be assessed.** This is something done outside the class. It (reading outside the class) must be an independent choice. **When you assess it, it seems to be a part of the reading course.**

Participant 2 does not prefer the ERP to be assessed. The same participant, however, is confused about the achievement of the ERP if it is not assessed.

(Participant 2)... **It must be assessed according to our students;** otherwise, the participation would be lower. **Assessing it is appropriate for our student profile.** This is one of the weaknesses.

Participant 2 defends the idea that if the ERP is not assessed, the participation in the project will be lower. According to Participant 2, assessing the project is appropriate for the type of learners at AUSFL. The students are grade-oriented, and

as they are grade-driven, they are doing the project for getting a grade. However, Participant 3 thinks that assessing the project, which is a weakness, may turn into a positive point:

(Participant 3)... **Assessing it may be a negative point** although we think that ER is something motivating to read more... **Although they are reading for getting a grade, we know that till the end of the term they are reading 6 texts.**

As Participant 2 mentions, when the students prepared their reports outside the class and handed their reports in the class, another weakness of the project occurred, which is the cheating factor. Although the students prepare the reports in the class now, Participant 3 still complains about the cheating factor:

(Participant 3)... **Cheating factor is another negative point,** as the other people, not the students themselves, may be preparing their answers to the questions...

The fact that the ERP is assessed is revealed as a controversial issue among the teachers. According to some teachers, the students should have an external factor, which forces them to read outside the class. As ER at AUSFL is assessed, it also helps the students to increase their reading course grades and extrinsic motivation to read more:

(Participant 1)... I think that Extensive Reading, **although it has the assessment aspect, it encourages students to read more...** I know that ER should not be assessed. **However, we do not have autonomous students. If you do not force them to do something, they won't, so assessing ER forces students to read more...**

(Participant 4)... This is completely against the nature of ER, but we are not a society which likes reading, so in order to get something done, you have to have a force. In our case this is assessment. **As grades are the most important thing for students, they read for getting grades. The percentage of the students who do this (ER) voluntarily would be 3 if you do not grade it, so this (ER) wouldn't reach its aim.**

(Participant 3)...almost all of my students do something for ER, except the regular absent students. **Although it is for grades, they read at least one page in English.** How it is effective for their motivation..., **it is not intrinsic motivation, but unfortunately getting a grade motivates some of the students.** If they were not getting a grade, would they read? I am not sure. Once, I asked my students how many of them would read if ER was not assessed, I have 28 students in my class, 3 or 5 raised their hands and I am not sure if they were telling the truth...

Related to the assessment aspect of the ERP, the fact that the ERP is obligatory, the quality of the assessment questions, and the weight of the ERP in the students' reading course grades emerged as weaknesses of the ERP in the answers to the open-ended question. Moreover, one teacher thought that evaluating the ERP reports was a burden for the teachers as they have many other papers to grade for the other courses, and one teacher also mentioned the students having no choices for the text types to read extensively as a weakness of the ERP. The type of the text which the students are assigned to read may lead to a decrease in motivation to read more. This was an idea that occurred in the interviews as well:

(Participant 1): I do not know the percentage but I think that **Extensive Reading Project makes some students read more, but it changes according to which type of text they read...**

According to the perceptions of the teachers, assessing the ERP is a weakness of the ERP implemented at AUSFL. Related to the assessment feature of the project, many problems occur in the implementation. The students tend to cheat in order to get a higher grade, or they find someone else to write the reports. Letting the students use their dictionaries while reading the text extensively and writing their reports also occurs as weaknesses of the project. Moreover, there may be some problems in finding the appropriate level of texts especially for lower level students.

The Students' Perceptions of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project

The questions in the students' questionnaire sought to answer research question 1 and thus its sub question a, which was concerned with the students' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project implemented at AUSFL. This section presents the data from this questionnaire under three headings: General Statements about the ERP, the Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP and the Students' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP.

General Ideas about the ERP

In order to investigate the perceptions of the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project, the students were given the "Students' Perceptions of the ERP" questionnaire. In the second section of the students' questionnaire there were 22 Likert scale items. The students were asked to mark the alternative that best corresponds to their opinion. The alternatives were 'Strongly Agree' (SA): 5, 'Agree' (A): 4, 'Undecided' (UD): 3, 'Disagree' (D): 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' (SD):1. Table 6 below shows the means and the standard deviations of the items in this questionnaire.

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
1. Reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability.	48	2	5	4.19	.891
2. The reading text for extensive reading should include vocabulary that is appropriate to the students' level.	48	1	5	4.19	.982
3. Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they learn in the class.	48	2	5	4.25	.729
4. The assessment questions related to the text type should focus on every detail in the reading text in assessing extensive reading.	48	1	5	3.56	1.090
5. Students should decide the topics they want to read about out of the class.	48	1	5	4.25	.934
6. The teachers should guide students to find different texts about different topics to read extensively.	48	1	5	3.54	1.202
7. Extensive reading material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels.	48	1	5	3.00	1.255
8. The teacher should make it clear to the students that the purpose of reading a text extensively is to understand the general gist of the text.	48	1	5	3.63	1.196
9. The reading teacher should do a post reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life.	48	1	5	3.40	1.216
10. Extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level.	48	1	5	2.23	1.016
11. In order to be a fluent reader, a student should read extensively.	48	2	5	4.10	.928
12. The students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively.	48	2	5	4.35	.699
13. Extensive reading is helpful in learning a foreign language.	48	1	5	4.33	.883
14. Extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class.	48	2	5	3.92	1.028
15. Students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher.	48	1	5	3.00	1.185
16. Extensive reading should be guided by the teacher.	48	1	5	2.75	.978
17. Extensive reading is more helpful for students than intensive reading (reading in class) is.	48	1	5	3.23	1.077
18. Extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary.	48	1	5	4.23	1.016
19. Students should be given a purpose to read while reading a text extensively.	48	1	5	3.31	1.075
20. The aim of extensive reading is to make students like reading, not a detailed reading.	48	1	5	4.04	1.129
21. Students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries (bilingual or monolingual) while reading a text extensively.	48	1	5	3.98	1.082
22. Assessing session of extensive reading is not very important part of extensive reading if the students understood the text.	48	2	5	4.00	1.072

Table 6 - Descriptive statistics of the students' perceptions of the ERP

In contrast to the teachers, who had many areas of agreement, and even one item which most of them disagreed on, the students do not appear to agree on their responses to very many items. According to Table 6, there are only two items which most of the students agreed on, and one item that most of the students disagreed on, and they had mixed feelings about the rest of the items in the questionnaire.

Unlike the teachers, who had mixed feelings about item 12 (The students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively), most of the students agreed with that idea. Item 13 (ER is helpful in learning a foreign language), although it has a big range and a big standard deviation, was another item with which the students mostly agreed. The idea about the ERP which the students mostly disagreed with is that extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level (item 10), although it also has a big range and standard deviation.

The students had some mixed feelings about the rest of the items in the questionnaire. For example, 19 students agreed and 19 students disagreed with item 7 (ER material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels). In addition, item 9 (the reading teacher should do a post-reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life) was another idea with which 23 students agreed, 10 were undecided, and 15 disagreed. Item 15 (students' work in ER should be evaluated by the teacher) also revealed some confusion among the students. 18 students agreed, 10 were undecided and 18 disagreed with this idea. Item 16 (ER should be guided by the teachers) caused some mixed feelings among the students. 22 students agreed, 15 were undecided and 11 disagreed with this item. Furthermore, the students could not decide on item 17 (ER is more helpful than intensive reading). Only 15 students

agreed with this item. The students had mixed feelings about the benefits of the ER. For example, the first item (reading extensively helps student improve their reading comprehension ability), item 11 (in order to be a fluent reader, a student should read extensively) and item 14 (ER makes students more confident in reading in English in the class) were items which caused confusion among the students. Lastly, the students were not sure if the assessing session of extensive reading is very important as long as the students understand the text, or not, as item 22 states.

The following discussion is about the strengths and weaknesses of the ERP.

The Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP

Table 7 presents data gathered from the open-ended question about the strengths of the ERP at AUSFL in the students' questionnaire.

Strengths of the ERP	Number of the Students
Improving vocabulary	27
Practising what is learnt in the class (reading strategies)	8
Improving reading comprehension	4
Helping to gain new ideas	4
Increasing the reading course grade	4
Helping to be a fluent reader	3
Increasing confidence to read	2
Increasing motivation to read	2
Getting the habit of reading	2
External factor to read	2
Exposure to different types of texts	1
Improving pronunciation	1
Developing research skills	1
Helping to make sentences	1

Table 7 - Students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP

According to the answer to the open-ended question which asked about the students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP, the effect of the ERP on helping the students improve their vocabulary is found as a strength. In addition, on item 18 of the students' questionnaire, 41 students agreed that they improved their

vocabulary knowledge as a result of the ERP. The data gathered from the interviews supported the same idea.

(Participant 1)... **My vocabulary knowledge improved because I have to explain what I understood...**

(Participant 2)... **It also improves my word knowledge.** For example, I read books for low-intermediate level. As I learn the words, I can use them in other courses...

Practising what they learnt in the class while the students are reading extensively is considered as another strength of the ERP. For example, they used the reading strategies while preparing their projects. Forty-two students agreed with the idea that the ERP helped them use the reading strategies that they learnt in the class, which is the idea stated in item 3 in the questionnaire. The data gathered from the interviews showed that the students found using the strategies learnt in the class as a strength of the ERP as well.

(Participant 1)... In the first term there was vocabulary file and we could not learn anything as we were just looking up the meaning of the word in the dictionary. Now **in ER we are making inferences** and learning the meaning of the words out of the texts. As we have to write (the reports) we are learning new words to use and understand what is in the text. This is very useful. As we are learning the meaning of the word in the text, we do not forget the meaning of it...

(Participant 2)...although you know many words, **you can guess the meaning of the words in context... It also helped me find the information I look for...**

(Participant 3)... you have to use a dictionary, but I do not like using a dictionary, so **I am trying to understand the meaning of the word in the text. That's useful for me.**

Guessing meaning from the context and skimming are the strategies that the students use while reading extensively.

Moreover, according to the students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP, they developed their reading comprehension ability, as stated also by 41 students in item 1 in the questionnaire, and they also stated that they have a chance to read about different topics with the help of the ERP and gain new ideas.

