

## **STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS EXTENSIVE READING AT YUOE\***

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### **Abstract**

Extensive reading plays a crucial role to enhance the academic knowledge of an individual in education. This research was carried out to investigate attitudes of the undergraduate students attending at Yangon University of Education (YUOE) in 2023-2024 Academic Year towards implementing an extensive reading programme. Most of the students at YUOE view that extensive reading has a positive effect on their English language proficiency and they want to adopt an extensive reading programme at the university. For the required data, 76 students from YUOE were asked to answer questionnaires and interview questions. The data were analyzed using a mixed method approach, explanatory sequential. The result shows 90.8% of students welcome extensive reading. They believe that extensive reading will be of great help for the development of their English language proficiency. But when they are asked about choosing the reading materials and the level of the texts, their attitudes are mixed: 40.8% of the students believe that self-selected texts will be more enjoyable and beneficial to improve their English language skills compared to the teacher-selected texts, whereas 56.3% want their English teachers to choose the level and genre of the books they should read. It was observed that 90.8% of the participants believe that an extensive reading programme should be implemented at YUOE. The findings of this research will be a help to the administrative board, English language teachers and students at YUOE in considering how to implement an extensive reading programme at the university. This study will be beneficial not only to students who are trying to improve their English language proficiency but also to teachers who are willing to introduce their students to the benefits of extensive reading on English language learning.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, attitudes, English language proficiency, self-selected texts, teacher-selected texts

### **Introduction**

In line with the English curriculum and syllabus of KG+12 in Myanmar, new English coursebooks have been recently introduced in the higher education institutions: degree colleges, and universities. Due to different circumstances such as a limited number of scholars to develop syllabi for English language proficiency courses and the convenience to access the ready-made EFL/ESL coursebooks on the market, English coursebooks used for the undergraduate classes in the majority of the universities in Myanmar are mostly published overseas, for instance, the series of coursebooks as *Life* published by the National Geographic Learning. It is undeniable that the components or the contents (the materials) of coursebooks are developed in accordance with the respective proficiency levels. However, when the students are taught using the coursebooks, many of them, especially the students who have passed the matriculation examination with arts subjects (geography, history, and economics) and arts and science subjects (physics, chemistry and economics), find the concepts of some reading texts prescribed difficult to understand. One of the reasons why the reading texts in the coursebooks are difficult for them is that they do not have a proper habit of reading both in English and in Myanmar.

As there are many temptations for youths today such as online games, online social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and so on, the time youths spend on extensive reading gets decreased from decade to decade. These temptations, to some extent, negatively affect the English language learners of Myanmar, too. Apparently, extensive reading enhances different

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language sub-skills. According to Day (2018), extensive reading is considered not only to expose language learners to a large amount of language input but also to aid in vocabulary, grammar learning and in developing students' writing skills. Therefore, it is very important for a language learner to have positive attitudes towards reading.

Undergraduate students of YUOE are prospective teachers who will be assigned as senior assistant teachers (SATs) when they become graduates. They joined Yangon University of Education as soon as they had completed their high schools at the age of their late teens. Therefore, when they graduate after attending for 5 years, they would be approximately in their mid-twenty. Obviously, to become a senior assistant teacher in the age of 25 is challenging if they are not well-qualified in their respective subjects to teach. Therefore, starting their junior years at university, they need to be trained to become well-qualified teachers. One of the ways to fulfill their needs is persuading them to read anything related to their study written in English or Myanmar, highlighting the benefits of reading. And introducing them to extensive reading in English, revealing the academic and personal advantages of reading English books, is highly appreciated in the tertiary level education. Only when they are wise and knowledgeable enough, they will be able to nurture their students to become good citizens and valuable human resources of the county.

Regarding the benefits of extensive reading on language learning, Hedge (2000) says that students will acquire cultural knowledge and gain better confidence in their L2 reading. Suk (2016) further suggests that there are positive effects of extensive reading on student motivation regarding reading comprehension, reading rate and vocabulary acquisition. However, the benefits of extensive reading can be different by individuals based on their enthusiasm, availability, and belief in the impact of extensive reading on their English language proficiency.

The purposes of this study are:

- (1) to examine the attitudes of the YUOE students towards reading,
- (2) to clarify which reading materials students prefer: teacher-selected texts or self-selected texts, and
- (3) to investigate students' belief in extensive reading for their English language enhancement.

This research was carried out at Yangon University of Education. For the required data, 76 students from all five undergraduate classes at YUOE in 2023-24 academic year were asked about their attitudes towards extensive reading, using questionnaires and interviews.

