

Empowering Learners With Autonomous Learning Strategies in EFL Classroom Through Extensive Reading Strategy Training

Yenenesh Y. Alemu

English Department, Institute of Languages Study and Journalism, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Tamiru O. Defa

English Department, Institute of Languages Study and Journalism, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Mekuria Z. Bedada

English Department, Institute of Languages Study and Journalism, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Abstract—This study aimed to investigate the effects of extensive reading strategy training (ERST) on autonomous learning strategies (ALSs) that English language learners use in an EFL context. Sixty-one undergraduate first-year social science university students participated in the study. These samples were assigned to two modalities: a control group, which involved 31 students, and an experimental group, which involved 30 students. During the experiment, the participants in the control group took only the institute's regular communicative English language course, and the participants in the experimental group received ERST intervention in addition to the existing procedures of the communicative English language course. The intervention focused on extensive reading strategies training integrated with learner autonomy framework to induce them to work with ALSs. To conduct the study, the current researcher employed the concurrent triangulation design and collected the data within ten week-period via questionnaire and interview designed for comparable groups. By controlling for any pre-existing differences and analyzing the quantitative data, the current researcher employed one-way ANCOVA and analyzed the interview data thematically. Finally, the study reveals the potential of ERST for increasing ALSs used by EFL learners and affords practical guidelines to language teachers on how to incorporate ERST into EFL classrooms.

Index Terms—autonomous learning strategies, ERST, language learner autonomy, reader autonomy

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learner autonomy is a type of LA that develops a universal human capacity and drive (Little et al., 2017). According to this perspective, educational strategies for LA need enhancement since they address the human constitution rather than technical or political imperatives (Benson, 1997). The psychologist Phillida (1998) captured this constitution and stated that when life is seen even from the babies' points of view, it assures that human beings struggle for the right that nature gives them. They usually refuse to do what others ask them to do if they do not like it. They do not always need assistance and want to be controlled by others. Boys and girls express their active presence, willful agency, demands, and protests in vivid ways from an early age because they are cognitively and emotionally independent. No one can avoid being autonomous in this fundamental, biologically determined sense because their perception of and response to the world around them is their own alone (Little et al., 2017). This feeling may help to explain why autonomy also appears to be a fundamental behavioral drive and emotional desire.

Hart (2002) distinguishes between reactive and proactive degrees of LA in a reading classroom. Students are guided to access the target language at the reactive level by setting reading goals and making a plan to get there. They must take charge of their reading-based learning at the proactive level, where the goal is to develop LA, which is the essential indicator of successful learning and instruction (Jaisook & Thirawisit, 2015).

Previous scholars in the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning have raised the vital role that extensive reading plays in cultivating autonomous learners in language classrooms. Widespread study evidence and common sense observation supporting the numerous advantages of ER (Waring, 2006). Krashen's (2004) 'The Power of Reading' makes passionate arguments in favor of reading. Scholars also tried to put pre-requisites to incorporate ER effectively in language classrooms. For instance, Jaisook and Thirawisit (2015) argue that three key pedagogies should be taken into account when ER is used to promote LA in a language classroom: student involvement in their learning process, student reflection on their learning process, and proper target-language use.

Extensive reading gives the learners freedom to choose reading resources and activities according to their interests and language ability, so it minimizes the direct interference of teachers and paves the way for reader autonomy. From the general features of ER, one can understand that the students use strategies by themselves to understand the materials

they read. Since students use their full autonomy and achieve the intended effect through these internally derived strategies, they are called autonomous learning strategies (ALSs) (Wang, 2010). They get autonomy, interest, initiation, hope, and success from them. To this end, ER plays a crucial role, so the current researcher has decided to use ERST as an independent asset to empower EFL/SL learners with ALSs.

Firstly, the students are engaged in building a positive attitude toward their reading as the concern of affective strategy. It is the green card that allows them to start their action. ER also trains the students to manage their work appropriately since their teachers are not always there to help them. The students plan, monitor, and evaluate their work through a metacognitive strategy. This strategy has similar features to learner autonomy, and it is the road map that guides how the journey starts, passing through many ups and downs and getting into the attempted destiny. But all these have no value without the fuel that moves the motor towards the goal - the cognitive strategy which activates the students' knowledge and changes every effort to success. And finally, all these processes are performed within the context of ER.