According to the students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP, the students not only gained new ideas but they also increased their reading course grades as a result of the ERP. This controversial issue of the ERP at AUSFL, which is related to assessment, also occurs as a strength in the interviews. Some of the participants mention the assessment aspect of ERP as a forcing factor to read something:

(Participant 1)... Assessing ER is good. **As it is assessed we have to read, and read.**

(Participant 3)... I do not find myself a hardworking student, so **I have to be forced to do something...**

(Participant 4)... I always want to read something about my field but I always delayed it. **With the help of the text that I have to read, I liked my department more than I did.**

(Participant 5)... Whatever we read, it is useful for us. When it is done in the class, it is more serious. When you do it outside the class, you can leave it aside whenever you want. **When is in the format of an assignment, I am forced to do it and that is fine.**

As the students' reports are evaluated out of 100 and consist of 25% of their reading course grades, the participants were asked what they think about this percentage in the interviews. The results show that they are happy with this assessment percentage:

(Participant 3)... **You can sometimes find reading exams quite difficult, but when it is ER you do not have any difficulty. You are not nervous as you will get a grade. 25% is quite a lot.**

(Participant 4)... **It helps my grade improve. The teachers are very flexible (in grading). ER grades are always high. The teachers grade it if the students hand it in. It helps a lot.**

(Participant 5)... **That is good for students. Reading exams are sometimes difficult and ER has 25%. This percentage contributes to the reading course grade a lot.**

Another strength stated in the open-ended question of the questionnaire by the students was that the students became fluent readers. This idea was supported by the 40 students who agreed with item 11, which states that ER helps the students to be fluent readers.

Increasing confidence in reading and motivation to read more, and being exposed to different types of texts were among the answers that occurred in the open-ended question. The students considered the ERP to be an external factor to read outside the class. Moreover, improving pronunciation and helping to make sentences were also mentioned as the strengths of the ERP.

Another strength mentioned by some of the participants in the open-ended questions and the interviews was that the ERP helped the students improve their research skills.

(Participant 3)... **I have to do some research. I am not interested in anything except the courses, that's why I have some idea about something, Internet or newspaper. I see what's happening in the world. That's useful...**

Improving vocabulary, practising what is learnt in the class, improving reading comprehension, helping to gain new ideas, and increasing the reading course grade were the strengths of the ERP stated by the students as answers to the open-ended question in the questionnaire. In addition, the effect of the ERP on increasing confidence and motivation to read, getting the habit of reading outside the class, and

being exposed to different types of texts were also mentioned by the students as strengths of the ERP.

Students' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP

Table 8 presents the students' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP.

Weaknesses of the ERP	Number of the Students
Not taken seriously	6
Being obligatory	6
Reading a text type I do not like	4
Doing the project just for getting higher grades	4
Writing the reports very often	2
Reading texts higher than proficiency level	2
Not having enough time	1
Boring	1
Knowing the questions beforehand	1

Table 8 - The students' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP

The students may not consider the ERP a serious project to do because of some of the problems in the implementation. According to the students' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP, the project being obligatory, which is against the nature of the ideal implementation of ER, is a weakness. As the students have to do what they are assigned in the implementation, the characteristics of the implementation are also the points which the students consider as weaknesses. To illustrate, Participant 4, for example raises one of the problems with the implementation:

(Participant 4)... **I have some friends, especially at lower levels, who find the Turkish version of the text and get it (the report) written.** It is not an exam. We can use dictionaries, it is a comfortable atmosphere. **Students cause these problems in this project.**

What Participant 4 brings into light as an issue is the problem related to the project's being obligatory. The students cheat while writing their reports as

they have to write six reports for a midterm. Other participants also agree with

Participant 4 on this point:

(Participant 1)...**Some of our friends can prepare some notes beforehand and put it in the dictionary.** I mean there are some friends who do not do the ERP seriously.

(Participant 3)... Some do not take it seriously as they do not need any grade, and **some memorize what they are going to write beforehand.** But as we have books or dictionaries with us, you can use the information you want. This depends on if the person likes the course or not. I come to school prepared for the report, but this happens. **Some find the text just before the class or find the summary of the text on the net. It depends on the student.**

As reading extensively is an obligation for the students, the students may be assigned to read a text type which they do not like. In the ERP, students are assigned to read five types of text types in a term: biography, short story, department related article, newspaper article and free reading (lyrics, anecdotes and so on). It means they have to read all types of texts, among which there may be a text type which they do not like. With the help of the information gathered from the answers to item 12 in the questionnaire, the open-ended questions in the last part of the students' questionnaire and the interviews, it is revealed that students prefer some text types over others and their preference is usually articles about their departments:

(Participant 3)... If I pass the class, I will start with the second year in my department as I come from another university. **Now when I read a department related article I have the chance to keep up with the field, so when it (the type of the text) is free reading in ER, I try to read department related article.... I like my department, so when I read something about my department, I like it and I learn something, and I know that it is useful for me. For the other types of text, I only learn the language, but if it is department related article, I learn something about my field as well.**

(Participant 4): ...the ERP was a reminder for me to read for fun in the first term. **I had planned to read something for my field**, but I couldn't. Then while I was searching (articles on the Internet for the ERP), **I found a website on the net. I still have a look at that site.**

(Participant 5)... I will start from the second year when I finish prep class. **As I know something about my field, reading some articles is good for me. I find the terminology difficult but I also find it useful as well.**

As stated before, some of the participants stated that the fact that ERP is assessed also affects their reading course grade positively. However, some students felt that they were reading extensively just to get higher grades, and they perceived this as a weakness. The items 15 (students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher), and 22 (the assessing session of extensive reading is not a very important part of extensive reading if the students understood the text) in the questionnaire revealed some ideas about the assessment of the ERP. According to the answers to these items, some of the students were not happy with reading just for getting higher grades in the reading course.

Among the other weaknesses that were stated by the students in the open-ended questions in the last part of the questionnaire were that the students did not have enough time for themselves after school, and they feel that they are reading extensively very often. One student mentioned that there was not enough time to do extensive reading, and two students stated that having to write the reports very often was a weakness of the ERP

As the students find the texts for themselves, reading texts higher than their proficiency levels emerges as a weakness of the ERP, according to the students' perceptions. Although the teachers are supposed to approve their reading material,

this problem emerges as a weakness. Another weakness of the ERP stated by the students in the open-ended question was that there are some problems with the assessment type of the ERP. For example, the number of the reports they write makes the students feel bored with reading. As the students have to write six reports in a term, they get bored with reading.

According to the perceptions of the students of the weaknesses of the ERP, the fact that it is not taken seriously by the students, the project being obligatory, reading a text type which is not liked by the student, reading in order to get higher grades, and writing the reports very often were revealed as weaknesses of the project. These issues are all related to the implementation procedure of the project.

Perceptions of Teachers and Students of Achievement of Goals of ERP

The following discussion tries to answer research question b and its sub research question i, which seek information regarding what the teachers and the students thought about the achievement of the goals of the ERP, which were set as enhancing reading comprehension, improving vocabulary, improving attitudes to reading in English and making the students use the strategies that they are taught in the class. Items 1, 3, 14, and 18 are the items on the questionnaire most closely related to the goals of the ERP implemented at AUSFL. Table 9 presents the data collected from the teachers' and the students' answers to these items.

	Teachers'		Students'	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability.	3.40	.503	4.19	.891
3. Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they learn in the class.	2.95	.759	4.25	.729
14. Extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class.	3.45	.510	3.92	1.028
18. Extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary.	3.50	.513	4.23	1.016

Table 9 - Questionnaire items related to the goals of the ERP

The teachers think that the implementation of the ERP achieves three out of the four goals. The answers of the teachers to the items 1, 14 and 18 in the questionnaire showed that they find the ERP successful in achieving these goals; however, they are suspicious about the effectiveness of the ERP in terms of meeting the goals and objectives, as emerged in the interviews, and as the answers to item 3 show. Fourteen teachers agreed, whereas nine teachers disagreed that reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they learn in the class. In the questionnaire, all of the teachers agreed with item 1 (reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability), item 14 (extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class, and item 18 (extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary). However, the data gathered from the interviews showed that the teachers were not sure the extent to which the students improved in terms of these goals.

When the same objectives of the ERP are taken into consideration from the students' perspective, some of the students think that the ERP is successful to some extent, whereas some of them do not. For example, the data gathered from the

questionnaire items, such as item 3 (reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they learn in the class), which 42 students agreed with, and item 18 (extensive reading helps the students to improve their vocabulary), which 41 students agreed with, support the idea that the students consider the ERP successful in meeting these goals. However, the students as a group were not sure whether reading extensively helps the students improve their reading comprehension ability, stated in item 1, to which 41 students agreed, but three students remained undecided, and four students disagreed with. The students were also not sure whether ER makes the students more confident in reading in English in the class (item 14), which 33 students agreed with, but nine students were undecided, and six students disagreed. It should be noted that the standard deviations for all of these items are quite large, indicating a wide spread of answers. The data gathered from the interviews also suggests that the students were not sure about the extent to which these goals are achieved.

Students' Perceptions of Improved Attitudes toward Reading and Reading Comprehension Ability

The following discusses the results of the study related to the last research question ii, which seeks the answer to the question of whether the ER project results in improved attitudes toward reading in English and whether the ER project results in perceptions of improved reading comprehension ability.

Students' Attitudes toward Reading in English Questionnaire

This section presents the data collected through Section II of the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire, which was conducted as a pre- and a post-questionnaire.

The questionnaire which aimed to reveal the attitudes toward reading in English consisted of 30 5-point Likert scale items and a separate validity checking item. The students were given this questionnaire before they started the ERP. The same questionnaire was conducted after the ERP in order to find out if the ERP had any effect on improving students' attitudes toward reading in English. For the first questionnaire, the mean of the means of the first 30 items was calculated and then it was compared to the mean of the validity checking question, using an independent t-test. The results of the independent t-test can be seen in Table 10.

Question type	Mean	Standard Deviation		t	Sig.
Means Reading attitude questions	3.0267	.41748	Means Equal Variance assumed	-.573	.571
Validity Checking Question (Q31)	3.2700	.	Equal variance not assumed	.	.

Table 10 - Comparison of the means of 30 questions with the mean of question 31

This table indicates that the mean of the first 30 items can be used as a valid description of attitudes toward reading, as there is no significant difference between the means.

The next step was to calculate a mean for each questionnaire for each student and compare the results of the pre-ERP version of the questionnaire with the post-ERP questionnaire to see if the difference was significant. Therefore, Table 11 shows the means for each participant on the pre- and post-ERP questionnaires.

Class	Pre questionnaire means	Post questionnaire means	Increase(+) Decrease(-)
5	2.90	1.51	-
5	2.74	2.90	+
5	3.67	3.06	-
5	3.35	2.67	-
5	4.09	2.87	-
5	2.54	1.90	-
5	3.96	3.32	-
5	2.38	3.19	+
5	1.93	3.45	+
5	3.83	4.12	+
5	3.48	3.74	+
5	2.77	2.35	-
5	3.19	3.03	-
5	4.09	1.93	-
5	2.38	3.25	+
5	1.87	3.19	+
5	3.38	2.83	-
5	2.38	3.29	+
5	2.38	3.70	+
5	3.80	3.54	-
5	2.87	3.00	+
5	3.70	2.48	-
5	1.70	2.41	+
5	3.06	2.09	-
18	2.39	2.35	-
18	3.67	2.87	-
18	2.25	3.29	+
18	3.87	2.58	-
18	2.77	2.41	-
18	2.45	2.00	-
18	2.38	3.09	+
18	3.09	2.22	-
18	3.41	3.35	-
18	2.70	3.06	+
18	3.09	3.45	+
18	3.35	4.22	+
18	3.54	2.90	-
18	3.29	2.74	-
18	2.45	3.03	+
18	3.51	3.64	+
18	3.77	3.03	-
18	3.29	2.87	-
18	2.61	3.45	+
18	2.80	2.45	-
18	2.51	3.64	+
18	3.74	3.67	-
18	3.06	3.32	+
18	2.67	2.48	-

Table 11 - Overall mean for each student, attitudes toward reading

As can be seen from Table 11, 20 students out of 48 improved their attitudes towards reading in English, whereas 28 students' attitudes toward reading decreased. The means are rather low in both pre- and post-questionnaires. There are only two students whose means are above 4, and therefore can be rated as a 4 on a scale of 5 in terms of attitudes to reading in the pre-questionnaire. It is interesting to note that these two students' means went down considerably in the post-questionnaire. There are also three students whose means were very low in the pre-questionnaire, less than 2, but their means increased on the post-questionnaire.