### **Research questions**

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How do students of YUOE view the impact of extensive reading on their English language proficiency?
2. For extensive reading, what do students of YUOE prefer: teacher-selected texts or self-selected texts? Why?
3. How do students view implementing an extensive reading programme at YUOE?

## **Literature Review**

In this chapter, the theoretical review of extensive reading, encouraging students to read extensively, students' reading attitudes, and previous researches are specifically described.

### **Extensive Reading**

It is the most common suggestion by the language teachers or senior language learners to their students or junior learners to read books extensively to improve their language proficiency. Regarding extensive reading, there are different definitions by different scholars. According to Harmer (2007), the term "extensive reading" refers to reading which students do often (but not exclusively) away from the classroom. They may read novels, webpages, newspapers, magazines or any other reference materials. Where possible, extensive reading should be involved in reading for pleasure – what Day (2018) called joyful reading. This is enhanced if students have a chance to choose what they want to read, if they are encouraged to read by the teachers, if some opportunity is given for them to share their reading experiences.

### **Encouraging students to read extensively**

As the benefits of extensive reading are vivid, if it can be practised by the students, whether it is self-determined or teacher-led, extensive reading will be of a great help for the language proficiency level of students. To encourage students to read extensively, it is important to use simplified readers at pre-advanced levels because students will find reading boring or difficult if they do not know how to choose the suitable texts and level to their interests and proficiency. Harmer (2007) suggested four factors that contribute to the success of extensive reading. They are:

#### **(a) Library**

Students need to have access to a collection of readers, both at their own level and above and below it. Sometimes the library will be in a fixed place in a school, but we can also carry collections of books around to different classes. The library should have a range of different genres (factual, novels, adaptations of films, etc.).

#### **(b) Choice**

A major aspect of joyful reading is that students should be able to choose what they read – both in terms of genre but also, crucially, level. They are much more likely to read with enthusiasm if they have made the decision about what they read.

#### **(c) Feedback**

Students should have an opportunity to give feedback on what they have read, either verbally or in written form. This does not mean formal reports, however, since that might take the pleasure away from reading.

#### **(d) Time**

The teacher needs to give students time for reading on their own.

### **Students' Reading Attitudes**

Today, as there are many temptations of technology-aided devices, reading has not been a common recreational habit among the youths like it used to be. What worsens this is the attitude of the youths towards reading that reading is a boring and end-dated recreation style adopted by

the 20<sup>th</sup> century generation. But in language learning, the benefits of reading are unmeasurable. According to Briggs & Walter (2016), a positive reading attitude is a motivational stimulus that encourages and assists learning, whereas, a negative attitude will result in the opposite. He also concluded that children who have positive attitudes towards reading have a greater possibility for success. A National Survey on Children's Attitudes toward Reading reported that recreational and academic reading attitudes among children in the United States of America is decreasing gradually and it is predicted that as children mature and more options on leisure activities are available, the positive attitude towards reading will become worse (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth 1995) and this is a serious issue as Smith (1990) mentioned that a positive attitude plays a significant role in reading behaviour as it helps to motivate in accomplishing cognitive tasks. Thus, encouraging or motivating students to have a habit of reading becomes a responsibility of the authoritative persons and organizations such as teachers, schools and universities.

### **Previous Researches**

One of the studies related to this research is *Reading Habit and Students' Attitudes Towards Reading: A Study of Students in the Faculty of Education UiTM Puncak Alam* by Jamiah Baba and Faiza Rostam Affendi, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. This research was attempted to highlight the reading habits and attitudes of the students. The researchers used questionnaires to investigate students' reading habits, preferences and attitudes towards reading. The research findings through quantitative analysis revealed that the students had an overall positive attitude towards academic and leisure reading as they read academically and leisurely daily or at least once a week. Apart from that, digital materials are considered better compared to printed texts when it comes to the students' preference and availability.

Another related study is measuring students' motivation for reading by Hooley et al (2013). In their study, they researched 64 high school students' reading attitudes in the US. The findings of this study showed that as many as 71% of the students reported that the class reading material was disengaging. But 85% of the students were positively inclined towards self-selected reading and increased learner autonomy.

### **Research Methodology**

This chapter deals with the main basic features of a research – research method and materials, participants, and research procedure.

#### **Research method and materials**

This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. In data collection, questionnaires and interviews were used to investigate the attitudes of the undergraduate students of YUOE towards the extensive reading in English language learning. The purpose of using questionnaires is to investigate the quantitative understanding of students' attitudes towards extensive reading, in the meanwhile, the purpose of using interviews is to gain qualitative, and better ideas of the students on extensive reading. The questionnaire was constructed with 27 closed-ended questions based on varying scale options (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) and 4 open-ended questions, and 5 follow-up interview questions were conducted for more in-depth student perspectives on extensive reading.