Although scholars widely discussed the importance of extensive reading and its integrative nature with LA in ESL and EFL classrooms in a foreign context, it is not practically used in Ethiopian EFL classes. For instance, at Wollega University, ER is not included or integrated with any English courses given at the University. Furthermore, from the lower classes to the high schools in Ethiopia, ER is not included in any English language textbooks as an experience lesson for the students. Therefore, testing the role of ER in empowering learners with ALSs to take charge of their learning in the context of university (undergraduate) education in Ethiopia is the main objective of the current study.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. *Extensive Reading*

Unwaveringly, gaining acknowledgment of the existence, extensive reading's avail becomes the uncontroversial immense in second language theory. Because of the advantages extensive reading has for language learning, educators who have the power to influence the foreign language teaching-learning sector are constantly seeking for ways to increase language proficiency (Son, 2017). Although students read extensively for pleasure, numerous studies have shown its positive effects on language development and LA advancement (Jaisook & Thirawisit, 2015). To teach students with varying degrees of competence in their courses, teachers frequently rely on the offered curriculum and other requirements (Mermelstein, 2015). However, teaching the same topic in the same classroom with different learners caused issues. Since it gives students the opportunity to choose how they can succeed as language learners with their differences in the same language learning classroom, the scholars recommended ER as an alternate option to the conventional teacher-centered manner of teaching (Yenenesh et al., 2023).

As Yenenesh et al. (2023) continued stating, an extensive reading holds the conviction that the learner's active engagement plays an important role in the process of learning, which is consistent with the concept of social constructivism. The main goal of integrating participatory activities in ER classes is to discuss widely what they have understood from their reading (Channuan, 2012). Additionally, Benson (2001) stated that when students are actively involved in decisions on the course's content and methodology, learning will be at its most effective. Especially in EFL settings, when exposure to the target language is restricted, ER may assist second language learners in becoming more independent language learners. The students can recognize the time constraint for teachers to contact each student in the classroom and make an effort to practice the language through extensive reading.

Recently, Chiu-Kuei (2015) defined the term extensive reading as reading longer passages just for pleasure in simplified language forms, and the purpose was determined as comprehending the general meaning and being able to pursue it to the end without the intention of focusing on grammatical and lexical components. Thus, Aliponga (2013) believes that in a second or foreign language learning environment, students should be exposed to large quantities of target language input, which is most successfully achieved through ER.

B. *Autonomous Learning Strategies*

The role of the learner has received lots of attention because of the shifting perspectives in the field of English language teaching over the past few decades (Tudor, 1993). In other words, language teachers began to organize the classroom around the student's needs, preferences, and learning styles. This new perspective of learner-centeredness has changed the roles of learners and teachers and created an autonomous learning environment in the classroom. The idea of learner-centered education sees teaching and learning languages as a collaborative process between teachers and students rather than as a collection of rules that teachers must impart to their charges (Chernet, 2019).

Having a sense of self-fulfillment requires feeling autonomous or having the ability to make decisions. It also depends on meeting two other needs: feeling competent, or having the ability to face and overcome "optimal challenges," and feeling "connected with others while being effective and autonomous," according to American social psychologist Deci (1971). According to this theory of human motivation, the freedom that autonomy gives is both confirmed and constrained by our relatedness because our independent actions come from our feeling of self (Yenenesh et al., 2023).

If students get training to be more effective users of their combination of strategies throughout the entire learning process, they learn better. Since experienced learners can systematically solve language-learning problems and are

typically skilled in choosing appropriate learning strategies to complete a language-learning task, we as teachers must teach our students different learning strategies based on the cognition approach (Kutluturk & Yumru, 2017). Experienced learners can systematically solve language-learning problems and are usually skilled in selecting appropriate learning strategies to complete a language-learning task (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Additionally, according to Cohen (1998), strategy training encourages students to look for shortcuts to success, which improves LA and self-regulated learning. It encourages students to put their efforts toward learning goals. According to Cohen, another goal of strategy training is to promote autonomous learning by allowing students more freedom to choose and employ the learning strategies that are best for them without the guidance of language teachers.

Strategies are the procedures that entail decision-making and procedural knowledge on the best course of action that the student will need to select to cope with a task in the order of the preceding notions (Mayor et al., 1993). To learn and subsequently develop competencies, they rely on the student's context and the features of the particular learning experience. The student can build self-learning through the appropriate application of these tactics. The learning process will be under the control and self-regulation of the student, resulting in the acquisition of competencies. To do this, the students must master a diverse range of strategies they choose based on their features.

The ALSs suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and mentioned in Wang (2010) have been used for this investigation. They distinguish between three types of autonomous learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and social mediation/affective. While reading, recalling, taking notes, and asking questions are cognitive strategies, planning the learning, gathering data, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, learning reflection, and organizing the person's learning file are metacognitive strategies. The creation of group rules, cooperation with classmates, good communication, and assistance in evaluating their work are all examples of social mediation/affective conduct (Wang, 2010).

