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Key Constructs in Language Teaching

Extensive Reading in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Willy A. Renandya
National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Flora D. Floris*
Petra Christian University, Indonesia

Jing Zhou
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre, USA

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Abstract
Extensive reading (ER) has long been a foundational construct in second language acquisition (SLA) theory, due to its ability to foster implicit linguistic knowledge and improve fluency. Rooted in the principles of providing learners with abundant, comprehensible, and self-selected input, its implementation has often faced practical challenges related to resources and assessment. This article introduces the key construct of ER in the tech-driven, AI-powered era. Drawing on the seminal work by Day and Bamford (1998) as well as recent research on the primacy of input-based learning, we argue that AI does not render ER obsolete; rather, it offers vast opportunities to scale, personalize, and enhance ER programs. AI-powered tools can address traditional implementation challenges by facilitating content curation, providing adaptive scaffolding, and enabling more efficient monitoring.

Keywords
Extensive reading, artificial intelligence, language teaching, implicit knowledge, comprehensible input

1 Introduction

In second language learning contexts, extensive reading (ER), also known as pleasure reading or free voluntary reading, stands as a pedagogical approach with strong theoretical and empirical support. The core proposition of ER, as articulated by researchers such as Day and Bamford (1998), Nation and Waring (2019), and more recently by Zhou (2024), is that meaningful language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to a large quantity of easy, engaging, and self-selected texts. This approach stands in contrast to intensive reading which focuses on a small amount of text with high linguistic and cognitive

*Corresponding author. Email: debora@petra.ac.id

demands. This approach is often referred to as the read-then-answer-comprehension-questions approach (Renandya et al., 2015), which is still a widely used method for teaching reading.

ER's value lies in its ability to facilitate the development of implicit linguistic knowledge, the intuitive, unconscious understanding of a language that underpins fluent, communicative competence (Renandya & Day, 2020). As research consistently shows, this implicit knowledge is primarily acquired through exposure to rich, comprehensible language input, not through the explicit teaching of grammar rules (Renandya & Day, 2020; Wong & Van Patten, 2008). The benefits of ER are manifold, including improved reading fluency, expanded vocabulary, and enhanced writing skills (Jeon & Day, 2016; Nakanishi, 2015; Nation & Waring, 2019; Robb & Ewert, 2024; Zhou, 2024). Beyond its linguistic contributions, ER also enriches learners' general knowledge and fosters a positive and confident attitude toward language learning (Ng et al., 2019; Rothville, 2025).

Despite its widely acknowledged benefits, the implementation of ER programs has historically faced significant challenges. These range from logistical issues, such as building and maintaining book collections and finding effective ways to monitor progress without reducing reading enjoyment, to broader concerns such as limited time, lack of support, and insufficient teacher training (Chang & Renandya, 2017; Renandya et al., 2021; Robb & Ewert, 2024; Thongsan & Waring, 2024; Zhou, 2025). The following subsections discuss ten commonly reported challenges in more detail.

1.1 Limited time

Teachers often feel they lack the time to implement ER due to an already overcrowded curriculum and numerous additional responsibilities such as lesson planning, grading, administrative duties, and extracurricular supervision. The fear is that dedicating class time to silent reading may compromise coverage of required syllabus content. This concern is especially acute in educational systems that prioritize test preparation and structured instruction.

One way to address this concern is to present evidence that ER improves language skills, making it a productive use of class time. Research shows that sustained ER can enhance students' grammar, vocabulary, and reading proficiency, which in turn reduces the need for excessive grammar drills and vocabulary memorization.

Suk (2017) reported that Korean university students who added 30 minutes of extensive reading to their weekly schedule improved their reading rate by 35.13 words per minute compared to 15.53 in the control group and learned an average of 13.07 new words versus 3.41 in the control group. Reading comprehension also increased, despite 30 percent less direct comprehension instruction. Similarly, Aka (2019) found that Japanese high school students who replaced grammar instruction with two hours of extensive reading each week for one year scored 9.13 points higher in grammar and vocabulary and 9.49 points higher in reading than those in traditional classes, with the greatest gains among middle- and lower-proficiency learners.