Then, a paired samples t-test was done in order to see if there was any difference from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire among the students as a group.

	Mean	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1 Pre questionnaire student means	3.0229	.561	.577
Post Questionnaire student means	2.9569		

Table 12 - Paired samples t-test - mean scores of students' attitudes

Table 12 shows that the students did not change their attitudes from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire.

The next step was to do a paired samples t-test in order to see if there was any difference in each item of the questionnaire from pre- to post-questionnaire.

Table 13 presents the results.

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre-1 - post-1	.14583	1.66298	.24003	-.33705	.62871	.608	47	.546
Pair 2	pre-2 - post-2	-.04167	1.39845	.20185	-.44774	.36440	-.206	47	.837
Pair 3	pre-3 - post-3	.31250	1.57313	.22706	-.14429	.76929	1.376	47	.175
Pair 4	pre-4 - post-4	.27083	2.04980	.29586	-.32437	.86603	.915	47	.365
Pair 5	pre-5 - post-5	.10417	1.22456	.17675	-.25141	.45974	.589	47	.558
Pair 6	pre-6 - post-6	.37500	1.53851	.22207	-.07174	.82174	1.689	47	.098
Pair 7	pre-7 - post-7	.02083	1.49452	.21572	-.41313	.45480	.097	47	.923
Pair 8	pre-8 - post-8	.18750	1.48261	.21400	-.24301	.61801	.876	47	.385
Pair 9	pre-9 - post-9	-.16667	1.80228	.26014	-.69000	.35666	-.641	47	.525
Pair 10	pre-10 - post-10	.04167	1.57045	.22667	-.41434	.49768	.184	47	.855
Pair 11	pre-11 - post-11	.16667	1.75443	.25323	-.34277	.67610	.658	47	.514
Pair 12	pre-12 - post-12	.08333	1.36574	.19713	-.31324	.47990	.423	47	.674
Pair 13	pre-13 - post-13	.04167	2.15326	.31080	-.58357	.66691	.134	47	.894
Pair 14	pre-14 - post-14	.54167	1.50118	.21668	.10577	.97756	2.500	47	.016
Pair 15	pre-15 - post-15	-.27083	2.09091	.30180	-.87797	.33630	-.897	47	.374
Pair 16	pre-16 - post-16	.12500	1.48216	.21393	-.30538	.55538	.584	47	.562
Pair 17	pre-17 - post-17	.22917	1.75329	.25307	-.27994	.73827	.906	47	.370
Pair 18	pre-18 - post-18	.25000	1.66950	.24097	-.23477	.73477	1.037	47	.305
Pair 19	pre-19 - post-19	-.27083	1.86501	.26919	-.81238	.27071	-1.006	47	.320
Pair 20	pre-20 - post-20	.04167	1.59732	.23055	-.42215	.50548	.181	47	.857
Pair 21	pre-21 - post-21	.41667	1.60893	.23223	-.05052	.88385	1.794	47	.079
Pair 22	pre-22 - post-22	-.20833	1.50118	.21668	-.64423	.22756	-.961	47	.341
Pair 23	pre-23 - post-23	.14583	1.58436	.22868	-.31422	.60588	.638	47	.527
Pair 24	pre-24 - post-24	-.08333	1.84314	.26603	-.61853	.45186	-.313	47	.755
Pair 25	pre-25 - post-25	-.10417	1.71650	.24776	-.60259	.39425	-.420	47	.676
Pair 26	pre-26 - post-26	.39583	1.51221	.21827	-.04327	.83493	1.814	47	.076
Pair 27	pre-27 - post-27	-.08333	1.25195	.18070	-.44686	.28019	-.461	47	.647
Pair 28	pre-28 - post-28	-.43750	1.44261	.20822	-.85639	-.01861	-2.101	47	.041
Pair 29	pre-29 - post-29	.04167	1.64974	.23812	-.43737	.52070	.175	47	.862
Pair 30	pre-30 - post-30	-.12500	1.36249	.19666	-.52063	.27063	-.636	47	.528
Pair 31	pre-31 - post-31	.10417	1.35646	.19579	-.28971	.49804	.532	47	.597

Table 13 - Paired samples t-test results, attitude questions

Table 13 indicates that there is no significant difference in terms of students' attitudes toward reading in English except in two items. One of the items, in which the students showed a lower attitude from pre- to post-questionnaire, was item 14 (reading in the class is fun). The other item which changed from pre- to post-questionnaire was item 28 (I feel comfortable while reading in English as I understand most of what I read), for which the students showed a better attitude.

Table 14 below presents the means and the standard deviations of each item in both the pre- and the post-questionnaires.

Items	Mean (Pre-Q)	Standard Deviation(Pre-Q)	Mean(Post Q)	Standard Deviation(Post Q)
1. I only read when I have to.	2.77	1.189	2.62	1.153
2. Reading in English is easy for me.	2.73	.893	2.77	.994
3. I think I have something more important to do than read in English.	2.77	1.077	2.46	1.110
4. I check out books to read in English from the library.	2.79	1.368	2.52	1.353
5. I think reading in English is enjoyable.	3.04	1.031	2.94	1.040
6. I read in English as much as I can.	3.21	1.129	2.83	1.117
7. I think I am a good student in reading in English.	2.60	1.047	2.58	1.028
8. Reading in English is an enjoyable pastime for me.	2.50	.968	2.31	1.114
9. I read magazines and newspapers in English to improve my English.	2.48	1.271	2.65	1.360
10. I feel confident that I understand what I read.	3.21	1.051	3.17	1.173
11. I read on the Internet to improve my English.	2.79	1.250	2.63	1.178
12. I learn a lot when I read in English.	3.62	.959	3.55	.996
13. I have to translate a text into Turkish in order to understand it completely.	3.25	1.313	3.21	1.320
14. Reading in the class is enjoyable.	3.28	1.097	2.73	1.125
15. In an EFL context, I do not have to be a fluent reader in English.	3.09	1.558	3.35	1.345
16. Reading in English helps improve my English.	3.94	.932	3.81	1.104
17. I like studying reading.	3.15	1.203	2.92	1.269
18. I need the teacher's help in order to understand the text.	3.42	1.164	3.17	1.098
19. I read aloud what I write in English to improve my English.	2.48	1.220	2.75	1.263
20. I like reading in English.	3.04	1.091	3.00	1.149
21. I would like to have more hours for the Reading Course.	2.98	1.151	2.56	1.109
22. I am a good reader in English.	2.67	.859	2.87	1.084
23. I try to read something in English when I have free time.	2.77	1.115	2.63	1.104
24. I read English subtitles of the films when I watch a film to improve my English.	3.06	1.227	3.15	1.220
25. I read lyrics of songs in English when I listen to a song.	3.40	1.333	3.50	1.353
26. Reading in English improves my vocabulary.	4.23	.973	3.85	1.021
27. I feel confident when I read in English.	3.31	1.035	3.41	1.079
28. I feel comfortable that I understand most of what I read in English.	2.67	1.209	3.10	1.207
29. I believe that good readers in English also get higher scores in the other courses.	2.83	1.404	2.79	1.254
30. Reading in English becomes enjoyable after a short while because I understand most of what I read.	2.73	1.026	2.85	1.220

Table 14 - Descriptive statistics, students' attitudes toward reading in English

When the data in table 14 are analyzed, item 26 (reading in English improves my vocabulary) has the highest mean in both the pre- and the post-questionnaire.

Items 9 (I read magazines and newspapers in English to improve my English) and 19 (I read aloud what I write in English to improve my English) have the same mean and the lowest mean in the pre-questionnaire, whereas it is item 8 (reading in English is an enjoyable pastime for me) that has the lowest mean in the post-questionnaire.

Students' Perceptions of Reading Ability and Improvement

As for the data gained from the open-ended questions which asked the students how well they think that they understand what they read and if the ERP helped them to improve their reading comprehension abilities, the researcher put the data gathered from these open-ended questions into tables. The students' perceptions of their reading comprehension were assigned to three categories: "Poor", which means the students have difficulty in understanding what they read; "Fair", which refers to comprehension with some difficulties; and "Good", which means that the students do not have any difficulties in understanding what they read. Table 15 shows the distribution of these three categories:

Perceptions of Reading Comprehension Level	Poor	Fair	Good
Number of the students	5	35	8

Table 15 - Students' perceptions of reading comprehension ability

According to Table 15, which presents the students' perceptions of their reading comprehension, most of the students (35 out of 48) think that they have a fair understanding of what they read. The students also stated in the answers of the same open-ended question that their reading comprehension may change depending on the level of the text and the motivation they have to read.

Table 16 presents data for the second open-ended question, which asked whether the students thought that the ERP improved their reading comprehension abilities:

Perceptions of the Effect of the ERP on Reading Comprehension abilities	Yes	No
Number of the students	37	11

Table 16 - Students' perceptions, effect of ERP on reading comprehension ability

According to the answers of the students, 37 students thought that the ERP was effective in improving the students' reading comprehension abilities. This data was also supported by the data gathered from the interviews:

(Participant 1)... The more I understand what I read, the more I tend to read short stories or newspaper articles or department related articles more. **It helps improve my reading comprehension.**

(Participant 3)... You can understand longer texts. When you first start to read a short story, **you feel that you cannot understand what you read... Before I started to read, I had some prejudice about my comprehension. I thought that I would not understand what I read. After I started to read I saw that I understood what I read.**

(Participant 4)... Normally somebody has to read something, but sometimes she does not do that. **As I am given a responsibility like that, I feel that my reading comprehension improves...**

(Participant 5)... **My reading comprehension improved since the beginning of the term but I do not know it is as a result of ER. Of course it affected, but I am not sure.**

According to the data gathered from the open-ended questions, most of the students think that their reading comprehension ability improved as a result of the ERP. This idea is supported by 41 students who agreed with the first item on the

questionnaire (reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability) as well.