Therefore, language teachers are generally advised to explain all of the fundamental principles, positive principles, and specific strategies to utilize the ER strategies into the maximum meaningful levels for learners to transform them into more lifetime, self-governing, strategic, and knowledgeable L2 readers (Wijaya, 2021).

C. Statement of the Problem

In the current language classroom, students are expected to take more ownership of their education, and teachers are expected to support their development within and beyond the classroom. Tesfaye (2009) pointed out that since engaging students to use meaningful learning strategies results in more successful and immediate learning outcomes, students must participate well in cognitive, metacognitive, and affective activities. To participate in all these activities and produce autonomous learners who use their strategies, minimizing the direct interference of teachers is necessary. For instance, Wintek (2012) noted that because it is one of the essential educational objectives, instructors and educators must promote LA.

According to Dunn (1995), students should be encouraged to employ their preferred learning strategies to comprehend what they learn. Cano (2005) also emphasizes the significance of learning styles and strategies to perform better. Therefore, the government of Ethiopia has been engaged in a thorough reform effort to realign its educational system to fit the needs of students since the ratification of its Education and Training Policy (ETP) (MoE, 1994). As the policy's stated goals make clear, students' physical, mental, and problem-solving capacities should be enhanced, and citizens should be encouraged to develop their cognitive, creative, productive, and appreciative potential by appropriately relating education to the environment and societal issues.

As experience reveals, though the current Ethiopian education system motivates EFL students to take part in their learning and to seek out information from a variety of sources, most of them remain passive and dependent and lack the initiative to demonstrate their effort to overcome their learning (Yenenesh et al). Most teachers play the central role and take over all responsibilities of their learners. Even because of the reluctance of the learners to take responsibility, they have already started to think that it is up to the teachers to judge suitable materials, teaching strategies, teaching methods, and other elements students use in the teaching-learning process.

Over the past few decades, scholars conducted classroom experiments to investigate the effectiveness of incorporating ER into EFL/SL classrooms. For instance, Channuan (2012) examined the effect of ER on the reader autonomy of Thai University students and found that students who frequently used the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies during ER showed improvement in their LA, which would eventually enable language learners to become more autonomous learners.

Do and Dinh (2020) also did a study to determine the possible effects of ER on LA of first-year English language learners and discovered that ER improved the majority of the student's independent learning. They advised teachers to enhance student awareness, foster supportive learning settings, and effectively include ER in instructional activities in order to help students grow their autonomy.

Although there isn't any research specifically on the topic of the current study in the FL setting of an Ethiopian university, Abdurahman (2018), for example, conducted research on the impact of ER on EFL learners' attitudes and reading comprehension. The goal of this study was to summarize two separate investigations into how ER affected Ethiopian second-cycle primary school pupils' attitudes and reading comprehension. Each trial featured an intervention, and a control group was drawn from two intact grade 8 sections. In the first and second studies, the intervention group received ER for six weeks and 12 weeks, respectively. Reading comprehension tests and attitude questionnaires were

used to gather data. When reading time was increased and stimulating activities were added, the intervention group outperformed the control group in reading comprehension and attitudes toward reading.

Even though many attempts have been made to puzzle out the impact of ER on L2/FL development, there is scantiness of investigation into its effect on empowering learners with ALSs. The researcher feels that there is a strong research need for a better understanding of the role of ERST in enhancing ALSs used by Wollega University students. Thus, the study sought to answer the following question:

Does ERST bring a statistically significant difference in the ALSs used by experimental group as compared to control group?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The current study fits under the category of a "concurrent triangulation mixed methods design," in which qualitative data were gathered to be triangulated with the quantitative data. The researcher used this method to confirm, cross-validate, and verify the findings and expand the quantitative data collected (via questionnaire) through open-ended qualitative data collected (via interview) (Creswell, 2012). The pre-intervention questionnaire – Intervention - post-intervention questionnaire design involved two intact EFL classes, one serving as the experimental group which received ERST treatment in addition to the Communicative English Language skills-II course (n = 30), and the other serving as the control group (n = 31) which underwent only the conventional communicative skills-II course was employed.

B. Participants

The data for this study was generated from 61 first-year Wollega University students who were enrolled to take the communicative English Language skills - II Course in the second semester of the 2021/22 academic year, and one TEFL teacher who taught them. One class was taken as the experimental condition with 30 students, and the other as the control condition had 31 students. The students were targeted purposively since the main issue of the current study was their prominent problem needed to be investigated. Additionally, in this stage, students are expected to take charge of their own ER in order to handle their university lessons.