Furthermore, integrating ER into the official curriculum, as has been done in places like Singapore (Loh & Pang, 2022), can provide institutional validation. Early initiatives such as the *Reading and English Acquisition Programme* (REAP, 1985–1989) promoted wide reading in primary schools through a book flood approach. This was followed by the *Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading* program (STELLAR, 2006–2015), which scaled ER practices nationwide with class libraries, sustained silent reading, and teacher mentoring. More recently, the *Building a Reading Culture* project (BRC, 2017–2020) has focused on secondary schools, redesigning libraries and learning spaces to make reading more engaging. This kind of support makes it easier for teachers to justify its use of classroom time.

1.2 Lack of relevant reading materials

A successful ER program depends on access to a large collection of engaging, level-appropriate reading materials, typically in the form of graded readers. However, many schools, especially in low-resource or rural areas, cannot afford to purchase sufficient physical books from major publishers like *Oxford* or *Cambridge University Press*, which can be costly. This lack of materials creates a significant barrier to implementation.

Fortunately, digital solutions are increasingly available. One example is *Xreading* (https://www.xreading.com/), which offers over 1,200 online graded readers from 20 ELT publishers, organized into 15 levels and 34 genres. *Xreading* also includes a learner management system (LMS) that lets teachers monitor which books students are reading, the number of words they have read, and their reading speed (Xreading, n.d.). In addition, numerous websites now provide free, high-quality reading content specifically designed for language learners. These include *Reading Skills for Today* (https://www.readingskills4today.com/), *ER-Central* (https://www.er-central.com), *Let's Read* (https://www.letsreadasia.org/), and many others. These options make it possible to establish a functional ER library even with minimal funding.

1.3 Delayed impact of ER

One of the most common concerns among teachers is that ER does not produce immediate, measurable results. Since ER is based on the principle of gradual language acquisition through massive input, improvements in vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and overall proficiency may take months or even years to become apparent. Teachers, who often work under pressure to show short-term progress on standardized tests, may become discouraged if they do not see quick gains.

However, research shows that significant benefits, such as increased reading speed and improved writing, typically emerge only after students have read between 100,000 and 1 million words. Studies by Krashen (2004) and meta-analyses by Jeon and Day (2016) confirm that ER leads to superior long-term outcomes compared to traditional methods, especially when sustained for a year or more. Evidence from classroom-based studies with year-long ER programs shows how this works in practice.

As discussed in Section 1.1, Aka (2019) reported substantial gains from a one-year ER program. Lower- and middle-proficiency learners improved the most, showing that ER works best when it continues over a long period. Milliner (2017) also found positive results from a year-long ER program with Japanese university students learning English using the *Xreading* platform. From December 2014 to December 2015, students were required to read 100,000 words in the first semester and 150,000 in the second. Most read more than 250,000 words in total. On average, they completed 39 graded readers over 41 hours and 25 minutes, and their TOEIC IP scores increased by 38 points overall (454 to 492) and by 29 points in the reading section (183 to 212).

Together, the findings from Aka (2019) and Milliner (2017) support the view that ER is most effective when maintained over time. Regular exposure helps students strengthen and remember words they have seen before.

1.4 Legitimacy issue

In many educational settings, effective teaching is equated with active instruction: lesson delivery, explanations, structured exercises, and assessments. ER, by contrast, involves students reading silently at their own pace with minimal teacher intervention, which can appear passive or unstructured. As a result, both students and administrators may perceive ER as not real teaching or a waste of valuable class time. This perception undermines the legitimacy of ER and makes it difficult for teachers to justify its inclusion in their lessons.

One way to address this concern is to make ER part of the existing syllabus by linking it to coursebooks. As Brown (2008) notes, coursebooks carry institutional credibility, and they can legitimize ER when it is treated as a core component rather than an optional extra. According to Brown (2008), ways to integrate ER into textbooks include direct methods such as reading logs, book choice flowcharts, unit-specific reader lists, first-chapter hooks, serialized short readers, and discussion tasks. Indirect methods involve designing textbook reading activities that follow ER principles, including variety, student choice, reading for pleasure, and level-appropriate materials.