Thus, according to the students' perceptions of the achievement of the goals of the ERP, which included improving attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension ability, it appears that most of the students feel that the ERP improves their reading ability. However, the results of the pre- and post-“Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire do not reveal any improvement in attitudes toward reading.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the data gained from the questionnaires and the interviews were analyzed and presented in three sections. In the first section, the data consisted of the Likert scale questions in Section III of the “Teachers’ and the Students’ Perceptions of the ERP” questionnaire and the interview transcripts, which answered research question 1 and a. In the second section, the data gained from the teachers’ and the students’ perceptions of the ERP and the interviews aimed to answer research questions b and i. The last section presents data from the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire and qualitative data gathered from the “Students’ Perceptions of the Extensive Reading Project” questionnaire, in order to address research question ii. In all the sections the data gathered from the open-ended questions in both the teachers’ and the students’ questionnaires were used to support the quantitative results.

The next chapter will present an overview of the study, the discussion of findings, pedagogical implications, and limitations of the study, suggestions for further research, and the conclusion.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The study was conducted to reveal the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project implemented at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) by examining the students' and the teachers' perceptions of its strengths and weaknesses, and by examining the extent to which the teachers and the students think that the ERP achieves its goals and objectives. The research questions addressed for the study were as follows:

1. How effective is the Extensive Reading Project (ERP) implemented at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL)?
 - a. What are the perceptions of the instructors and the students about the strengths and the weaknesses in the implementation of the ERP?
 - b. To what extent does the ERP achieve its goals and objectives?
 - i. To what extent do the instructors and the students think that the implementation of ER meets its goals and objectives?
 - ii. Does the ER project result in improved attitudes toward reading and perceptions of improved reading comprehension ability?

In this chapter, an overview of the study, the discussion of findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, pedagogical implications, suggestions for further research, and the conclusion will be presented.

Overview of the Study

Twenty instructors who are currently working for Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) and 48 lower intermediate level students participated in this survey study. The researcher used two types of data collection

instruments in this study. First, the students were given the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire. Second, both the teachers and the students were given separate versions of the “Perceptions of the Extensive Reading Project” questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews with five teachers and five students, all randomly chosen, were conducted just after the distribution of the questionnaires in order to obtain more information.

The “Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions of the ERP” questionnaires were similar to each other. The questionnaires included questions designed to obtain background information about the participants, Likert-scale items that aimed to investigate the perceptions of the participants toward the ERP, and two open-ended questions designed to obtain the participants’ perceptions of the strengths and weakness of the ERP.

The “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire was given to the students before and after the implementation of the ERP. Section I was designed in order to obtain background information about the students. Section II consisted of 31 Likert-scale items which aimed to investigate the students’ attitudes towards reading in English.

Two different but related schedules of interview questions were designed for teachers and students. The interview questions were asked of the participants in order to allow them to clarify the information they provided in the questionnaires.

General Results

The results of the data analysis suggested that the teachers and the students are satisfied with the ERP implemented at AUSFL to some extent. The results of the questionnaires and the participants’ responses during the interviews revealed that the

teachers agreed with the idea that reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability, that in order to be a fluent reader, students should read extensively, that ER is helpful in learning a foreign language, that ER makes students more confident in reading in English in class, and that ER helps the students improve their vocabulary. As for the teachers' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP, they think that exposure to different types of texts, learning new vocabulary, helping the students be fluent readers, and encouraging the students to read outside the class are the strengths of the ERP. Moreover, they believe that the ERP has a positive effect on improving the students' research skills, reading comprehension skills, and motivation to read more. However, in the interviews, when the teachers were asked if the ERP is helpful in improving the students' comprehension ability and vocabulary development, it emerged that some teachers were not sure about these improvements. They thought that the ERP contributes to reading comprehension and vocabulary improvement, but they seemed to be confused about whether the students internalized the words they learnt while reading extensively, or whether the students' improvements in reading comprehension were a result of only the ERP.

There are some teachers who think that the fact that ER is assessed results in failure of the ERP to meet its goals and objectives, which are developing reading comprehension, improving vocabulary, improving the attitudes toward reading in English, and using the strategies taught in the class. In addition, according to the perceptions of the teachers, assessing the ERP is a weakness, as there is no assessment of ER in its ideal implementation. Therefore, the assessment feature of the ERP is revealed as a controversial issue in the findings. Related to the assessment

of ER in the project, many problems occur in the implementation. As the reports that the students write are evaluated by the teachers, the students try to find easy ways to prepare their reports. They sometimes cheat by using the reports of their friends, or they hide some notes between the pages in their dictionaries and cheat in the class while writing their reports. According to most of the teachers, the assessment type of the ERP is problematic and is not successful in evaluating students' understanding of the text.

As for the students' perceptions of the ERP, some similarities and differences appeared between the students' and the teachers' perceptions of the ERP. For example, the students agree with the teachers that ER is helpful in learning a foreign language. In addition, like the teachers, the students also had some mixed feelings about whether the reading teacher should do a post-reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life. As the teachers did, the students had some mixed feelings about whether the work in ER should be evaluated by the teacher. However, unlike the teachers, the students had mixed feelings about some of the benefits of the ER. For example, the students were unsure about whether reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability, or become fluent readers, or become more confident in reading in English.

According to the students' perceptions, improving vocabulary, practising what is learnt in the class, improving reading comprehension, helping to gain new ideas, and increasing the reading course grade were strengths of the ERP, mentioned by several students. In addition, the effect of the ERP on increasing confidence and motivation to read, getting the habit of reading outside the class, and being exposed to different types of texts were also mentioned by several students as strengths of the

ERP. Moreover, according to some of the students, the ERP is an external factor which forces them to read; otherwise they would not.

As for the weaknesses of the ERP, the students, as the teachers did, found the assessment type to be a weakness of the project. They stated that cheating and memorizing the texts are problems that occur while writing the reports. The students also mentioned that they do not take the ERP seriously as they can get higher grades as long as they hand in something in the format of a report. Thus, the assessment of the ERP is revealed as a controversial issue among the students, similar to the teachers' perceptions.

The perceptions of the teachers in the questionnaire showed that they find the ERP successful in achieving three out of four of its goals. For example, all of the teachers agreed that reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability, that ER makes students more confident in reading in English in class, and that ER helps students improve their vocabulary. However, the teachers did not consider that the ERP helps the students use the strategies that they are taught in the class. In addition, the data gathered from the interviews showed that the teachers were not sure about the extent to which the students improved in terms of these goals.

Unlike the teachers, the students had some mixed feelings about the achievement of the ERP in meeting its goals. For example, most of the students agreed with the ideas that reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they learn in the class, and that ER helps the students to improve their vocabulary. However, some students disagreed that reading extensively helps the students improve their reading comprehension ability. There was also some

disagreement about whether ER makes the students more confident in reading in English in the class. The data gathered from the interviews also suggest that the students were not sure about the extent to which these goals are achieved.

The data gained from the “Students’ Attitudes toward Reading in English” questionnaire, which was conducted as a pre- and a post-questionnaire, showed that there was no difference between the attitudes of the students toward reading in English before and after the implementation of the ERP. Only 20 students out of 48 improved their attitudes toward reading, whereas 28 students’ attitudes toward reading decreased. In addition, there was no significant difference on any specific item in the questionnaire, except for two items. One of those items, for which the students showed a lower attitude, was item 14 (reading in the class is fun). The other item, which increased its mean from pre- to post-questionnaire, was item 28 (I feel comfortable while reading in English as I understand most of what I read). However, unlike the data from the attitude questionnaire, the data gained from the interviews indicated that the students’ attitudes to reading improved as a result of the ERP.

As for the students’ perceptions of their reading comprehension improvement, most of the students (35 out of 48) think that they “fairly” understand what they read. The students also stated in the answers of the same open-ended question that their reading comprehension may change depending on the level of the text and the motivation. In the interviews, they reported that they improved their reading comprehension as well. Moreover, according to the data gathered from the students’ answers to the open-ended question which asked whether the students thought that the ERP improved their reading comprehension abilities, 37 students thought that the ERP was effective in improving the students’ reading

comprehension abilities. This finding was also supported by the data gathered from the interviews.

Discussion of the Results

The Teachers' and the Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of the ERP

The effect of the ERP in helping the students improve their reading comprehension was considered as a strength of the ERP by the teachers and the students; this was an expected result, as improved reading comprehension has been revealed in different studies in the literature. Bell (2001), Leung (2002), and Robb and Susser (1989) carried out different studies, the findings of which show that the students' reading comprehension improved as a result of ER. Krashen (1993) also states that free voluntary reading results in better reading comprehension. Improvement in reading comprehension is of great importance and is one of the underlying motives for having an ERP in the curriculum. Thus, this is a positive finding for AUSFL, as the integration of the ERP into the reading course results in at least the perception of success, in the eyes of those involved, in terms of improving reading comprehension. It is interesting, however, that the students did not feel as strongly on this questionnaire item as the teachers did. This difference between the perceptions may be the result of the fact that the students might not yet have enough experience with the project to judge its effect on reading comprehension, as they have participated in the project for only one month.

Another strength stated by both the students and the teachers was that vocabulary improves as a result of the ERP. There are several reasons why it is so attractive to develop vocabulary through extensive reading (Pigada & Schimitt, 2006; Waring & Takaki, 2003). This approach facilitates learner autonomy, can be very

pleasant and motivating, provides learners with the opportunity to meet words in their context of use (Thornbury, 2002), and increases sight vocabulary (Coady, 1997). Moreover, Hunt and Beglar (2005) state that with the help of ER, EFL learners can build their reading vocabulary to an advanced level. Horst (2005) also carried out a study, the results of which showed that an ER program, in which the students chose books appropriate to their interests, was effective in gaining word knowledge.

Hayashi (1999) and McQuillan (1994) found that students perceived that reading more in English lead to significantly greater success in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge. A similar result was also found in this study: According to the students' perceptions of the strengths of the ERP in the present study, the ERP is not only helpful in improving their vocabulary but also their reading comprehension.

Exposure to different types of texts was also mentioned as a strength of the ERP implemented at AUSFL, by ten teachers and two students. As the students are supposed to read five different types of texts, such as biography, short story, department related article, newspaper article, and free reading (lyrics, anecdotes and so on), they have to read different genres. As Powell states (2005), a good variety of genres is of great importance while the students are reading extensively. The students must be exposed to different types of text and real language. As Camiciottoli (2001) mentions, priority should be given to equip the classrooms and libraries with a wide variety of books and other types of reading materials as a means of encouraging students to read in English.

Encouraging being a fluent reader is another benefit of ER and also one of the strengths of the ERP as stated by the teachers and the students at AUSFL. According

to Hitosugi and Day (2004), ER nurtures fluency in reading. The study conducted by Greenberg et al. (2006) demonstrates growth in the areas of reading fluency and expressive vocabulary as a result of ER. However, there appears to be a difference between the perceptions of the students and the teachers about the effect of ER on reading fluency. For example, all the teachers agree on item 11 (in order to be a fluent reader, students should read extensively), whereas the students have mixed feelings about whether ER helps them become a fluent reader. As mentioned above about reading comprehension, this difference between the perceptions may be a result of the students' being exposed to the project for only one month, which is a short time to judge its effect on reading fluency.