C. Data Collection Instruments

(a). The Questionnaire

In this study, the pre- and post-questionnaire was employed to collect the required data. The questionnaire was adopted from Channuan's (2012) study. It involves 35 questions, and was used to identify ALSs used by the students. In the current study, these strategies are called ALSs since they involve the autonomous learners' strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies chosen by students to become independent successful learners. Specifically, ALS include planning, monitoring, evaluating, directing strategies one's own work in addition to the common reading strategies.

The type of the questionnaire was based on 5 points Likert scale in which the subjects rate their degree of opinion on a scale of 1-5. To evaluate the students' degree of coincidence, the 35 items were responded on a scale from 1 to 5. The five points on the scale were: 5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=uncertain; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree (McLeod, 2023). At the beginning of the experiment, the pre-questionnaire was filled out by both the control and experimental groups to determine the pre-existing levels of the students before the treatment. In order to determine whether the intervention had an impact on the experimental group, a post-questionnaire was administered to both groups at the end of the intervention. Finally, the results of the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire scores were analysed using a one-way ANCOVA.

To check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, before the experiment, the researcher administered it to 25 students who didn't participate in the main study. Using the Cronbach's alpha test to collect and analyse questionnaire data, the internal consistency of the current study was evaluated. The 35 questionnaire items used to measure the learners' ALSs had an alpha coefficient of 0.865. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be relatively high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). All the composite reliabilities (CRs) were higher than the recommended value of 0.70 (Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Chronbach's alpha of each construct (cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies) also exceeded the 0.70 threshold. As a result, the questionnaire was found reliable for the intended purpose.

Regarding validity, confirmatory factor analysis gave proof for the three elements underlying ALSs, namely, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive strategy, and affective strategies, whereas factor analyses supported the construct validity of the questionnaire. Because the average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than 0.50, convergent validity was also considered acceptable. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which was used to assess discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE for the concept was higher than the inter-construct correlation, as shown in the table. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations was used to assess the discriminant validity of the data (Henseler et al., 2015), with values below the threshold of 0.90. Therefore, discriminant validity was proven.

(b). The Semi-Structured Interview

The teacher trainer interview also gained professional-judgment-based content validity from a group of three colleagues. The experts agreed to accept all the items with little word and phrase correction.

D. Procedures of the Study

Before the treatment, the teacher trainer had two days of training under the direction of ERST materials created specifically for this purpose after the pre-questionnaire had been administered to the treatment and control groups. ERST material was adapted from Channuan's (2012) study. Additionally, the present researcher modified the content so that it corresponded with the focus of the study. The training's materials were created with the goal of enabling students to read a variety of literature both within and outside of the classroom using appropriate ERSs of their choosing. In order to help the learners become successful autonomous learners, the material for the current study was developed in a way that plays to their psychological and methodological make-up (Yenenesh et al., 2023).

The teacher trainer was informed well about facilitating students' independent work, methods of following up individualized reading classes, maintaining and enhancing students' motivation and confidence, conducting peer work, group work, and discussion classes, and how to use reflective reading journals to take notes while reading. In one section of the control group, on the other hand, it was indicated to the teacher that she should use the conventional approach of teaching and the Course Module as it is without mixing it with the training approach.

In this study, the main focus area is integrating ERST into the conventional Communicative English Language Skills Course-II course to train the experimental group. The activities in conventional Course were shared by both groups. Therefore, in the conventional approach, students often read intensively and do the comprehension questions with direct interference of the teacher focusing on correcting students' errors to the given answers. However, the newly designed ERST procedure was implemented for the experimental group with the following three components:

ER and LA-based motivating training. At the beginning of the training, ER and LA-based motivating activities were given to the students for two consecutive periods in which each period lasted for 70 minutes. The teacher's role was to facilitate and manage the classroom activities. Students worked collaboratively in small groups to complete particular assignments. The focal point was on understanding the concept and application of LA and ER. In line with this, metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating were introduced to help them manage their work effectively. Concurrently, affective strategies such as motivation and positive attitudes toward ER and LA were promoted.

ER-based strategies training. After the two-consecutive periods of ER and LA-based motivating training, the subjects were trained on ER-based strategies for two periods. The lesson focused on the combination of topic-based and strategies-based lessons. The emphasis is on practicing reading skills such as activating background knowledge, predicting, guessing word meanings, finding main ideas, using references, etc. Moreover, cognitive reading strategies such as resourcing, deduction, imagery, keywords method, transfer, inference, translation, summarizing, etc. were integrated to promote reader autonomy. These activities helped learners to get aware of different strategies they can use during ER to get general ideas of the reading materials and identify the strategies that help them to enhance their comprehension skills and learning.