Another way to strengthen ER's legitimacy is to embed it into a task-based curriculum. Green (2005) proposes this approach to give ER a clear purpose and make it part of recognised classroom work. In this model, ER supports information gathering or problem-solving and can be used to explore grammar, vocabulary, and discourse features. Material selection can be based on class surveys, with tasks built around graded readers, magazine mini-texts, or student writing.

Another practical step is light accountability. Short online quizzes (e.g., via *Xreading*) verify basic comprehension and confirm that students did the reading. Research shows that short quizzes do not harm students' attitudes toward ER, give a sense of accomplishment, and help students stay on task (Robb & Ewert, 2024).

1.5 Lack of support from school leaders

Even when teachers are enthusiastic about ER, they often lack the necessary support from school administrators and policymakers. While school leaders may acknowledge the general importance of reading, they are typically more concerned with measurable outcomes such as exam results. Without clear evidence that ER improves test scores, they may be unwilling to allocate funding for books, digital platforms, or dedicated class time.

An effective strategy is to present clear research evidence. Puripunyavanich (2022) found that ER programs gain more backing when linked to school policies and missions and when administrators are shown credible studies that demonstrate their benefits. Long-term solutions also matter. Thongsan and Waring (2024) point to cooperation among teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers, proper funding for materials and training, and adding ER to the formal curriculum. These steps move ER from an optional activity to a recognized part of education.

Taken together, the studies show that leaders can be persuaded through evidence in the short term. Sustained support, however, requires structural changes in policy, funding, and curriculum.

1.6 Limited knowledge about ER

Despite the growing body of research and resources on ER, many teachers still have misconceptions or incomplete understanding of what it entails (e.g., Waring & Puripunyavanich, 2025). Some believe ER is only suitable for advanced learners, not realizing that graded readers are available for all proficiency levels, including beginners. Others think that only "serious" or literary texts should be used, dismissing popular fiction, graphic novels, or series books as inappropriate. However, research shows that engaging, enjoyable content (often dismissed as "fluffy" reading materials) is precisely what motivates reluctant readers and helps them develop a reading habit.

Recent studies support this view. Saito (2025), for example, found that Japanese university students made measurable progress in ER when they read books connected to their interests and prior knowledge. Many students preferred fiction and fantasy for their straightforward language and engaging stories, while others selected biographies of well-known figures they already recognized. These choices showed that students were motivated more by how easy it was to understand and how enjoyable it felt to read. The study further demonstrated that students who read larger volumes of such personally relevant and

accessible texts achieved greater gains in reading proficiency. The study concludes that motivation and progress are strongly tied to interest-driven book selection rather than the difficulty or literary value of the material.

Addressing these misconceptions requires accessible professional development, clear guidelines, and success stories from other teachers. By showing that ER works with engaging and level-appropriate texts, teachers can see that it is an inclusive and flexible approach. In this way, ER can be understood not as a luxury or an add-on, but as an effective method for supporting learners at all levels.

1.7 No personal experience with ER

Teachers who have never personally experienced the benefits of extensive reading in their own language learning journey may struggle to believe in its effectiveness. Without firsthand experience of how reading comprehensible and interesting texts can improve language proficiency, they may doubt its value or abandon the program when challenges arise. This lack of personal conviction can undermine the energy and consistency needed to sustain an ER program.

Research supports this concern. In a qualitative study based on interviews with 14 administrators, coordinators, and teachers of a large-scale online extensive reading program at a university in Thailand, Puripunyavanich (2022) found that the lack of personal ER experience was a major obstacle to program implementation. The study showed that teachers who read extensively themselves were more effective in motivating students because they could share their own reading experiences and recommend books.

This suggests that teacher commitment can be strengthened by giving them opportunities to experience ER themselves. When teachers read engaging, level-appropriate books for pleasure, they see the benefits for themselves and are more likely to support, sustain, and promote ER in their classrooms.

1.8 Lack of motivation

Student motivation is a critical factor in the success of any ER program. Many teachers report that their students show little interest in reading, preferring digital entertainment like videos, games, or social media. This lack of intrinsic motivation makes it difficult to establish a reading habit. However, motivation is not fixed; it can be nurtured.