**Participants**

A total of 76 students (42 males and 34 females) were randomly selected to answer the survey questions. All participants were from different undergraduate years in the 2023-24 academic year in YUOE. For the interview, 8 students (4 males and 4 females) from the 4<sup>th</sup> year of B.Ed. programme were requested.

**Research procedure**

To be able to conduct this research, firstly, questionnaires and interview questions were determined and validated by the experts in the field of study. Thus, the validity and reliability of the instrument were ensured. Then, questionnaires were delivered to the students. To get the correct responses from the participants, they were encouraged to answer the questions as sincerely as possible and to avoid the inadequate understanding of the given questions due to the language barrier, the questions were interpreted by the researcher if necessary. To provide this study with more in-depth student-perspectives, 8 students from 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate class were invited to answer the interview questions. Before they were asked, they were encouraged to get relaxed and suggested to reply to the questions as sincerely and correctly as they could. And the whole interview was recorded on the phone and transcribed. Then, the collected data were systematically analyzed using tables and figures followed by respective data interpretation. Finally, research findings were discussed focusing on the four main research questions of the study, followed by suggestions and conclusion.

**Analysis of Data**

The data collected from the survey and interview were analyzed thematically using descriptive statistics. The collected data was tabulated and presented in the forms of graphs, charts, tables and interpretations.

**Table 1: Students’ opinion on reading, and reading English texts**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	I like reading.	15.8%	71.1%	10.5%	2.6%	0%	100%
2.	I like reading in English.	7.9%	67.1%	17.1%	7.9%	0%	100%
3.	I think reading is very time-consuming.	6.6%	25%	17.1%	50%	1.3%	100%

**Note.** (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

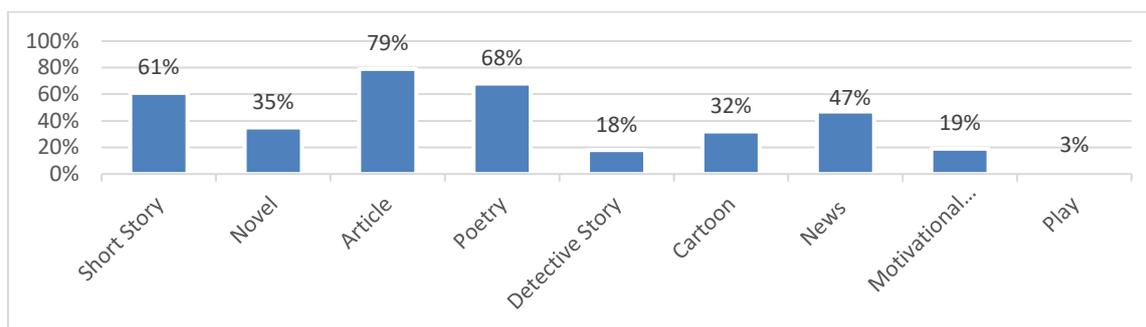
Table 1 describes the percentage of the responses of the students for the items eliciting their opinion on reading and reading English texts. As shown in the table, 86.9% of the students of YUOE like reading and the percentage of the students who like reading English texts is 75%. Moreover, 31.6% of the respondents think reading is a waste of time. However, no one strongly dislikes reading. Regarding reading, 51.3% of the respondents think that reading is not very time-consuming while 17.1% of the respondents stand for neutral and 31.6% believe that reading is time-consuming.

**Table 2: Frequency of reading**

Item	Descriptions	D	1/ Wk	1/ Mth	R	N	Total
1.	How often do you read for pleasure?	23.7%	40.8%	23.7%	7.9%	3.9%	100%
2.	How often do you read for academic purposes?	28.9%	31.6%	27.4%	10.8%	1.3%	100%
3.	How often do you practice reading in English?	2.6%	46.1%	36.8%	13.2%	1.3%	100%