Sustained silent reading-based training. For a number of crucial causes, the SSR exercises were used as a kind of treatment. The SSR exercises, in the first place, might allow for more direct and intimate communication between the text and the individual students. Second, it is a learner-centered activity that concentrates on the particular needs and skills of the students. Third, Day and Bamford's (1998) also suggested that reading should be private and silent. And finally, in big mixed-ability classrooms, SSR is the only practical approach to personalized reading (Channuan, 2012).

As per the procedures of SSR in the treatment adapted by Yenenesh et al. (2023), three periods were devoted to SSR activities in the classroom. Each student brought whatever books they had started reading outdoors but kept reading during the training session. The teacher adopted the role of a reading role model and read along with the pupils. Each period included 30 minutes of sustained silent reading, with the remaining 40 minutes being used for class discussions on the topics that students read aloud in class and outside of class, as well as reading strategies, teacher consultation, and book borrowing and return. Students were urged to read outside of class as much as they could so that they would have something to write about in their reading notebooks and something to present, negotiate, talk about, and share with their peers.

The programme was implemented for eight weeks, lasting three sessions per week for the main course and an additional 70 minutes per week of training sessions for both the control and experimental groups. The experiment was held from December 1, 2022, to January 30, 2023. Finally, the post-questionnaire was filled out by the two groups to see if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Finally, the results were analysed and computed through a one-way ANCOVA to see if a significant difference existed between the groups in terms of the ALSs they used.

Following the treatment, the teacher trainer was also interviewed. The interview took place for about 30 minutes. Since the teacher trainer had no trouble using the language, it was conducted in English, the target language. Finally, the responses were recorded, transcribed, coded, and thematically analysed.

IV. RESULTS

The current study was conducted to test if there is a statistically significant difference between the ALSs used by the experimental group and the control group due to the intervention. The results of the pre-questionnaire, post-questionnaire and teacher trainer interview are provided in this section.

The results from pre- and post-questionnaire show the acceptable values of skewness and kurtosis since they range between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010). In addition to skewness, kurtosis, and a Shapir-Wilk's normality test $p > .05$ (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965; Razali & Wah, 2011). The questionnaire was normally distributed for both the experimental and control groups, according to their histograms, normal Q-Q plots, and box plots. There were no outliers that could have distracted the study's findings.

The normality test was also conducted and evaluated the interaction between the covariate and the independent variable in the prediction of the dependent variable. The result in Table 1 suggests that the interaction was not significant since $F(1, 57) = .005, p = .946$, and $p(.946) > (.05)$.

TABLE 1
HOMOGENEITY OF REGRESSION TEST FOR ALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group * pre-questionnaire	.001	1	.001	.005	.946
Error	7.463	57	.131		
Total	828.335	61			

As shown in Table 2, the assumption underlying homogeneity of variance for one-way ANCOVA was also achieved by $F(1, 59) = .45, p = .50$, and $p(.50) > (.05)$.

TABLE 2
LEVENE'S TEST FOR ALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.45	1	59	.50

The number of students who participated in the experimental group (30 students) and control group (31 students) is shown in Table 3. In this result, it is also clear that there were no missing cases and that there were variations in the means and standard deviations between the experimental group ($M = 3.88, SD = .38$) and the control group ($M = 3.45, SD = .35$).

Additionally, the table reveals the rise of the control group's mean ($M = 3.45$) to the experimental group's mean ($M = 3.88$). This means the experimental group performed better than the control group, as the mean score is greater. Thus, it could be suggested that ERbST had an added influence on experimental group students' performance.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALSS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control Group	3.45	.35	31
Experimental Group	3.88	.38	30
Total	3.66	.42	61

To provide a plausible answer to the current research question, the post-intervention questionnaire scores of the two groups were tested by one-way ANCOVA. Table 4 shows the performance in terms of the ALSs scores of the groups differed significantly ($p = .002 < .05$) whilst adjusting for the pre-intervention questionnaire. ERST has a significant effect $F(1, 58) = 10.68, p = .002$ on the ALSs used by the students. This result indicates the experimental group's score was found to be significantly higher than the control group. The analysis also shows that the study's hypothesis is accepted because the p-value is less than .05 and the ERST had a positive effect on the participants' ALSs scores on the post-test. This supports the idea that exposing students to ERST procedures has a positive impact on the ALSs they utilise.