There are some other strengths of the ERP at AUSFL mentioned by both the teachers and the students and which are also unique to the present situation because of some differences in implementation between the ERP and the way ER is described in the literature. "Developing research skills" was identified by one teacher and one student as a strength of the ERP, a strength or benefit that has not emerged in other studies. The reason for this is that, in the usual implementation of ER, there is a library or a bank of materials; however, in the ERP at AUSFL, the students search for their own materials. In addition, "helping to increase the reading course grade" is a strength stated by both the teachers and the students and is also unique to the situation, as none of the studies conducted so far looked at a program in which ER was assessed.

Both teachers and students mention improved motivation and attitudes to reading with the help of the ERP. As Asraf and Ahmad (2003) state, ER encourages the students to develop a positive attitude towards reading. It also increases their

motivation to read (Constantino, 1994; Day & Bamford, 1998; Hayashi, 1999; Hedge, 1985). Perhaps this may occur as a result of the fact that the more one reads, the easier reading becomes.

The students also think that the ERP made them practise what they learnt in the classroom, especially using the strategies they learn in the class. As this is one of the goals of the ERP, it appears as a strength of the project. However, according to the teachers' perceptions, the ERP does not encourage the students to use the strategies they teach in the class, which is a bit strange. The difference between the students' and the teachers' perceptions on this point may emerge because the teachers cannot observe their students use the strategies while they are reading, or the teachers do not ask their students if they make use of the strategies while reading extensively.

The Teachers' and the Students' Perceptions of the Weaknesses of the ERP

The assessment feature of the ERP emerges from the data gathered from the open-ended question in both the teachers' and the students' questionnaires, and in the interviews. This feature emerges as a weakness of the ERP, as both the students and the teachers think that this practice is one reason why the project does not achieve its goals completely. According to some of the teachers and the students, the assessment of ER acts as an external factor to force the students to read outside the class just to get grades for the reading course. For the teachers, assessing the ERP does not fit with the way it is usually implemented, and assessing the ERP may result in failing to achieve the goals of the project. According to Day and Bamford (1998), reading is its own reward. In an ER program, students should not be assessed for what they read. However, there may be some exceptions, such as discovering what the students

have comprehended from the text they read, having an idea of what the students read, monitoring the attitudes of students toward reading, and relating reading with the curriculum of the school, in that the teacher may prepare some follow-up activities (Hitosugi & Day, 2004). However, the practice of assessing ER at AUSFL does not fit any of these exceptions. Therefore, assessing the ER and integrating assessment with the curriculum may lead to failure to reach the goals that were set.

“Reading a text type I do not like” and “Reading texts at a higher proficiency level” were mentioned by several students as weaknesses of the ERP. As the students have to read different text types assigned by the teacher, sometimes the students have to read a text type which they do not like, although the students choose the reading material they like in the implementations described in the literature (Day & Bamford, 1998). This external factor forces them to read, which results in reading unwillingly, and thus failing to meet the goals. In addition, because of teachers’ lack of guidance to help the students find the texts appropriate for their proficiency levels, the students may find themselves reading a text that is too difficult for them, which is contrary to the purpose of ER, since in the literature it is emphasized that the reading material must be easy (Powell, 2005).

Perceptions about the Achievement of the Goals of the ERP

The goals of the ERP implemented at AUSFL are improving the students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary, improving the students’ attitudes toward reading and encouraging the students to use the strategies they are taught in the class. These goals are also set as the goals of an ideal implementation of extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 1998). According to the perceptions of the teachers which emerged both from the questionnaire and the interviews, the teachers think that the ERP is

successful at meeting the first three goals mentioned above, but they do not agree that the ERP is successful in encouraging the learners to use the strategies they learnt in the class. In addition, the interviews reveal that some of the teachers were unsure about the extent to which these goals are met. Unlike the teachers, the students have mixed ideas about the achievement of these goals, although most of them agree that the ERP improves reading comprehension and gives them a chance to use the strategies they learn in the class. The reason behind their mixed feelings may be related to some problems with the implementation. One problem that may prevent the ERP from meeting its goals is a lack of teacher guidance for organizing the project in the classroom. Although the teachers are told that the students should be informed about the benefits of the ERP and the goals of the project, and why the project is implemented, there still appear to be many students who do not know why they are reading extensively (as indicated by the number of questionnaire items that received the full range of responses), and thus, they do not take the project seriously. It is the teachers' responsibility to guide the students in the implementation. For example, the teachers should help the students to find the texts appropriate to their levels, or the teachers should help the students to understand the purpose of reading extensively, and thus their purpose for reading the texts they have chosen, or help them to understand why they should read texts that are easier. Lack of guidance may also be the reason for some similarities and differences between the students' and the teachers' perceptions of the weaknesses of the ERP. As Powell states "ER is not a magic formula" (2005, p. 34). In order to make use of it, the teachers should provide the student with regular input and encouragement.

*Students' Perceptions of Improved Attitudes toward Reading and Reading
Comprehension Ability*

One of the goals of the ERP implemented at AUSFL is to improve the students' attitudes toward reading in English. Camiciottoli (2001), Greenberg et al. (2006), and Yamashita (2004) found that the students' attitudes toward reading improved as a result of ER. However, the attitudes of the students toward reading in English in this study did not improve. There are several possible reasons for this. First, it might be that because the students were forced to read, because they would be evaluated, their already poor attitudes (as inferred from the low means on the attitude questionnaire) did not change. Another reason might be that the students were assigned to read a particular text type which they did not like. A third reason for the lack of improvement in attitudes to reading might be the difficulty the students had while trying to find a reading text to read that is appropriate to their level. The students' negative attitudes toward reading in L1 may also be a factor affecting their attitudes in L2. Tercanlioglu (2001), in her study, states that Turkish students do not read for social reasons, which means that they are not motivated to read with their friends or with their families. Related to Tercanlioglu's study, Yamashita (2004) conducted another study which investigated the relationship between learners' L1 and L2 reading attitudes and their L2 proficiency. The findings demonstrated that if students have a positive attitude towards L1 reading, they are likely to develop a positive attitude towards reading in L2 even at lower levels of language proficiency. These students' positive reading attitudes are likely to encourage them to get input from reading. On the other hand, students' negative attitudes in L1 reading will result

in reading in L2 for only assignments or exams. Such learners may not develop their potential to the fullest since they are not willing to get further input.

It can be said that exposure to the ERP was one of the factors leading to the perceptions of the improvement in reading comprehension. If the students read more, their perceptions of their reading comprehension will be higher. Most of the students think that their reading comprehension abilities improved as a result of the ERP. However, 11 students do not think that the ERP is helpful in improving their reading comprehension abilities. These students may be the ones who are not aware of the benefits of the ERP, or the ones with low motivation to learn English; alternatively, the problems stated above may explain their negative perceptions (being assessed, being assigned a particular text type, and having difficulty in finding the texts appropriate to their levels).

The Implementation of the ERP

In addition, the ERP is different from any ER program described in the literature in several ways. For example, in the ERP at AUSFL the students search for their own materials on the Internet or in the library in order to make the students take the responsibility for their own reading and to make the reading enjoyable for them, while in the ideal implementation, there is a library of interesting and level-appropriate materials to choose from (Powell, 2005). In addition, in the ideal implementation, the students read at least a book a week (Day & Bamford, 2002), whereas in the ERP at AUSFL, the students read six texts in a term. The rationale behind this number was that the teachers considered this number of texts to be enough of a workload for both the teachers and the students. In fact, they wanted the students to read more texts, but it would have been a burden for the students as they

had many assignments to do for their other courses, and it would have also been a heavy workload for the teachers as they had many papers to grade for the other course they taught. Moreover, the syllabus of the reading course was too loaded to add more ER assignments.

In the ERP, what the students read is assessed in order to force the students to read, because it was felt that the students would not have participated otherwise, but on the other hand, in the literature, the students read for enjoyment. Moreover, the students write a report in the class about what they read in the ERP at AUSFL because it was felt that this way of assessing would save time. In addition, making the students write reports in the class was simply a way of assessing, while in the literature, the students talk about the book they read with their peers or their teacher, in order to improve their language skills, help them appreciate reading, and share their reading experiences with others. Being assigned a particular kind of reading is another characteristic of the ERP at AUSFL, the purpose of which is to expose the students to different types of texts and make them familiar with different text types. However, in the ideal implementation stated in the literature, the students choose the text type according to their interests.

It can be seen that there are many differences between the implementation of the ERP at AUSFL and the way ER is described in the literature. These differences from the ideal implementation of ER as described in the literature may be having an effect on the ability of the ERP to meet its goals and objectives.

Limitations

As for the limitations of the study, the length of the study can be discussed. The difference between the attitudes of the students toward reading in English before and after the ERP is measured over only one month. This may be one reason why their attitudes did not seem to change toward reading in English. The result might have been different if the study had been longer, allowing time for change in attitudes to occur.

Moreover, more teachers and more students could have been interviewed, as only five teachers and five students were interviewed. In addition, more students could have been involved in the study. Furthermore, the students' perceptions of their improved reading comprehension were relied on, when it would have been better to measure their comprehension directly.

The number of the teachers was 20, whereas the number of the students was 48. Having more teachers would have meant having more opinions and would have provided more reliability. Moreover, it would have made it possible to generalize the results to all of the teachers who are involved in the ERP.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study also suggest that the success of a reading program depends on several factors (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003), among which are how the teachers are able to motivate the students to read; how the program is organized and implemented; and how their reading is monitored. It also depends on how teachers feel about extensive reading. Unless the teachers are of the view that extensive reading is beneficial in promoting English language development among their students, they are not likely to exert their efforts to make the program a success.

Thus, these factors should be given careful consideration when implementing an extensive reading program.

In order to help the ERP achieve its goals of improving reading comprehension and improving vocabulary, some changes in the ERP should be made. For example, the students should be encouraged to read more as six texts a term is not enough, since the more they will read, the better they will understand what they read. Moreover, they should be encouraged to actually read rather than cheating. In addition, they should be supported to improve their attitudes and motivation for reading because if they have a better attitude and are more motivated, they will read more. Finally, they should read materials at the appropriate level since reading materials that are slightly below their proficiency level will help them to improve their reading fluency, as well as their vocabulary, as the higher percentage of known vocabulary helps in understanding the unknown words.

In order to accomplish the above changes, the program may be extended over the whole term, instead of only over three or four weeks, because extending the program over the whole term would make it possible for the students to read more. In addition, the students may be rewarded for the amount of reading they do. This may provide extrinsic motivation for the students to read more. The amount of reading that the students do can be monitored by having the students keep an extensive reading portfolio that includes the texts they have read. In addition to encouraging students to read outside class, extra time in the class for reading can be provided, which will ensure that the students read at least for that amount of time in the week. Extra time can also be provided in the class to allow the students to discuss and share their readings with each other and the teacher, which will help to ensure that they

actually read. Appropriate materials should be provided in the form of a library of ER materials. In addition, the students should be given specific guidance in finding and selecting their own reading materials, when the library is not sufficient.