Research shows that when students find the right book, what Trelease (2013) calls a “home run book”, they often experience a turning point that sparks a lifelong interest in reading. These are books that resonate personally, match the reader’s interests, and are easy enough to read without frustration. Teachers play a crucial role here in helping students find such books through recommendations, book talks, and creating a classroom culture that celebrates reading. Moreover, teachers who model good reading behaviour can significantly influence student attitudes and engagement.

Empirical studies confirm that teacher involvement is crucial in building and sustaining motivation. Milliner (2017) showed that Japanese university students were often reluctant to read because of busy schedules, and that teachers responded by setting word targets, linking reading to grades, giving class time for ER, monitoring progress through *Xreading*, and leading follow-up discussions. In the same vein, Puripunyavanich (2022) found that teachers encouraged students by explaining the benefits of ER, checking progress regularly, and using incentives such as points or competitions. Tabata-Sandom (2023) motivated students by sending them newsletters regularly. Teachers also helped students choose suitable books and, importantly, acted as role models by engaging in ER themselves.

Together, these studies show that teachers motivate not only through classroom strategies and structured support but also by modelling positive reading habits. Sustained motivation requires both guidance and example.

1.9 Limited professional development opportunity

Many teachers, especially those in remote or underfunded schools, lack access to systematic training on how to implement ER effectively. Without proper guidance, they may feel unprepared to start a program, select appropriate materials, or assess student progress. Thongsan and Waring (2024) note that such training is essential, not only to clarify what counts as typical ER practice but also to provide practical workshops on how to organize classes, guide students in book selection, manage reading resources, and act as role models. Thongsan and Waring (2024) also highlight the importance of building networks of teachers who can support one another in sustaining ER programs.

However, opportunities for this type of professional development are often limited. Many workshops are offered by ELT/TESOL organizations, but participation requires time and financial resources that many teachers do not have. More recently, online platforms have helped fill this gap. Free webinars, virtual workshops, and online communities allow teachers to learn about ER at little or no cost. Organizations like the *Indonesian Extensive Reading Association* (*IERA*) and the *Extensive Reading Foundation* (*ERF*) regularly offer free training and support. These opportunities not only build knowledge but also connect teachers with a global network of practitioners who can share resources, advice, and encouragement.

1.10 ER principles are too demanding

Some teachers find it difficult to fully implement all ten established principles of ER, believing they must be strictly followed as rigid rules. A commonly cited challenge is the principle that "reading is its own reward," which suggests avoiding comprehension questions or other forms of accountability. In formal educational settings, this makes it hard to verify if students have read and to assess their learning.

ER scholars suggest that these principles should not be treated as rigid requirements. Waring and McLean (2015) argue that the ten principles of ER are best understood as descriptions of practices observed in successful ER programs, rather than as fixed prescriptions. Macalister (2015) makes the same point, stating that the principles are "guidelines rather than commandments" (p. 126) and should be applied flexibly according to the local teaching context. This view highlights that teachers should adapt ER principles to their students' needs and conditions, rather than feeling bound to implement all ten in every situation.

By treating the principles as adaptable guidelines, teachers can focus on what is most practical and effective for their learners. This flexible approach can also reduce teacher resistance and make ER more sustainable in diverse contexts.

While ER has been shown to provide benefits, its implementation in classrooms still faces many challenges. To address these challenges, it is important to revisit to the basic principles of ER, which continue to provide direction for effective ER practice. The following section reviews these principles and their continued relevance.

2 The Principles of Extensive Reading and Their Enduring Relevance

The long-standing principles of ER, first put forth by Day and Bamford (1998) and later re-examined and refined by other ER scholars (e.g., Macalister, 2015), remain highly relevant in today's tech-driven second language learning. These principles form the philosophical backbone of the approach, emphasizing a learner-centred experience where the act of reading is intrinsically motivating, and the teacher's role is one of guidance and modelling.