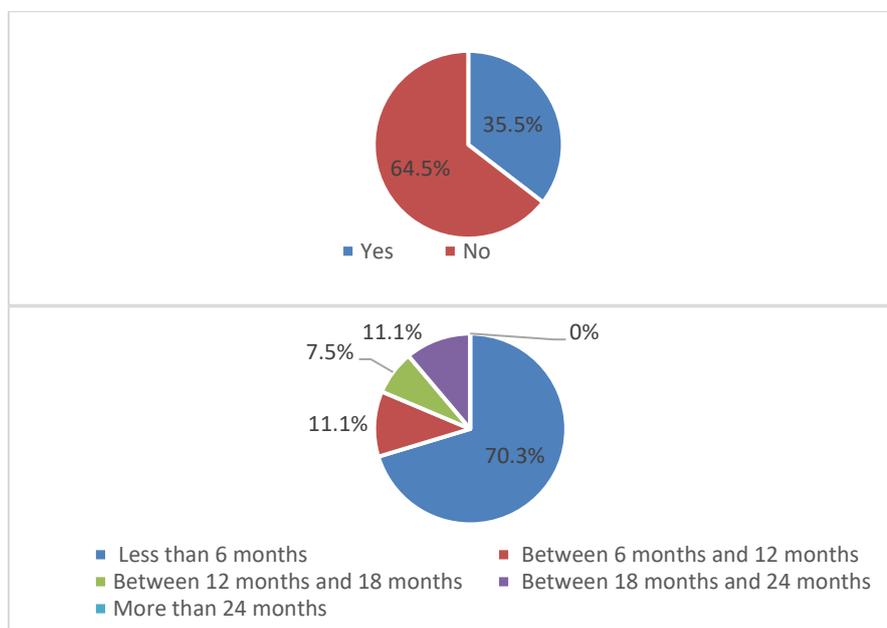
**Note.** (D = Daily, 1/ Wk = Once a week, 1/ Mth = Once a month, R = Rarely, N = Never)

According to the students’ responses, it is observed that 23.7% and 40.8% of the participants read for pleasure daily and once a week respectively while 28.9% of the students read for their academic development daily and 31.6% weekly. It is found that 2.6% of the participants read texts written in English and 46.1% once a week. Meanwhile, 13.2% of the participants rarely read English texts and 1.3 % never read English books.



**Figure 1.** Types of Reading Texts

Figure 1 highlights the types of text students are used to reading. As the figure shows, 79% of the students read articles, followed by 68% poetry, 61% short stories, 47% news, 35% novels, 32% cartoons, 19% motivational texts, 18% detective stories, and 3% plays respectively.



**Figure 2.** Participation in an Extensive Reading Programme

As it is seen in the figure 2, only 35.5% of the respondents have participated in an extensive reading programme. Among them, 70.3% of the students have experience of less than 6 months and 11.1% of them have experience between 6 months and a year and between 18 months and 2 years respectively. Only 7.5% of them have less than one and half year experience of joining an extensive reading programme. No student has participated in an extensive reading programme for more than 24 months (2 years). It shows that the majority of the students at YUOE have limited experience of participating in an extensive reading programme.

**Table 3: Perceptions of Teacher-selected and Self-selected Reading Text**

Item	Descriptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	My current English teacher knows my English language proficiency level.	10.5%	31.6%	25.0%	26.3%	6.6%	100%
2.	I know my English language level.	32.9%	39.5%	21.1%	6.5%	0%	100%
3.	I want my English teacher to choose the level of book I should read.	39.5%	40.8%	15.8%	3.9%	0%	100%
4.	I want to choose the level of book I should/ will read myself.	13.2%	46.1%	21.1%	15.8%	3.8%	100%
5.	I want my English teacher to choose the book I should read.	28.9%	53.9%	9.3%	7.9%	0%	100%
6.	I think my English teacher can choose the appropriate level of books I should read.	34.2%	53.9%	9.3%	2.6%	0%	100%
7.	I think my English teacher can choose the books I should read.	22.4%	56.6%	14.5%	6.5%	0%	100%
8.	I think I can choose the books I should read.	18.4%	40.8%	27.6%	11.8%	1.4%	100%

**Note.** (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

Table 3 shows the students’ beliefs on their English teacher and on themselves in choosing the appropriate levels of books and the genre of books. It is observed that 42.1% of the students believe that their teacher knows their English language level while 72.4% of them believe they know their language level well. But in choosing the level and genre of the books that is appropriate to them, 53.9 % of the students want their teacher to choose the level of books they should read and 56.6% think that their teacher is capable of choosing the books (genre of book) they should read. Followed by the number, 40.8% of the respondents say that they can choose the books they should read and 46. 1% want to choose the level of book they will read themselves.