In order to help the ERP to achieve its goal of giving students a chance to practice the reading strategies they have learned in class, the following change should be made in the ERP: Students should keep a diary of their extensive reading, in which they can talk about the difficulties they had, the reading strategies they employed to overcome those difficulties, and the success or non-success of those reading strategies. This would help to remind the students to practice their reading strategies, or at least show that they are using the reading strategies they learned in the class. This diary could be incorporated into the extensive reading portfolio mentioned above.

In addition, in order to help the ERP meet its goal of improving attitudes to reading in English, the following changes should be made in the ERP: The students should be informed about the goals and the implementation of the ERP. Knowing that the ERP is a useful and effective way of improving their reading comprehension, and that this is the main purpose of its implementation, will help the students understand the rationale behind the ERP. Furthermore, understanding the principles behind all of the characteristics and features of the ERP (i.e. why it is done at all, why they should read easy materials, why they should read outside of the class, what is their purpose for reading, and so on) will also enable the students to be aware of what they are supposed to do in the implementation. In addition, being able to freely choose reading material that is interesting to them, and being able to read materials that are appropriate for their language proficiency level, will support the students to

develop positive attitudes toward reading. Most importantly, not seeing the ERP as just another way to be assessed, or as a way to get a higher reading grade, and being able to share and discuss the reading that they do with others who may or may not have read the same reading may also improve the students' attitudes toward reading.

In order to achieve the above objective, the teachers should show the students that the program is taken seriously, as a genuine effort to improve their reading comprehension, rather than just another way to assess them, by making the students aware of the rationale behind all of the practices in the ERP. The ERP should also allow the teacher to act as a role model of a reader, enabling the students to see him/her reading in the class while students are reading. As stated above, the students should be allowed to choose reading materials based on their interests, rather than assigning them different text types. In addition, the teacher should ensure that students are reading materials at the appropriate level for their language proficiency, because when students read texts that are too difficult for them, they will not enjoy the reading that they do, and this will negatively impact their attitudes to reading. As stated above, a library of interesting and level-appropriate materials from which to choose should be provided, and a system of guiding students to finding their own appropriate materials should be developed when or if the library is insufficient for their interests or needs. Most importantly, the practice of assessing ER in the ERP should be stopped. If necessary, students' level of participation in ER can be assessed in order to satisfy the requirements of the administration, but the students' comprehension of what they have read should not be assessed.

In implementing the above changes in the ERP, several issues, such as time constraints, materials and assessment, will need to be addressed. First, time is of

great importance as the syllabus of the reading course is full of quizzes and midterms in different weeks, and the changes proposed above will require more time in the curriculum than is currently allotted. The forty-minute slot which is now devoted to letting the students write their reports could be allotted instead to actually reading extensively in the classroom. The teachers, during this time, may act as role models of readers in the class. The forty-minute class can also be increased up to two forty-minute classes to allow the students to discuss and share what they read with their classmates. During this time, the teachers could be checking that the students have read extensively. Although it may mean devoting less time to something else in the curriculum, as long as the goals of the ERP are achieved, it is worth it. It is also worth remembering the benefits that ER can have on other language skills.

The materials for the ERP are also an issue, which causes some problems in the implementation as the students complain about the problems they have while trying to find appropriate materials for their levels to read extensively. The stakeholders of the ERP may establish a specific ERP library, which provides the students at different levels with different reading materials such as graded readers, magazines and newspapers, simplified department-related articles, biographies, and poems appropriate to different proficiency levels and interests. An empty class in the school or some shelves in each class can be set aside for this library. The materials for this library can be purchased, or already graded materials can be found on the Internet. If needed, some teachers can work as materials development staff and simplify the materials. A photocopying budget can be allotted for photocopying the materials to be kept in the library.

As for the assessment issue, in order to satisfy the requirements of the administration, the students can be assessed for their participation in the ERP, but not their comprehension of what they have read. The teacher can assess whether or not the students have read, by asking random questions and rating the students' answers on a checklist, as to whether they are "good", "fair", or "poor". To do this, the teacher can open a page of the reading material randomly and ask the student "What happened before this point?" and "What happened after this point?", or "How many people were involved in the accident?". These questions should be in a format that cannot be prepared for, in order to prevent the students from cheating, and also the teachers should keep the questions in a format that cannot be answered without having read the text. The students' performance can be evaluated as class participation, but not 25% of their reading course grades. This assessment can take place while students are discussing their reading with each other in small groups. As another way of assessing their level of participation, as stated above, the students can be rewarded for the number of pages read, as checked off in their portfolios.

If the changes suggested above are realized, the goals of the ERP implemented at AUSFL, which are improving reading comprehension and vocabulary, and improving attitudes toward reading and using the strategies the students learn in the class, may be achieved to a greater extent, both in practice, and in the eyes of the teachers and the students.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study explored the teachers' and students' attitudes towards the strengths and the weaknesses of the ERP implemented at AUSFL. The first alternative for further study may be to add classroom observations to support the data gained from

the questionnaires and the interviews. In addition, a study can be carried out to actually measure the effectiveness of the ERP in achieving its goals and objectives.

Another study may involve the ERP without assessment, to reveal the perceptions of the students and the teachers, and demonstrate if any difference would occur. Since this survey study was carried out at the local level, it may be replicated by other researchers from other universities where the conditions are similar to those of the ERP implemented at AUSFL. This would allow representatives of language programs to evaluate the ERPs which are systematically implemented in their institutions as a part of the assessment.

Finally, another alternative for further research would be exploring the teachers' and students' points of view about alternative extensive reading projects.

Conclusion

The study looked at the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project implemented at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) by examining the students' and the teachers' perceptions of its strengths and weaknesses, and by examining the extent to which the teachers and the students think that the ERP achieves its goals and objectives. The data were collected through three questionnaires, one separate and two parallel, as well as interviews. The findings of the questionnaires and the interviews revealed that both the teachers and the students are generally content with the ERP in terms of achieving its goals, which are improving reading comprehension, and vocabulary, using the strategies taught in the class, and improving attitudes toward reading in English. According to the perceptions of the teachers, the results also suggested that the reason that the ERP does not fully meet its goals is that it includes the practice of assessment. The study

also pointed to the problems in the assessment practices of the ERP. For example, informing the students about the questions they are going to answer and letting them use their dictionaries are only two of the problems in the assessment process. Finally, the results showed that the students have some complaints about the ERP, such as its being obligatory and not being taken seriously by the students. As the implementation of the ERP at AUSFL has not been carried out according to the procedure described in the literature, success in meeting its goals and objectives may have been affected. It is possible for the stakeholders at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages to change the implementation of the ERP according to the recommendations given in this chapter in order to increase its effectiveness, and its ability to meet its goals and objectives.

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APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS FOR TEXT TYPES

Biography

- 1) Why did you especially choose this person for the project? Justify your answer.
- 2) What are the high or low points in that person's life? Explain them in details.
- 3) What can you infer from the biography about that person's personality?
- 4) Do you have anything in common with that person? If so, what's it? If not, in what ways are you different?
- 5) What title would you suggest for that biography? If it has one, how would you change it?

Free Reading: Poems/ Lyrics-Comics-Critics/ Reviews etc.

- 1) Why did you read especially this text for the project? Justify your answer or list the reasons why you read this text.
- 2) What is the theme/main idea of the text?
- 3) What is the most striking point in the text? Why? Justify your answer by providing quotations from the text.
- 4) What (other) title would you suggest for the text? Why? Justify your answer.
- 5) Write your comments and reactions to the text. If you were the writer/author/poet of the text, what would you change in the text? (in term of its content, wording, ideas/opinions, etc.)

Short Stories and Novels

- 1) Who are the main characters in the story? Describe each character in detail (physical appearance and/or character).
- 2) What is the story about? (between 50-100 words are recommended).
- 3) What is the most interesting or most important event in the story?
- 4) What is the main idea or the message of the story?
- 5) What is the relationship between the title and the story? If there is no relationship, how would you change the title and why?

Department-Related Articles

- 1) What is the text mainly about? Write a paragraph summarizing the text. (recommended word limit: between 50 and 100 words)
- 2) What did you expect to find in the text before you read it? How did it match your expectations? How did the text affect your expectations about your department?
- 3) What is the most interesting / useful or the newest information you learned from the text? Do you think this piece of information will be useful in your department? If yes, why and how? If not, why?
- 4) Write two words that are related to your department and that you think are very important for the text. Why do you think they are important? Justify your answer.
- 5) Write your comments and reactions to the text. While reading the text, did you have any difficulties? If yes, how did you overcome them? If not, why?

Newspaper Articles

- 1) Why did you choose especially this article among many others? Justify your reason.
- 2) Write a brief summary of the article considering the following questions: what, who, why, where, when, and how.
- 3) Are there any pictures related to the article? If yes, explain its relation to the text. If not, what kind of a picture would you like to see with this article? Why?
- 4) Write five topic-related words that you learned and/or that you think are important in the article.
- 5) What are your reactions to the text? Write your comments and feelings.

APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN ENGLISH
QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is prepared to collect data for a thesis study conducted at Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program. The study aims at gathering data about attitudes toward reading in the foreign language. A number of statements about reading in English are presented below. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your ideas are of vital importance because the results will give valuable information for students' attitudes toward reading.

The first part of the questionnaire consists of questions about personal information. The second part includes attitudes toward reading in the foreign language. The third part includes one general question about your attitudes toward reading in English.

All responses will be treated as confidential, and your individual privacy will be maintained in all presented and published data resulting from the study.

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign in this form.

Figen Tezdiker

Faculty: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Part I

Please mark the option that corresponds to your answer.

Sex: () Female () Male

Age: () 16- 18 () 19 – 21 () 22 – 24 () 25 +

First Semester Level: _____

Part II

Please put a tick in the box that corresponds to your answer.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I only read when I have to.					
2. Reading in English is easy for me.					
3. I think I have something more important to do than read in English.					
4. I check out books to read in English from the library.					
5. I think reading in English is enjoyable.					
6. I read in English as much as I can.					
7. I think I am a good student in reading in English.					
8. Reading in English is an enjoyable pastime for me.					
9. I read magazines and newspapers in English to improve my English.					
10. I feel confident that I understand what I read.					
11. I read on the Internet to improve my English.					
12. I learn a lot when I read in English.					
13. I have to translate a text into Turkish in order to understand it completely.					
14. Reading in the class is enjoyable.					
15. In an EFL context, I do not have to be a fluent reader in English.					
16. Reading in English helps improve my English.					
17. I like studying reading.					
18. I need the teacher's help in order to understand the text.					
19. I read aloud what I write in English to improve my English.					
20. I like reading in English.					
21. I would like to have more hours for the Reading Course.					
22. I am a good reader in English.					
23. I try to read something in English when I have free time.					
24. I read English subtitles of the films when I watch a film to improve my English.					
25. I read lyrics of songs in English when I listen to a song.					
26. Reading in English improves my vocabulary.					
27. I feel confident when I read in English.					
28. I feel comfortable that I understand most of what I read in English.					
29. I believe that good readers in English also get higher scores in the other courses.					
30. Reading in English becomes enjoyable after a short while because I understand most of what I read.					