Building on this foundation, several core principles have been widely recognized as essential for effective ER programs. These include providing easy and varied reading materials, giving learners

the freedom to choose what they read, focusing on reading for pleasure, and encouraging silent and individual reading. Each of these principles contributes to creating the conditions in which learners can develop both fluency and motivation.

2.1 Easy and varied reading materials

This principle dictates that learners should be able to read texts with a high degree of comprehension, typically understanding 98% or more of the words on a page without needing a dictionary. This is often referred to as "reading in the comfort zone", enabling students to enjoy the reading without having to frequently consult a bilingual dictionary. The material should be varied to cater to different interests and to expose learners to a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. For example, a learner with an intermediate English level might read a simplified version of *the Harry Potter series* or a collection of graded readers about travel and adventure rather than a full-length unabridged classic such as *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.2 Learner choice

This is a fundamental motivator in extensive reading. Students are given the choice and flexibility to choose what they read, based on their own interests and preferences. This autonomy significantly increases engagement and the likelihood that they will sustain their reading habits. A teacher implementing this principle would provide a library of diverse graded readers—from mysteries to non-fiction—and allow students to freely select their next book, rather than assigning a single novel for the entire class.

2.3 Reading for pleasure

The primary goal of ER is to nurture a love for reading and a positive attitude toward the language. The focus is on the meaning and the enjoyment of the story, not on the grammatical structures or individual vocabulary items. A teacher following this principle would avoid traditional follow-up activities like pop quizzes, grammar worksheets, or detailed comprehension questions that turn reading into a chore.

2.4 Silent and individual reading

ER is meant to be a personal, solitary activity. This allows learners to read at their own pace, immerse themselves in the text, and develop internal fluency. In a classroom setting, this is often implemented through a dedicated Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) time, where every individual, including the teacher, reads a book of their choice without interruption. After students have finished reading, enjoyable post-reading activities can flow quite naturally, allowing them to share their feelings, opinions, and favourite parts of the story with peers. These discussions, book talks, or creative responses (e.g., drawing a scene or writing a diary entry from a character's perspective) can help deepen comprehension and make reading a more interactive and socially engaging experience.

The theoretical underpinning for these principles, as highlighted by Renandya and Day (2020) and Zhou (2024), is the primacy of input in language acquisition. This perspective posits that, while there is a place for some explicit instruction at the initial phase, language learning is largely a non-linear, implicit process. Learners acquire fluency not by rote memorization or systematic practice, but by a process of repeated, focused engagement with meaningful messages. ER provides the perfect environment for this process, as it immerses the learner in a continuous flow of comprehensible and compelling language. While this theory is a cornerstone of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the practical application of providing abundant input has been a perennial challenge.

3 Extensive Reading and the Artificial Intelligence Era

The proliferation of AI tools presents a valuable opportunity to overcome the traditional hurdles of ER implementation. By leveraging these technologies, teachers can create a more dynamic, personalized, and efficient extensive reading ecosystem.

3.1 Personalized content curation and access

One of the most significant challenges for implementing ER is building a collection of diverse, easily accessible, and level-appropriate materials. School libraries or classroom collections are often limited and require substantial financial and logistical investment. Without a wide selection, learners may find it difficult to find reading texts that both match their proficiency and sustain their interest, undermining two of the core principles of ER: reading ease and learner choice.

AI-based tools can help address this problem. For example, *ReadTheory* (https://readtheory.org/) uses adaptive algorithms to recommend texts based on a learner's past reading performance and vocabulary level. *Xreading* (https://www.xreading.com/) provides a virtual graded reader library where learners can search books by level or interest, and the system recommends titles based on their reading preferences and history. These applications act as curators by matching readers with suitable materials, supporting learner autonomy and keeping reading within their comfort zone of comprehension.

The potential of AI extends further when combined with the vast digital libraries now available online. As Reiber-Kuijpers et al. (2021) observe, the challenge is not the absence of material but its overwhelming abundance and the difficulty of selecting from too many options. AI-based apps like *ReadTheory* or *Xreading* can organize these collections into manageable choices, helping learners access a wide range of texts without confusion. By doing so, AI enhances both efficiency and personalization in the ER process, ensuring that learners engage with material that is not only comprehensible but also meaningful to them.