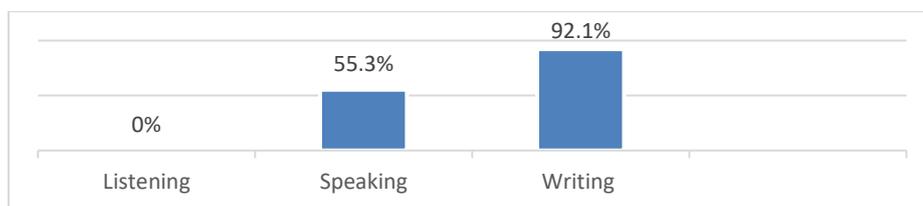
**Table 4: Attitudes towards extensive reading and language development**

Item	Descriptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	I think an extensive reading programme has a positive effect on my English language development.	47.4%	51.3%	1.3%	0%	0%	100%
2.	I think my reading speed will get faster after joining an extensive	48.7%	48.7%	2.6%	0%	0%	100%

Item	Descriptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
	reading programme.						
3.	I think the performance of students in English language skills will be developed after they have dealt with an extensive reading programme at least a year.	40.8%	52.6%	6.6%	0%	0%	100%

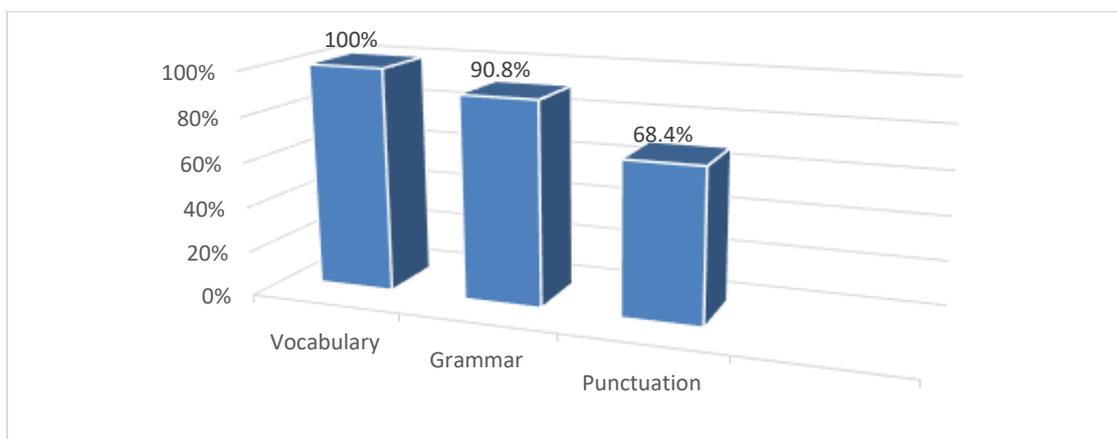
**Note.** (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

Related to language development due to extensive reading, 98.7% of the students think that an extensive reading programme has a positive effect on their English language proficiency. Then, 97.4% of the students assume that their reading speed will be faster after joining an extensive reading programme. The percentage of the students who think their English language skills will be developed after joining for an extensive reading programme is 93.4%. There is no participant who negatively views towards the extensive reading for their language development.



**Figure 3.** Perceptions on the development of three macro-skills due to extensive reading

As figure 3 represents, 92.1% of the students believe that their writing skills will be mainly developed as an impact of extensive reading. But there is no one who thinks that reading will be helpful to their listening, however, 55.3% of the students believe that extensive reading will help develop their speaking skill.



**Figure 4.** Development of sub-skills due to extensive reading

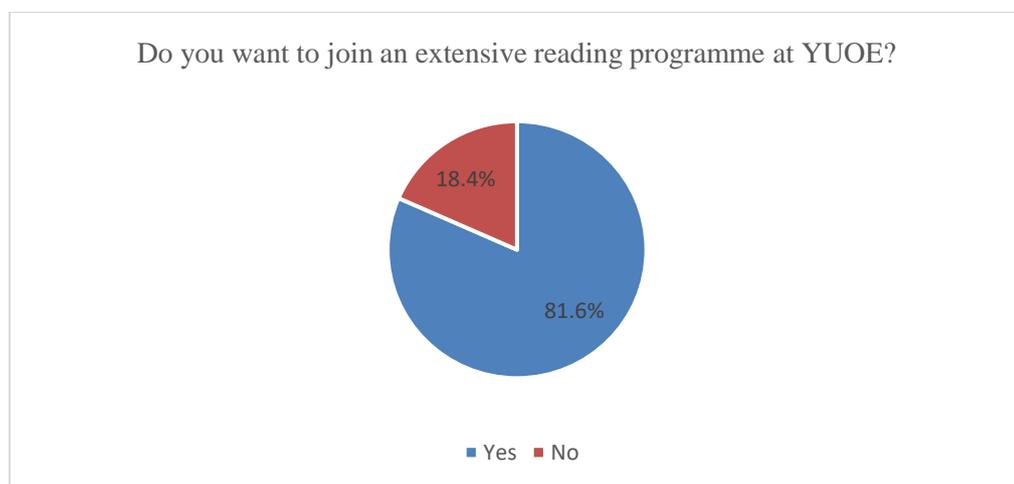
Figure 4 shows students’ belief on the sub-skills that can be developed due to extensive reading. All of the respondents believe that extensive reading will help them enrich their vocabulary, 90.8% of them think that they will have better knowledge of grammar and 68.4% assume that due to extensive reading, the correct use of punctuation will be noticed.