Part III

Please choose one of the options to answer the question.

In general, how would you describe your attitude to reading in English?

- a) I really like to read in English.
- b) I like reading in English as long as it isn't too difficult.
- c) I don't mind reading in English, but it is difficult for me.
- d) I don't like reading in English, but I do it when I have to.
- e) I hate reading in English, and I avoid it whenever I can.

☺☺☺ Thank you for your contribution! ☺☺☺

APPENDIX C: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN ENGLISH
QUESTIONNAIRE (TURKISH VERSION)

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Bu anket Bilkent Üniversitesi, MA TEFL Programı'nda yürütülen tez çalışmasına bilgi toplamak için hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışma öğrencilerin İngilizcede okumaya karşı tutumları hakkında bilgi toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Aşağıda İngilizce okumayla ilgili bazı ifadeler verilmiştir. Amaç sizin ifadelerle ilgili gerçek tutumlarınız hakkında bilgi toplamaktır. Sizin düşüncüleriniz büyük önem taşımaktadır çünkü sonuçlar öğrencilerin İngilizcede okumaya karşı tutumları için değerli bilgi verecektir.

Anketin ilk bölümü kişisel bilgi hakkında sorular içermektedir. İkinci bölüm İngilizcede okumaya karşı öğrenci tutumları içermektedir. Üçüncü bölümde İngilizce okumaya karşı genel tutumunuzla ilgili bir soru içermektedir.

Ankette doğru ya da yanlış cevap bulunmamaktadır. Bütün cevaplar gizli kalacaktır ve kişisel gizliliğiniz çalışmadan çıkacak tüm sunulan ve yayınlanan verilerde korunacaktır.

Çalışmaya katılmaya karar verdiyseniz, lütfen bu formu imzalayınız.

Figen Tezdiker

Fakülte: _____

Tarih: _____

İmza: _____

Bölüm I

Lütfen cevabınıza uygun olan seçeneği seçiniz.

Cinsiyet: () Bayan () Bay

Yaş: () 16- 18 () 19 – 21 () 22 – 24 () 25 +

Birinci Dönem Seviyesi: _____

Bölüm II

Lütfen cevabınıza uygun olan kutuyu işaretleyiniz.

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
1. İngilizce metin sadece zorunda olduğum zaman okurum.					
2. İngilizce metin okumak benim için kolaydır.					
3. İngilizce metin okumak yerine başka şeyler yapmayı tercih ederim.					
4. Okumak için kütüphaneden İngilizce kitap alırım.					
5. İngilizce metin okumaktan zevk alıyorum.					
6. Elimden geldiğince İngilizce metin okumaya çalışırım.					
7. İngilizce metin okumada iyi bir öğrenci olduğumu düşünüyorum.					
8. İngilizce metin okumak benim için eğlenceli bir boş zaman aktivitesidir.					
9. İngilizcemizi geliştirmek için İngilizce magazin ve/veya gazete okuyorum.					
10. İngilizcede okuduğum metni anladığım için kendime güveniyorum.					
11. İngilizcemizi geliştirmek için İnternet ortamında İngilizce metin okuyorum.					
12. İngilizce metin okuduğumda çok şey öğreniyorum.					
13. İngilizce bir metni tamamen anlamak için Türkçeye çevirmem gerekiyor.					
14. Sınıfta İngilizce metin okumak eğlencelidir.					
15. İngilizce'de iyi bir okuyucu olmam gerektiğini düşünmüyorum.					
16. İngilizce metin okumak İngilizcemizi geliştirmemde yardımcı oluyor.					
17. İngilizce metin okuma çalışmaları yapmayı seviyorum.					
18. İngilizce bir metni anlamak için öğretmenin yardımına ihtiyacım oluyor.					
19. İngilizcemizi geliştirmek için kendi yazdığım metni okurum.					

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
20. İngilizce metin okumaktan hoşlanıyorum.					
21. Okuma dersinin daha fazla saat olmasını isterdim.					
22. İngilizce metin okumada iyi olduğumu düşünüyorum.					
23. Boş zamanım olduğunda İngilizce bir şeyler okumaya çalışırım.					
24. İngilizcemi geliştirmek için film izlerken altyazılarını İngilizce okurum.					
25. İngilizcemi geliştirmek için sevdiğim şarkıların İngilizce sözlerini okurum					
26. İngilizce okumak kelime hazinemini geliştiriyor.					
27. İngilizce metin okuduğumda kendime güvenirim.					
28. İngilizce okuduğum şeyin çoğunu anladığım için İngilizce okurken kendimi çok rahat hissedirim.					
29. İngilizce metin okumada başarılı olanların diğer derslerde de daha başarılı olduklarını düşünüyorum.					
30. İngilizce okuduğum metnin çoğunu anladığım için İngilizce okumayı eğlenceli buluyorum.					

Bölüm III

Lütfen soruyu cevaplamak için seçeneklerden birini seçiniz.

Genel olarak, İngilizce okumaya karşı tutumunuzu nasıl tanımlarsınız?

- İngilizce metin okumaktan gerçekten hoşlanıyorum.
- Çok zor olmadıkça İngilizce metin okumaktan hoşlanıyorum.
- İngilizce metin okumaktan kaçınmıyorum ancak çok zorlanıyorum.
- İngilizce metin okumaktan hoşlanmıyorum ama zorunlu olduğum zaman okuyorum.
- İngilizce metin okumaktan nefret ediyorum ve elimden geldiğince İngilizce metin okumaktan kaçınıyorum.

☺☺☺Katılımınız için teşekkürler!☺☺☺

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSIVE READING
PROJECT (ENGLISH VERSION)

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is prepared to collect data for a thesis study conducted at Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program. The study aims at gathering data about EFL students' beliefs about the effect of Extensive Reading Project (ER).

The first part of the questionnaire consists of questions about personal information. The second and the third parts include beliefs about the effect of ER in learning a foreign language. The fourth part includes some questions about the ER Project.

All responses will be treated as confidential, and your individual privacy will be maintained in all presented and published data resulting from the study.

Filling in this questionnaire will ensure that you agree to participate in this study.

Thank you for your contribution!

Figen Tezdiker

Part I.

Faculty: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Gender : () Female () Male

Age : () 16- 18 () 19 – 21 () 22 – 24 () 25 +

First term level: _____

Part II. Student Perceptions about the Effect of ER

Directions: Please put a tick (✓) in the box that corresponds to your answer.

		strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability.					
2	The reading text for extensive reading should include vocabulary that is appropriate to the students' level.					
3	Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies they teach in the class.					
4	The assessment questions related to the text type should focus on every detail in the reading text in assessing extensive reading.					
5	Students should decide the topics they want to read about out of the class.					
6	The teachers should guide students find different texts about different topics to read extensively.					
7	Extensive reading material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels.					
8	The teacher should make it clear to the students that the purpose of reading a text extensively is to understand the general gist of the text.					
9	The reading teacher should do a post reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life.					
10	Extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level.					
11	In order to be a fluent reader, a student should read extensively.					
12	The students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively.					
13	Extensive reading is helpful in learning a foreign language.					

		strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
14	Extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class.					
15	Students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher.					
16	Extensive reading should be guided by the teacher.					
17	Extensive reading is more helpful for students than intensive reading (reading in class) is.					
18	Extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary.					
19	Students should be given a purpose to read while reading a text extensively.					
20	The aim of extensive reading is to make students like reading, not a detailed reading.					
21	Students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries (bilingual or monolingual) while reading a text extensively.					
22	Assessing session of extensive reading is not very important part of extensive reading if the students understood the text.					

Part III. Goals of ER Project

Number the following statements from 1 to 6 in order of importance (1 is the most important and 6 is the least important).

The extensive reading project should aim at	improving students' attitudes toward reading in English.	
	improving confidence in reading.	
	helping students become more successful in the reading exams.	
	enriching students' vocabulary.	
	making students become fluent readers in English.	
	making students use reading strategies which they are taught in the class.	

Part IV.

Please answer the following questions about the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project.

What are your opinions about the strengths of the Extensive Reading Project at Anadolu University?

What are your opinions about the weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project at Anadolu University?

How well do you think you understand what you read?

Do you think the ERP improved your reading comprehension abilities? Justify your answer.

😊😊😊Thank you for your contribution!😊😊😊

APPENDIX E: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSIVE READING
PROJECT (TURKISH VERSION)

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Bu anket, Bilkent Üniversitesi MA TEFL Programında yapılmakta olan tez için bilgi toplamak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışma, okulumuzda uygulanan yabancı dilde ders dışı okuma projesine karşı öğrenci tutumlarıyla ilgili bilgi toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Aşağıda ders dışı okumayla ilgili birçok ifade verilmiştir. Doğru ya da yanlış cevap yoktur. Sonuçlar sizin ders dışı okumayla ilgili tutumları hakkında bilgi vereceği için düşünceleriniz çok önemlidir.

Anketin ilk bölümü kişisel bilginizle ilgili sorular içermektedir. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümler yabancı dilde ders dışı okumayla ilgili tutumlar içermektedir. Dördüncü bölüm ders dışı okuma projesiyle ilgili sorular içermektedir.

Bütün cevaplar gizli kalacaktır ve kişisel gizliliğiniz çalışmadan çıkacak tüm sunulan ve yayınlanan verilerde korunacaktır.

Çalışmaya katılmaya karar verdiyseniz, lütfen bu formu imzalayın.

Figen Tezdiker

Fakülte: _____

Tarih: _____

İmza: _____

Cinsiyet : () Bayan () Bay

Yaş : () 16- 18 () 19 – 21 () 22 – 24 () 25 +

İlk dönem seviyesi: _____

Bölüm I

Lütfen cevabınıza karşılık gelen seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

		Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
1	Ders dışı okuma öğrencinin okuma becerilerini geliştirmesinde yardımcı olur.					
2	Ders dışı okunan metindeki kelimeler öğrencinin seviyesine uygun olmalıdır.					
3	Ders dışı okuma öğrencilerin okuma dersinde öğrendikleri stratejileri kullanmasında etkili olur.					
4	Ders dışı okuma projesindeki metin çeşidine göre sorulan değerlendirme soruları metin içindeki her detayla ilgili olmalıdır.					
5	Öğrenciler ders dışında okuyacakları metinlerin konusunu kendileri seçmelidirler.					
6	Öğretmen öğrencilerin ders dışında okuyacakları metinleri seçmelerinde yardımcı olmalıdır.					
7	Düşük seviyelerde ders dışı okuma materyali öğretmen tarafından seçilmelidir.					
8	Öğretmen ders dışı okumanın amacının metnin ana fikrini anlamak olduğunu öğrencilere anlatmalıdır.					
9	Okuma dersi öğretmeni öğrencilerin ders dışında okudukları metinle gerçek hayatlarını ilişkilendirecek bir aktivite yapmalıdır.					
10	Ders dışı okuma metni öğrencilerin seviyesinin altında olmalıdır.					
11	Etkili bir okuyucu olmak için öğrenciler ders dışında da okumalıdır.					
12	Ders dışı okuyacakları metnin çeşidini öğrencilerin kendisi seçmelidir.					
13	Ders dışı okuma yabancı dil öğrenimine yardımcı olur.					
14	Ders dışı okuma öğrencilerin sınıfta İngilizce okumada kendilerine daha fazla güvenmelerine yardım eder.					
15	Öğrencilerin ders dışı okumada yaptıkları çalışma öğretmen tarafından değerlendirilmelidir.					
16	Ders dışı okuma öğretmen tarafından yönlendirilmelidir.					