However, relying too much on AI algorithmic recommendations may limit students' exposure to different genres or text types. This is related to what Hu et al. (2022) call the "filter bubble effect", where recommendation systems create a personalized but limited information space. While such personalization can make reading easier and more engaging, it also risks isolating students from diverse content. In practice, this means students may repeatedly encounter the same types of texts and miss opportunities to read across different genres, topics, or styles. Teachers therefore remain important in maintaining balance, i.e. using AI to support reading while actively encouraging exploration across genres and styles, so that students benefit from both personalized support and broad reading experiences.

3.2 Balanced accountability

While "reading is its own reward" is a foundational principle of ER, research suggests that in many classrooms, some form of light accountability helps sustain student engagement, especially where motivation, time, or autonomy is limited (Ng et al., 2019). The key is to avoid high-pressure tasks like tests or lengthy reports, which undermine the joy of reading. Instead, simple, low-stakes checks, such as reading logs, short reflections, or brief discussions, can encourage consistency without turning reading into a chore.

In this area, AI tools can provide valuable support. AI-powered systems can automate routine tracking, allowing students to record their reading time or book titles through simple text or voice input. These systems can then generate personalized feedback, such as encouragement messages, progress summaries, or book recommendations aligned with learners' interests. *The StoryGraph* (https://thestorygraph.com/) is one example of a platform that lets students log their reading and add

short reflections, making it suitable for independent use. In classroom contexts, *ReadTheory* (https://readtheory.org/) offers adaptive comprehension tasks and progress reports that help teachers track engagement without relying on traditional testing. Together, such tools show how AI can provide light accountability while keeping the focus on reading enjoyment.

At the same time, reliance on automated systems raises concerns about engagement. While AI can monitor reading volume and consistency, it cannot fully capture the quality or the depth of the reading experience. Studies show that AI tools often focus on surface features, such as language correctness or task completion, rather than helping students build deeper analysis or critical evaluation (Al-Smadi et al., 2025). AI systems can also make learning feel less personal, since they cannot replace social interaction, peer discussion, or teacher feedback, all of which support critical thinking and deeper understanding (Al-Smadi et al., 2025). Teachers are therefore still needed to balance AI tracking with human guidance, so that accountability supports learning. In this way, accountability remains consistent with the principle that reading should, above all, be enjoyable and rewarding.

3.3 Adaptive scaffolding and vocabulary support

A key principle of ER is that reading should be easy and largely free of frustration. Learners are more likely to develop fluency and sustain motivation when they can understand around 98% of the words in a text (Hu & Nation, 2020). Yet in practice, many students still encounter gaps even with graded readers, which can lead to discouragement or disengagement. AI tools can help address this problem by providing adaptive scaffolding tailored to individual needs before and during reading.

Before reading, AI tools can be used to analyze a text's readability using features such as sentence length, word frequency, syntactic complexity, and lexical diversity. Tools such as *Readable* (https://readable.com/) or the *Hemingway Editor* (https://hemingwayapp.com/) allow teachers and students to check readability scores quickly, helping them identify whether a text is suitable for a given level. Another option is *Diffit* (https://web.diffit.me), which can adjust a text's reading level from 2nd grade up to 11th+ and provide levelled resources. These tools help students remain within their "comfort zone" of reading comprehension while also being exposed to new language.

During reading, AI can also provide real-time support. Instead of having frequent dictionary checks, students can access instant glosses, audio pronunciations, or simplified explanations of unfamiliar words with a tap or mouse-over. These "just-in-time" supports allow students to stay focused on meaning rather than on word decoding. AI tools such as *Readlang* (https://readlang.com/) translate and explain words instantly while students read online texts, and *Google Read Along* (https://readalong.google.com/) offers immediate pronunciation help without interrupting the reading flow.

By offering help both before and during reading, AI gives students the right level of support. Readability tools prepare learners by matching them with suitable texts, while vocabulary tools step in during reading to explain new words quickly. This balance keeps reading understandable, avoids overload, and makes it easier for students to stay motivated. In this way, AI scaffolding and support fit well with the idea of extensive reading, where texts should be clear, enjoyable, and only slightly challenging.

