Extensive reading: Can it enhance learners’ proficiency?

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Abstract

Extensive reading is not a new idea. But it is only recently that it has caught the attention of second/foreign language researchers and teachers. In the past decade, for example, numerous research studies have been conducted and reported in major ELT journals and hundreds of articles have also been written on the subject. Evidence for extensive reading consistently shows that those who do more reading show better development in vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and other areas of language learning. My presentation consists of four parts. I first give a brief overview of the theory and research of extensive reading. I then discuss how extensive reading is different from intensive reading and how they can both support learners’ language development. In the next part, I discuss some issues and controversies that surround extensive reading. Finally, I give practical suggestions on how extensive reading can be implemented in the Japanese context.

Biodata

Dr. Willy Renandya is a language teacher educator at SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore where he teaches language and applied linguistics courses. He is co-editor of the RELC Guidelines and the RELC Portfolio Series. His recent publication is Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice, published by Cambridge University Press (2002) and co-edited with Jack C Richards.