**Table 5: Attitudes towards implementation of an extensive reading programme**

Item	Descriptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	An extensive reading programme should be initiated in YUOE because students are prospective teachers.	48.7%	42.1%	9.2%	0%	0%	100%
2.	As prospective teachers, students in YUOE should read more and fulfill their knowledge better than other university students.	36.8%	48.7%	9.2%	5.3%	0%	100%
3.	I think we should have at least one period of extensive reading in weekly schedule after class.	25.0%	47.4%	23.7%	1.3%	2.6%	100%
4.	Although extensive reading programme is not important for exam, it should be practised in a university.	19.7%	53.9%	18.5%	7.9%	0%	100%

**Note.** (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

Table 5 shows the attitudes of the YUOE students towards implementing an extensive reading programme at YUOE. As it is shown in the table, 90.8% of the students believe that an extensive reading should be initiated in YUOE, 85.5% of students agree with the statement that they should read and try to be knowledgeable than other university students because they are prospective teachers. The idea of having at least an extensive reading period in weekly schedule is welcomed by more than a half of the respondents, precisely 25% of the students strongly agree with the statement and 47.4% agree with it. Only 23.7% cannot decide whether it should be adapted and 3.9% of students do not like having an extensive reading in their time-table. Obviously, the majority of the students believe that 73.6% of total participants have a desire to have an extensive reading programme introduced at university although it is not important for their exam, only 18.5% cannot decide and 7.9% do not welcome the programme.



**Figure 5.** Percentage of students' interest to join an extensive reading programme

Obviously, when students were asked whether they wanted to join the programme if an extensive reading programme is initiated at YUOE, 81.6% of the students said, 'Yes' while 18.4% did not want to join the programme.

**Table 6: Students' Responses to the Interview Questions**

Item	Questions	Students' Responses
1.	What do you think are the benefits of having the teacher choose what you should read in English?	1. Can guide students very well what to read (good for those who don't know which books they should choose – especially those with lower proficiency level in English)
		2. Students can grab books very easily
		3. Can direct students the appropriate levels and books with the students' proficiency level
		4. Good for the beginners
		5. Ask for help with anything students need with the level, book, vocabulary and so on
		6. Students can ask anything to teacher, related to the books
		7. Students don't need to choose by themselves
		8. Students can ask anything they want to know about the books
2.	What do you think are the benefits of choosing what to read for yourself?	1. Not influenced by the teacher
		2. No burden in choosing the books they want
		3. Students will read the book they have chosen till the end because the book was chosen up to their interest
		4. Students will find reading more enjoyable compared to reading a book chosen by their teacher
		5. Students know which books are available and have more incentive to read many more books
		6. Students will find it more enjoyable to read
		7. Students can choose any books they like
		8. Students find choosing books by themselves more independent
3.	To help students get more engaged with extensive	1. To know more about the students' interest
		2. To introduce different after-reading activities

Item	Questions	Students' Responses
	reading, what do you want to suggest to your English teacher?	<p>3. Group discussions should be done after reading books</p> <p>4. Teacher needs to be active and able to lead the students well</p> <p>5. Teacher needs to initiate competitions related to the books or texts students have read such as debate, group-discussions, book reviews</p> <p>6. Teacher needs to have dedication to keep on running the programme although the students may be less interested at the beginning of the programme</p> <p>7. Teacher needs to arrange interactive after-reading activities</p> <p>8. Fun activities should be arranged monthly and teacher needs to be knowledgeable enough about the books available</p>
4.	What do you prefer to read: paper books or e-books? Why?	<p>1. Paper books because I like the sense of holding and reading a book</p> <p>2. Paper books because reading e-books for a long time is bad for our eyes</p> <p>3. E-book because I don't need to carry thick books to wherever I go</p> <p>4. Paper books because I like turning over pages</p> <p>5. E-book because it saves papers</p> <p>6. Paper books because I love traditional reading</p> <p>7. Paper books because we can read them any time we want even if the electricity went out and device is off</p> <p>8. E-book because I like to screenshot and save the pages I want within a short time</p>
5.	If an extensive reading programme is a programme you must join as a student of YUOE, do you think it will be a challenge for the majority of students, why or why not?	<p>1. No if it is well-arranged.</p> <p>2. Yes for some students who have low level of English language proficiency</p> <p>3. No, but teachers have to guideline or facilitate the students with how to choose the best book</p> <p>4. Yes because not every student is interested in</p>