Although AI scaffolding brings many benefits, over reliance on it may weaken important reading processes. Tools that provide translation, pronunciation help, or instant glosses are useful, but they cannot replace skills like inferring meaning from context. Instant glosses serve as a clear example: they offer quick support but may reduce opportunities for deeper vocabulary growth (Huang & Lin, 2014). Teachers therefore need to guide students in using AI support strategically, so that it supplements rather than replaces the natural process of negotiating meaning in reading. In this way, AI can lower frustration while still keeping the focus on the enjoyment in ER.

3.4 Interactive companionship and post-reading activities

The principles of ER also stress the importance of teacher guidance and modelling. While the role of the teacher cannot be replaced, AI-driven tools can provide complementary support by acting as interactive reading companions. These tools can extend the reading experience beyond comprehension and into more meaningful engagement.

For instance, after completing a book, learners can use AI companions to discuss key themes, explore character motivations, or reflect on moral dilemmas presented in the text. AI tools such as *BookAI* (https://www.bookai.chat/) and *Rebind* (https://www.rebind.ai/) let students ask questions and receive responses that simulate dialogue about the text. *ChatGPT Study Mode* (https://chatgpt.com/) and *Google Gemini Guided Learning* (https://gemini.google.com/) can also guide reflection by asking students and giving tasks such as debating motives, summarizing chapters, or creating new content such as alternative endings. These activities turn post-reading into an interactive and creative process, linking reading with writing and speaking, and giving students chances to produce language.

It is important to note, however, that AI cannot replace the relational and motivational role of teachers. Tabata-Sandom (2023) found that teacher qualities such as friendliness and supportive attitudes strongly influence the students' engagement and persistence in ER. Teachers also play an important role in monitoring progress and encouraging productive challenges, especially for advanced readers. Beyond this, they create opportunities for peer interaction, which builds a sense of belonging and emotional security (Zhou, 2025). In this way, AI remains a supplement, while teachers ensure that ER stays both engaging and socially meaningful.

Overall, AI can support ER by helping students access suitable texts, track their reading, receive adaptive support, and engage in post-reading opportunities. Yet its role is supportive, not substitutive. It does not replace the human guidance and social interaction that keep ER meaningful and enjoyable.

4 Conclusion

The theoretical foundations of extensive reading, i.e., the crucial role of comprehensible input and the development of implicit linguistic knowledge, are as relevant today as they were when the construct was formalized three decades ago by Day and Bamford (1998). However, the practical application of ER has always been a negotiation between idealistic principles and logistical realities. The advent of artificial intelligence and the tools it provides, from personalized content curation to adaptive support, offer a pathway to resolve this tension. With AI, teachers can create ER programs that are more effective, more engaging, and more accessible than ever before. The future of extensive reading is not in isolation, but in a symbiotic relationship with technology, with the human teacher as the central figure, designing and facilitating an enriching, input-rich environment for language acquisition.

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Willy A. Renandya is a language teacher educator with extensive teaching experience in Asia. He currently teaches language education courses in Singapore, including at *NIE-NTU*, *SUSS* and *RELC*. He is currently a research fellow at the *University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City*, Vietnam and a visiting professor at *Chulalongkorn University*, Thailand and *Wuhan University*, China. He has given numerous keynote presentations at international ELT conferences, including *AsiaTEFL*, *IATEFL*, *KOTESOL*, *SEAMEO RELC* and *ThaiTESOL*.

Flora D. Floris is a senior lecturer at the English Department of Petra Christian University, Indonesia. Her research interests include language teacher professional development, the integration of technology in language learning, and the study of English as an international language. Her work appears in *TESL-EJ, JALT-CALL, PASAA, TEFLIN,* and *Modern English Teacher*, among others. Her publications reflect her commitment to bridging theory and practice in English language education.

Jing Zhou is a language teacher educator who specializes in second language reading, extensive reading, and teaching Chinese and English as foreign languages. She currently serves as co-editor of *Reading in a Foreign Language.*