On the basis of ETA squared at 0.16 values, Table 4 also shows the ERST effect size on the post-intervention questionnaire's mean scores. According to this result, the effect size of the ERST treatment on post-intervention questionnaire scores within eight weeks was high (Cohen, 1988). This number was also used to express the independent variable's (16%) contribution to the variation in the dependent variable. It indicates the significant increase in ALSs used by the students due to ERST with high effect (16%).

TABLE 4
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS FOR ALSs QUESTIONNAIRE

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-questionnaire	.29	1	.29	2.25	.139	.04
Group	1.37	1	1.37	10.68	.002	.16
Error	7.46	58	.13			
Total	828.34	61				

The findings presented in Table 5 below shows the mean difference (-.347) between the experimental and control groups. The difference in the learners' ALSs usage was significant among the two groups ($p < .05$). It can be concluded that the experimental group has made greater improvements due to the treatment (ERST).

TABLE 5
PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF MEASURE FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS ON ALSs QUESTIONNAIRE

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control Group	Experimental Group	-.347*	.106	.002	-.560	-.135
Experimental Group	Control Group	.347*	.106	.002	.135	.560

Concerning the interview conducted on the ALSs used by the participants, regarding cognitive strategies the teacher trainer commented,

Well, at the beginning of the treatment, the students even didn't know the kinds and the names of ALSs. For instance, they simply brought their background knowledge to the text ... it is better to say... what they remember... habitually. When they see the topic or title of texts, they were directly going to read; most students didn't give attention to the topic of reading materials and directly started to read the material since they didn't know activating their background knowledge; since their target was doing reading activities rather than reading for understanding, they simply search for answers instead of jotting down some ideas which may widen their knowledge of the language they are learning to integrate reading with other skills such as writing.

I also observed them when they struggled to understand the meaning of each new word and searched for its meaning from the dictionary while reading. When I asked them why they didn't guess from the contexts, most of the students answered that since English is a foreign language, sometimes it is difficult to understand the context by itself as a whole. They didn't even try to summarize what they have read; they didn't even want to remember what they have read unless they were asked to do so. They were not responsible for their learning.

Generally, these students didn't know which strategies they had to use to read extensively and understand the reading materials easily. However, after they started ERST and identified the ALSs and their uses, everything changed and showed improvement. They began to use different strategies during their practice, and I checked these from their reading journals in which they recorded and presented their day-to-day reports (Date: January 30, 2022).

About the metacognitive and affective strategies, the teacher trainer said,

The students also didn't have full awareness and adequate experience in the roles of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their activities. As I understood from what they said and did, according to them, these are the principals' and teachers' parts to do. So, I started giving those chances to plan, monitor, evaluate and show or present what they did. And from these, I observed that these students struggle to stand by themselves. Since I have done my best to encourage them through appreciation and continuous practices, they became responsible and confident students. I understood this when they became eager to show me the progress of their work in their reading journal.

However, it must be pointed out that all students do not have the same ability on using ALSs they have practiced. Some of them were seen when they used these strategies more than expected while others even could not apply them as much as needed. For this reason, more is expected from teachers to identify students' achievements and assist them when necessary (Date: January 30, 2022).

V. DISCUSSION

The current study mainly hypothesized the statistically significant difference between the ALSs used by the experimental and the control groups due to the treatment. After analyzing the data obtained from the students' ALSs questionnaire and teacher trainer's interview and comparing the outcomes of the control and experimental groups, the current researcher found that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Thus, the findings confirmed the hypothesis as the result of the study pointed to the positive effects of ERST on the experimental group usage of ALSs.

According to the findings, the experimental group progressively used varying degrees of ALSs while participating in ERST than the control group. This finding indicates that the experimental group benefited greatly in improving ALSs they used as a result of ERST. Thus, the finding of the current study is consistent with the study conducted by Burrows (2012) in which the ER/reading strategies group students who explicitly instructed on the reading strategies and also engaged in ER practice attained higher gains from time one to time three on the reading strategy test than those in

merely an intensive reading group. In his study, Wang and Han (2020) also assured that developing learners' autonomous learning strategies usage could have been accomplished through learning strategy training. Depending on their finding, Wang and Han (2020) suggested that mastering and using effective learning strategies is one significant and dominant component in cultivating this ability. In addition, this outcome is consistent with Nutalak's (2019) findings, which further knowledge of ER and lend credence to the idea that initiated educators to include ER in instructional activities to enhance students' reading proficiency and self-directed learning abilities.