17	Ders dışında okuma dersi için yapılan alıştırmalar okuma dersi için yapılan alıştırmalardan daha yararlıdır.					
18	Ders dışı okuma öğrencilerin kelime dağarcıklarını geliştirmelerinde yardımcı olur.					
19	Öğrencilere ders dışında okurken bir amaç verilmelidir.					
20	Ders dışı okumanın amacı öğrencilere okumayı sevdirmektir, detaylı bir okuma yaptırmak değildir.					
21	Öğrencilere ders dışında okurlarken sözlüklerini kullanmalarına izin verilmelidir.					
22	Ders dışı okumada öğrenciler okuduklarını anladıklarını gösterdikleri sürece değerlendirme önemli değildir.					

Bölüm II.

Ders Dışı Okuma Projesinin Amaçları

Aşağıdaki ifadeleri önem sırasına göre 1'den 6'ye kadar sıralayınız (1'i en önemli 6'yi en önemsiz şekilde işaretleyiniz).

Ders dışı okuma projesi	öğrencilerin İngilizce okumaya karşı olumlu tutum geliştirmelerini amaçlamaktadır.	
	öğrencilerin İngilizce metin okumada kendilerine karşı güvenlerini arttırmayı amaçlamaktadır.	
	öğrencilerin Okuma dersi sınavlarında daha başarılı olmalarına yardım etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.	
	öğrencilerin kelime hazinelerini zenginleştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.	
	öğrencilerin İngilizce okumada etkili okuyucu olmalarını amaçlamaktadır.	
	öğrencilerin derste öğrendikleri stratejileri kullanmalarını amaçlamaktadır.	

23. Sizce ders dışı okuma projesinin başarılı olduğu noktalar nelerdir?

24. Sizce ders dışı okuma projesinin başarısız olduğu noktalar nelerdir?

25. Okuduğunuzu sizce ne kadar iyi anlıyorsunuz? Cevabınızı aşağıya yazınız.

26. Sizce ders dışı metin okuma projesi okuduğunuzu anlama becerilerinizi geliştirdi mi? Açıklayınız.

😊😊😊 Katılımınız için teşekkürler!😊😊😊

APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ERP QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is prepared to collect data for a thesis study conducted at Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program. The study aims at gathering data about EFL teachers' beliefs about the effect of Extensive Reading Project (ER) in their teaching reading.

The first part of the questionnaire consists of questions about personal information. The second and the third parts include beliefs about the effect of ER in teaching reading. The fourth part includes some questions about the ER Project.

All responses will be treated as confidential, and your individual privacy will be maintained in all presented and published data resulting from the study.

Filling in this questionnaire will ensure that you agree to participate in this study.

Thank you for your contribution!

Figen Tezdiker

Part I. Background Information

1. **Gender:** Male Female

2. **Years of experience:**

3. **Your BA degree:** *(Please check the appropriate one for you)*

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English Language and Literature

American Culture and Literature

Translation and Interpretation

Other (Please

specify_____

4. **Your MA and/or PhD degree:** *(Please specify the field)*

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English Language and Literature

American Culture and Literature

Translation and Interpretation

Other (Please

specify)_____

5. **Have you taught reading before?**

Yes, I have taught reading before.

No, I have not taught reading before.

Part II. Teachers' Perceptions of the ERP

Below are some beliefs about the effect of the ER Project at Anadolu University in their teaching reading. Read each statement and then indicate whether you...

1. **strongly agree**
2. **agree**
3. **disagree**
4. **strongly disagree**

There are no right or wrong answers. This study is only conducted to have your opinions about the topic.

Directions: Please put a tick (✓) in the box that corresponds to your answer.

		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Reading extensively helps students improve their reading comprehension ability.				
2	The reading text for extensive reading should include vocabulary that is appropriate to the students' level.				
3	Reading extensively supports the students to use the reading strategies I teach in the class.				
4	The assessment questions related to the text type should focus on every detail in the reading text in assessing extensive reading.				
5	Students should decide the topics they want to read about out of the class.				
6	The teachers should guide students find different texts about different topics to read extensively.				
7	Extensive reading material should be chosen by the teacher at lower levels.				
8	The teacher should make it clear to the students that the purpose of reading a text extensively is to understand the general gist of the text.				
9	The reading teacher should do a post reading activity to relate what the students read with their real life.				
10	Extensive reading material should be below the students' language proficiency level.				
11	In order to be a fluent reader, a student should read extensively.				
12	The students themselves should decide on the type of the text to read extensively.				

13	Extensive reading is helpful in learning a foreign language.				
14	Extensive reading makes students more confident in reading in English in class.				
15	Students' work in extensive reading should be evaluated by the teacher.				
16	Extensive reading should be guided by the teacher.				
17	Extensive reading is more helpful for students than intensive reading (reading in class) is.				
18	Extensive reading helps students improve their vocabulary.				
19	Students should be given a purpose to read while reading a text extensively.				
20	The aim of extensive reading is to make students like reading, not a detailed reading.				
21	Students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries (bilingual or monolingual) while reading a text extensively.				
22	Assessing session of extensive reading is not very important part of extensive reading if the students understood the text.				

Part III. Goals of ER Project

Number the following statements from 1 to 6 in order of importance (1 is the most important and 6 is the least important).

The extensive reading project should aim at	improving students' attitudes toward reading in English.	
	improving confidence in reading.	
	helping students become more successful in the reading exams.	
	enriching students' vocabulary.	
	making students become fluent readers in English.	
	making students use reading strategies which they are taught in the class.	

Part IV.

Please answer the following questions about the effectiveness of the Extensive Reading Project.

What are your opinions about the strengths of the Extensive Reading Project at Anadolu University?

What are your opinions about the weaknesses of the Extensive Reading Project at Anadolu University?

Is extensive reading process necessary for your students? (Justify your answers)

😊😊😊Thank you for your contribution!😊😊😊

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

Interview Questions for Students

1. How do you think the ER project affects your reading comprehension?
2. How do you think the ER project affects your motivation toward reading in English?
3. What did ER change in your reading skills?
4. How do you feel about having your ER project assessed?
5. How do you feel about ER being included in your year-end grade?
6. What do you think about including ER as part of the year-end assessment system?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What are the strengths of the implementation of ER project at our school?
2. What are the weaknesses of the implementation of ER project at our school?
3. How do you think the ER project affects the reading comprehension of the students?
4. How do you think the ER project affects students' motivation toward reading in English?
5. How do you think ER project affects your teaching reading?
6. What do you think about the assessment aspect of ER?
7. What do you think about including ER as part of the reading assessment?
8. What do you think about including ER as part of the year-end assessment system?

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE INTERVIEW (STUDENT)

R: What are the strengths of ER?

P3: I do not find myself a hardworking student, so I have to be forced to do something.

I have to do some research. I am not interested in anything except the courses that's why I have some idea about something, Internet or newspaper. I see what's happening in the world. That's useful.

R: Did ER have an effect on improving your motivation to read a specific text type more?

P3: If I pass the class, I will start with the second year in my department as I come from another university. Now when I read a department related article I have the chance to keep up with the field, so when it is free reading in ER, I try to read department related article.

R: Do you read for fun?

P3: Yes, but it depends on the person. I like my department, so when I read I like it and I learn something, and I know that it is useful for me. For the other types of text, I only learn the language, but if it is department related article, I learn something about my field as well.

R: Does ER have an effect on your reading comprehension?

P3: Yes, because you have to use a dictionary, but I do not like using a dictionary, so I am trying to understand the meaning of the word in the text. That's useful for me. I want to say something about ER. While surfing on the net, I find

some texts easier than the others, I feel myself good because I feel that I am learning English, but I still find some texts harder in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

R: What about the assessment aspect of ER?

P3: I am not happy with that, I guess. I do not have any feedback. Sometimes

I write a report for a text that I did not understand but I can get a high grade. I am not sure if the teacher is reading it. Having a grade in ER is good because it is not in an exam format, you are more comfortable, but I do not know if my answers are correct or not. I do not know if I am making the same mistakes.

R: What are the weaknesses of ER?

P3: There may be some samples (reports) which we can see in order not to make the same mistakes. I am sometimes writing for the sake of writing a report the previous day. This is my fault.

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE INTERVIEW (TEACHER)

R: What are the strengths of the Extensive Reading Project that is being implemented at our school?

P5: I find ER project completely successful. I only do not like assessing it in the format of an exam in the class. Students also do not like it. Except this, it is (ER) is successful in all parts.

R: For example, is it successful in improving students' motivation toward reading in English?

P5: This is also related to the perception of the student's perception of reading in English but, at least, it affects some positively. They see that they can read something authentic. They see that they can read something in English better than they expected. Especially at higher level, this is more useful. They see that they can read the materials that are written for natives, but all of them do not take it seriously. For example, in my class, they brought some texts from ELS (a material used for university preparation), but we talked and came to an agreement.

R: Do you think that assessment aspect affects the students who do not take ER seriously?

P5: Yes, for example, almost all of my students do something for ER, except the regular absent students. Although it is for grades, they read at least one page in English. How it is effective for their motivation, it is not intrinsic motivation, but unfortunately getting a grade motivates some of the students. If there was not getting a grade, would they read? I am not sure. Once, I asked my students how

many of them would read if ER was not assessed, I have 28 students in my class, 3 or 5 raised their hands and I am not sure if they were telling the truth.

R: Do you find our assessment system correct?

P5: To me it's ok. In the beginning of the term, I tell my students that it is bonus for you, but it doesn't mean that, for example, one of my students brought a text appropriate to low int, I tell them I take their grades. On the other hand, another student took one article from a science magazine and tried to analyze it, there must be a difference among them. I always defend the idea that students should prepare their reports at home, however because of the experiences we had, we gave up this idea. ER may be implemented more often. The students read 3 reading tests in two months. It is often for students, to me it is not. Why don't they read a text a week? They cannot be fluent readers in this way. But I do not know if we increase the number of the texts will it be beneficial for the students? Do they find it very boring? I am confused in this point. To me it is(ER project) is very successful.

R: What do you think that the students think about the assessment of the ER project?

P5: They like it, but they are satisfied with the assessment as they get higher grades. They know that if they write good reports, they will get higher grades. I do not know if they got lower grades, how would they feel? The ones, who get lower than 70 are the ones, who do not enter any reports.