Item	Questions	Students' Responses
		reading and it will be heavy for them
		5. No if teacher can provide different genres of books that can grab students' interest
		6. Yes, because some do not even want to read books written in Myanmar language
		7. No, but teacher needs to make students realize the importance of English in their life and persuade them to read
		8. No because YUOE students are prospective teachers so, they are supposed to know the benefits of extensive reading very well

### Findings and Discussion

The aim of the present study is to investigate the attitudes of the undergraduate students of Yangon University of Education towards extensive reading. In this chapter, all about the facts that were found in analyzing the collected data will be discussed in detail to answer the research questions.

#### How do students of YUOE view the impact of extensive reading on their English language proficiency?

Regarding English language proficiency, 47.4% of the students strongly agreed that extensive reading has a positive effect on the development of their English language proficiency, 51.3% agreed with it while only 1.3% could not decide it on their own. There was no respondent who did not agree with the statement.

Concerning the reading speed, 97.4 % of the students positively believed that their reading speed would get faster after they had joined an extensive reading, in the meanwhile, 2.6% of the respondents could not decide on it. It was found that 40.8% of the students strongly agreed that their English language skill would be developed after they had dealt with an extensive reading in English at least a year, and 52.6 % agreed their English language would have developed after they had joined the programme. However, 6.6% of the respondents were neutral. The evidence shows that the students of YUOE have a positive attitude towards implementing an extensive reading programme at YUOE as it enhances their English language proficiency.

When students were asked which macro-skills, except reading skill, had a high positive impact due to extensive reading, 92.1% highlighted writing skill, and 55.3% speaking. Apparently, there was no one who pointed out listening skill. Regarding the development of sub-skills, 100% of the students believed that they will learn more vocabulary from reading, 90.8% think they would gain better knowledge in grammar and 68.4% thought that from reading different types of reading texts, the correct use of punctuation would be realized.

By analysing the students' responses, it is found that the majority of the students at YUOE believed that extensive reading could enhance their English language proficiency level, specifically, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. That is why, it is to be assumed that students have positive attitudes towards extensive reading and they have a strong belief that their English language skill will be improved after they have joined an extensive reading programme for a certain period.

### **For extensive reading, what do students of YUOE prefer: teacher-selected texts or self-selected texts? Why?**

For the above questions, the attitudes of the students were mixed. Regarding reading teacher-selected texts, approximately half of the students, 40.8%, responded that they wanted their English teacher to choose the level of book they should read. But 46.1% of the participants said they just wanted to choose the level of book they would read. However, when they were asked if they thought their teacher could choose the appropriate book they should read, 56.6% of them agreed, but 40.8% of the students said that they could choose the books they would read.

Additionally, it was found that 23.7% of the students who read daily and 40.8% of them who read weekly for pleasure wanted to choose the book they would like to read by themselves. And they preferred self-selected texts to teacher-selected texts. It could be because they have a good experience of reading books and they know the types of book which can arouse their interest. And if they have to read teacher-selected texts, they may find the texts boring and / or challenging for reasons such as the genre of the text and difficulty level of language.

Moreover, in the interview, the participants admitted that if they had a chance to choose the books they wanted to read by themselves, they would find it more enjoyable compared to the ones their teacher chose for them. But on the other hand, some thought that if the teacher gave guidelines or facilitated them in choosing the books they should read, they would not find it difficult to choose the ones that were suitable to their English language level. While some thought that they could choose the books they wanted to read independently, others had no confidence to choose the right level of books with their English language proficiency.

It could be because of one of the reasons they had responded to the questions of whether they thought their current English teacher knew their English language level and whether they knew their English language level. Only 42.2% of the participants thought that their English language teacher knew their English proficiency level well. Apparently, the majority of the students who participated in this research had not taken any English proficiency test, therefore, it is hard to believe that they know their English language proficiency level. Therefore, when they were asked to choose whether they would choose teacher-selected texts or self-selected texts, they were ambiguous. They, on the one hand, thought they might be able to choose the correct level of books with their English language proficiency but on the other hand, they did not believe in themselves – whether they could correctly choose the book which suited their English language level.