Generally, the current study reveals evidence for learners' readiness to be responsible for their learning by supervising the pace, deciding the direction, evaluating the outcome, and reflecting on their learning. Therefore, those who are likely to succeed in learning a foreign or second language in general and the English language, in particular, can become familiar with ALSs via ER and use them more effectively.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study lay a path between ERST and ALSs and establish a solid basis to integrate ER within the EFL/SL university teaching and learning context. The extensive reading strategy training proposed in the current study can be easily incorporated into FL/L2 instructional settings at the university level. The ERST program can assist students in becoming more independent learners. It goes well beyond simply encouraging the use of one's strategies of learning. It also gives students chances to gain experiences in language learning strategies usage through ER, which will improve their academic success.

Regarding the pedagogical ramifications, this study shows that teachers can effectively integrate the ERST program in EFL/SL university classrooms in a way that fosters independent learners who can use their strategies to overcome their learning issues. Therefore, one implication of this study is that by taking into account learner characteristics, the intervention for EFL/SL classes may suit the requirements and preferences of specific students.

VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study paves the way and leaves the ground for future research to refine its findings. First, the time allotted for this study was generally ten weeks which is short and might delimit the effect of the intervention as ER is an activity that needs a long time to cover numerous reading materials. Transferring these results to learners' long-term gains in performance might be questioned. In this light, future work would benefit from replicating the research for a longer time and seeing the effects. Second, since the sample participants were only social science students, it might delimit the scope of this study. Therefore, future works would benefit from advancing the area to the other fields of study in university. In addition, due to the small group sizes, statistical analyses may not be as accurate as they could be. Future attempts may use larger samples and more thorough qualitative analysis. The role of ERST and its impact on different language skills need to be further explored and reexamined in future expanded and methodologically rigorous investigations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express gratitude to the University for funding this project during the data collection and to the advisors for their unreserved professional support.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdurahman, A. E. (2018). Effects of extensive reading on EFL learners' reading comprehension and attitudes. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 3(4):1-11. <https://doi.org/10.29252/ijree.3.4.1>
- [2] Aliponga, J. (2013). Reading journal: Its benefits for extensive reading. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(12), 73-80. http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2013/8.pdf
- [3] Benson, P. (1997). The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman. p. 18-34.
- [4] Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Longman.
- [5] Burrows, L. (2012). *The effects of extensive reading and reading strategies on reading self-efficacy*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Temple University]. Retrieved on 17 August 2022 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED549086>
- [6] Cano, F. (2005). Epistemological beliefs and approaches to learning: Their change through secondary school and their influence in academic performance. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75, 203-221. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709904X22683>
- [7] Channuan, P. (2012). *The effect of extensive reading using learner autonomy training on reading ability and reader autonomy of Thai university students*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Chulalongkorn University].
- [8] Chernet, Z. W. (2019). EFL freshmen students and teachers perception and practice of learner autonomy: The case of Wolyta Sodo University. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 9(2), 398- 419. <http://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.9.02.2019.p8652>
- [9] Chiu-Kuei, C. C. (2015). Applying extensive reading to improve unmotivated learners' attitudes toward reading in English. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 13(2), 1-25. <https://www.ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/356>