Therefore, by the evidence of the survey, it can be assumed that teachers need to know the English language proficiency level and the interest of the students and they should help the students choose only when he or she is requested for a help. If students are found to be confident enough in choosing the texts, teachers should avoid helping them.

### **How do students view implementing an extensive reading programme at YUOE?**

Analyzing the answers and responses of the participants of the survey and interview questions, students in YUOE are accustomed to extensive reading even if the frequency of reading can be different from person to person. Even though 64.5% of the respondents have no experience of joining in an extensive reading programme, 23.7% daily read for pleasure and 40.8% of them weekly read for pleasure. So, it is strongly believed that implementing an extensive reading programme in YUOE will be successful. Many students believe that as they are prospective teachers who will become senior assistant teachers in high schools throughout the nation, they need to be knowledgeable enough: they need to have both academic knowledge and general knowledge which will be of a great advantage in teaching respective subjects to their students.

Moreover, according to the findings of the interview answers, to be able to run an extensive reading programme, teachers need to know the interests of the students and the books or reading texts should be relevant enough to persuade the students to come and borrow books. Then, after-reading activities should be initiated. As this programme is not directly related to the examination, the activities for the students should be persuasive, interactive and fun. As the participants suggested, both paper books and e-books should be arranged, only then, they will find borrowing books easy to access and comfortable for them.

However, if an extensive reading programme is initiated as a must-join programme, it will be irritating for some students who are weak in English. Therefore, highlighting the importance of English language for SAT teachers and the benefits of the extensive reading, students should be persuaded to join the programme.

As for the university administrative board of YUOE, implementation of an extensive reading programme in YUOE will be successful if it is run under a favourable condition and systematic supervision. To be able to implement an extensive reading programme, cooperation between YUOE library and English department of YUOE should be fostered to be able to provide different genres of books in different English language levels. It is because English department of YUOE alone will not be able to arrange or manage a large number of books for the lack of library management skill and the relevant texts with the English language proficiency level of the students will not be able to be provided by the YUOE library alone. Lastly, as students' responses in the interviews, an extensive reading programme will be more interesting if there are some reading-related activities which can arouse students' motivation, creativity, and critical thinking skill initiated by the English language teachers at YUOE or an English club running at YUOE, than purely borrowing and reading books within the allotted time.

### **Conclusion**

This paper aims to highlight the attitudes of the students of YUOE towards extensive reading. This study investigated the attitudes of 76 students from all undergraduate years currently attending Yangon University of Education in 2023-24 academic year. The students' attitudes have been investigated using questionnaires and interviews.

The findings of the study confirmed that extensive reading in English is assumed to be a great help for their English language proficiency. After joining an extensive reading programme for at least one year, better English language proficiency of the students will be observed. As students have different interests and different English language proficiency levels, their choice of

books can be different from each other, so the teacher must give an opportunity to the students to choose any texts written in any language level. But for those students who have no idea on what to read and those who have very limited English language skill, teachers are suggested to facilitate or give guidelines to them.

The present research has proved that the majority of the students in YUOE have positive attitudes towards extensive reading because they believe that extensive reading is beneficial not only to their English language skill development but also to their future career.

According to Harmer (2007), not all students become active readers. While some are highly motivated to read books, others don't have the same desire. If students are not willing to participate, teachers will not be able to make students engage in extensive reading. As a solution of the anticipated issue, the findings of this research have suggested that English language teachers should build a good rapport with the students and they should know the language proficiency level of the students they are teaching. Occasionally, English language level tests should be arranged for the students to help them realize their English language proficiency level. Since before the extensive reading programme starts, students should have been introduced to the benefits of extensive reading and the advantages of achieving higher English language proficiency level. Furthermore, teachers should also try to gain the belief and sense of reliability from their students, and they must be dedicated to the programme they run. More importantly, the administrative board of the university, Head of the English Department, librarians and assistant librarians should cooperate to help the programme to be systematically and sustainably conducted year after year.

As this research was carried out only at Yangon University of Education, it has its own limitations such as population size and area. As extensive reading plays an important role for English language development, further studies should be carried out in basic education schools, higher education degree colleges, and universities all around Myanmar to know more about students' attitudes towards extensive reading.

To conclude, it is the responsibility of the universities and ELT teachers to help their students become active global citizens, which is one of the goals of quality education in SDGs. In particular, universities of education such as YUOE should seriously take it into account. Because only when the students who would become teachers are good at English and have global knowledge, they will be able to nurture students, equipping with the quality education and communicative skills which lead to a modern workforce. Therefore, implementing an extensive reading programme at YUOE is seen to be a basic step to achieve one of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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