- [10] Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- [11] Cohen, J. (1998). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale.
- [12] Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- [13] Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Deci, E. L. (1971). Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 18(1), 105–115. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030644>
- [15] Dickinson, L. (1995). Learner preparation. In *proceeding of the seminar on self-access learning and learner's independence: A south East Asian perspective*, pp. 89-99. Bangkok: KMITT.
- [16] Do, H. & Dinh, H. (2020). Extensive reading and its impact on learner autonomy: A study on 1st year English majors at a Vietnamese university. *Educational Sciences*, 65(12), 3-12. <https://doi.org/10.18173/2354-1075.2020-0105>
- [17] Dunn, R. (1995). *Strategies for educating diverse learners*. Bloomington, Phi Delta Kappan. Retrieved on 23 July 2022 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED382598.pdf>
- [18] Mcleod, S. (2023). *Likert scale definition, examples and analysis*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/about-us>
- [19] George, D., & Mallery, M. (2010). *SPSS for windows step by step: A simple guide and reference, 17.0 update* (10th ed.). Pearson, Boston.
- [20] Hart, N. (2002). Intra-group autonomy and authentic materials: A different approach to ELT in Japanese colleges and universities. *System*, 30(1), 33-46.
- [21] Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 43(1):115-135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- [22] Jaisook, P., & Thirawisit, A. (2015). Extensive reading: A success in reader autonomy. *Humanities & Social Science*, 32(1), 147-164.
- [23] Krashen, S. (2004). *The power of reading*. Portsmouth, Heinemann.
- [24] Kutluturk, S., & Yumru, H. (2017). Cognitive and metacognitive strategy training to enhance freshmen's reading skills. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(1), 7-15. <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v5n1a2>
- [25] Little, D., Dam, L., & Legenhausen, L. (2017). *Language learner autonomy: Theory, practice, and research*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- [26] Mayor, S., Presley, J. F., & Maxfield, F. R. (1993). Sorting of membrane components from endosomes and subsequent recycling to the cell surface occurs by a bulk flow process. *J. Cell Biol.* 121, 1257–1269.
- [27] Mermelstein, A. D. (2015). Improving EFL learners' writing through enhanced extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(2), 182-198. Retrieved on 20 August 2022 from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/October2015/articles/mermelstein.pdf>
- [28] MoE. (1994). *Education sector strategy*. Addis Ababa: EMPDA.
- [29] Nutalak, P. (2019). The effects of extensive reading on English reading ability and attitudes of business English major students. *Southeast Bangkok Journal* 5(1), 88-102. Retrieved on 29 July 2022 from http://www.southeast.ac.th/SBC_Journal/Jornal_main/jornal_2562_1/content/sbj5_no1_2562_88-102.pdf
- [30] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
- [31] Phillida, S. (1998). *Life at school: Education and psychology*. London: Constable.
- [32] Razali, N. M., & Wah, Y. B. (2011). Power comparisons of shapiro-wilk, kolmogorov-smirnov, lilliefors, and anderson-darling tests. *Journal of Statistical Modeling and Analytics*, 2, 21-33. Retrieved on 15 August 2022 from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267205556>
- [33] Shapiro, S. S., & Wilk, M. B. (1965). An analysis of variance test for normality (complete samples). *Biometrika*, 53(3/4), 591-611.
- [34] Son, N. V. (2017). Using extensive reading to improve first-year students' learner autonomy. *International Journal of New Technology and Research (IJNTR)*, 3(7), 18-21.
- [35] Tesfaye, J. G. (2009). *Learning styles and strategies of Ethiopian secondary school students in learning mathematics*. [MA Thesis, University of South Africa (UNISA)].
- [36] Tudor, I. (1993). Teacher roles in the learner-centered classroom. *ELT Journal*, 47(1), 23-24. Retrieved on 10 July 2022 from <https://eric.ed.gov/?ti=Student+Centered+Curriculum/EJ459634>
- [37] Wang, X. S. (2010). Promoting language learners' autonomy in cooperative learning. *Sino-US Engl. Teaching* 7, 1-6.
- [38] Wang, G., & Han, L. (2020). On the strategies to cultivate college students' autonomous English learning ability in the new era. *English Language Teaching*, 13(11), 94. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n11p94>
- [39] Waring, R. (2006). Why extensive reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs. *The Language Teacher*, 30, 44-47.
- [40] Wasko, M. M., & Faraj, S. (2005). Why should I share? Examining social capital and knowledge contribution in electronic networks of practice. *MIS Quarterly*, 29(1), 35–57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25148667>
- [41] Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.
- [42] Wijaya, K. F. (2021). The important role of extensive reading strategy in Indonesian EFL learning contexts. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature, and Culture*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v6i2.2482>
- [43] Wintek, Y. (2012). Teachers' roles in autonomous learning. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Linguistics & Education*, 12(13), 47-50. ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X.
- [44] Yenenesh, Y. A., Tamiru, O. D., & Mekuria, Z. B. (2023). The effects of extensive reading strategy training on enhancing first year undergraduate EFL learners' level of autonomy. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1305.01>

Yenenesh Yerukneh Alemu is a senior lecturer at Wollega University. She received her Master degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the University of Addis Ababa. Since 2011, she has been attending Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) program in TEFL. She has 12 years of work experience in teaching English language in governmental high schools and higher institutions in Ethiopia. She has participated in Educational trainings and advised a number of BA and MA in TEFL students.

Tamiru Olana Defa is an Associate Professor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Currently, he has been teaching and advising M.A. and Ph.D. in TEFL students. He has more than 22 years of teaching experience at Nekemte College of Teacher Education and at Wollega University, Ethiopia. Besides, he is a director of Six Star Journals of the University.

Mekuria Zewdie Bedada is an Assistant Professor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Currently, he has been teaching and advising M.A. and Ph.D. in TEFL students at Wollega University. He has 17 years of teaching experience in teaching and research in different governmental higher institutions in Ethiopia.