Curious readers and interesting reads: Developing a positive L2 reading self and motivation through extensive reading

J. LAKE
Fukuoka Women's University, Japan

This study describes and explains reading motivation at different levels of specificity. A brief historical overview of the concept of reading interest is given and updated through insights from the field of positive psychology. An overview of the practice of extensive reading shows how it is well suited to develop curious readers from the frequent reading of many interesting books. This study explains the benefits of developing reader motivational characteristics and empirically demonstrates how gains in reading fluency, motivation, and a positive second language (L2) reading self can improve over the course of a semester based on a program of extensive reading. Increases in L2 reading interest, L2 reading self-efficacy, and reading speed were found for students in classes reading at least a book a week. The positive L2 reading self borrows constructs developed from the relatively new field of positive psychology and applies them to the field of foreign and second language reading, thus serving as a potential bridge between these fields.

Keywords: positive L2 reading self, L2 reading interest, curious readers, reading self-efficacy, extensive reading, positive psychology, reading motivation

Introduction

Reading is an important skill to acquire for developing proficiency in a second language. Reading is also important for personal development, for future professional career needs, and further academic studies and research. Fluency, motivation, and a positive reading identity are key components of reading development. Many studies (e.g., Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Robb & Susser, 1989; Mori, 2002, 2004, Takase, 2007; Yamashita, 2004, 2013) have looked at these components independently and have found that students can improve on them in a reading course.

It takes much time, effort, and motivation to become a strong second language reader. Motivational constructs may vary from broad dispositions, attitudes, or identities that are more stable and trait-like to the more contextual, situational, and moment-to-moment feelings that are more dynamic and state-like. Second language (L2) reader motivation may arise from the more "top-down" dispositional motivations or the more "bottom-up" momentary states. For example, dispositional motivation for the L2 reader may be due to a self-identification as a person interested and competent in reading. L2 reading self motivation may also be highly

specific and situational, such as reading a news article that catches your eye in a newspaper that you have at hand. This study examines how these motivations can change over a reading course through the use of graded readers in an extensive reading program. In addition, fluency as measured by reading speed with comprehension is also examined in a subset of the sample for this study.

The concept of interest has a long history in foreign language study (e.g., Palmer, 1917). Palmer (1921) devoted an entire chapter to interest as one of the essential principles of language study. However, in recent years there have been relatively few studies (Eidswick, 2010). This study seeks to revive the construct of interest in L2 reading and also updates the theory of interest for reading by borrowing from the field of positive psychology.

The literature reviewed gives an overview of more general constructs of motivation and how L2 reading as one of a person's interests can be used as a stable, dispositional construct that can be perceived as a component of a positive L2 reading self. More narrowly focused reading motivation is then reviewed and the construct of self-efficacy is situated as a construct that is specific to contexts and situations. In addition, the practice of extensive reading is described and past studies on the relationship of extensive reading to motivation are reviewed. Finally, drawing on the construct of interest in positive psychology, extensive reading is suggested as one possible way to initiate L2 reading motivation and develop an interest in L2 reading as a component of a positive L2 reading self.

Reading self-concept, curiosity and interest
A positive L2 reading self can be better understood when situated among other concepts of self. In academic learning domains, self-concept research distinguishes beliefs about the self at differing levels of specificity and with differing dimensions (e.g., Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Brophy, 2010; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh, Craven, & McInerney, 2005; Mercer, 2011). Self-

concept can refer to a global self where beliefs reference the whole person (e.g., self-esteem), or more specifically in a domain where beliefs reference the self in a particular content area (e.g. L2 reading self), or even more specifically in reference to beliefs about competence in a particular situation or for a specific task (e.g., self-efficacy to read a chapter in a textbook in reading class). In other words, self-concept spans a hierarchy from general self beliefs that are dispositional and identity-like to the more dynamic, less stable situational motivations that arise in the flux of time with differing situations and activities (Bandura, 1977, 2008; Bandura & Schunk, 1981).

Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) note that, "Students who have more positive self-efficacy beliefs (i.e., they believe they can do the task) are more likely to work harder, persist, and eventually achieve at higher levels" (p. 315). In the field of foreign language learning, Hsieh and Schallert (2008) found that among self-efficacy and differing attributional beliefs, self-efficacy was the greatest predictor of achievement.

Reading self-concept is associated with a disposition to read beyond the classroom from immediate out-of-class reading to becoming a lifelong reader. Self-identification as an interested and able reader is important so that reading skills and motivation transfers outside the reading class into other content classes and future educational pursuits, other media and literacies, and for pleasure and personal growth. Becoming a habitual reader improves proficiency and will help readers learn throughout their lifetime (Duncan, 2010; Mercurio, 2005; Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008).

In first language (L1) studies of reading achievement, reading self-concept has a long history and is an important component of student motivation to read (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995, 2003; Gambell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). If students identify themselves positively as able readers they are more likely to engage in reading and read more

frequently. Students identifying themselves as poor readers will be less likely to engage in reading and seek to avoid it (Strang, McCullough, & Traxler, 1955, 1967). Successful reading, on the other hand, leads to a positive self-concept in reading and negative experiences in reading lead to a negative self-concept. This creates well-known virtuous circles and vicious circles for the individual reader (Day & Bamford, 1998). These are also known as "Matthew Effects" (Stanovich, 1986) where groups of good readers read more and get better at reading while poor readers read less and growth in reading ability is inhibited.

As with the construct of self-concept, interest can be conceptualized at different levels of specificity. In studies of interest in educational psychology, a state of interest or the momentary interest aroused through particular features in the environment is often called situational interest and a more enduring dispositional interest in a topic is called individual or personal interest (Hidi, 1990; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). In first language studies of situational reading interest, the momentary state aroused by specific features of text is often investigated by examining what the features are, such as, novelty, vividness, concreteness, comprehensibility or how the features relate to text learning outcomes (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Schiefele, 1991, 1999; Schraw, Bruning, & Svoboda, 1995). Individual interest in first language studies of reading has been called a number of terms: topic interest (Schiefele & Krapp, 1996; Lee, 2009), reading for interest (Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2011), object-oriented reading motivation (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012), and curiosity (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

As previously mentioned, reading interest has a long history in studies of L1 reading, going back over a hundred years in first language studies (Kline, Moore, & Moore, 1987). From the end of the 1800s to the 1940s, over two hundred studies were published on reading interests (Gray, 1984). Most of these studies described readers' interest in various topics, text characteristics,

and how reader characteristics such as age and gender interacted with the classification of reading material by topics. Reading interest was also conceptualized to be a bridge between a reader and reading to aid in developing mature readers (e.g., Gray & Rogers, 1956).

Reading interest was also used to help overcome problems in the improvement of reading (e.g., Strang, McCullough, & Traxler, 1955). Book length treatments were devoted to the subject of reading interests and developing reading ability (e.g., Gates, 1930; Gray & Monroe, 1929; Waples & Tyler, 1931). From the last century to the more recent past, first language reading educators and researchers have highlighted the importance of increasing motivation through reading interest (Atwell, 2007; Fink & Samuels, 2008; Layne, 2009).

Compared with first language reading studies, the proportion of studies related to L2 reading interest is very small. The studies in L2 reading interest show similar sources of situational interest as in L1 studies (Brantmeier, 2006; Eidswick, 2010; Lee, 2009). Within the context of Japanese universities, Eidswick and colleagues have been the most prolific in introducing reading interest to second and foreign language studies of reading (e.g., Eidswick, 2010; Eidswick, Praver, & Rouault, 2010; Eidswick, Rouault, & Praver, 2011; Eidswick, Rouault, & Praver, 2012). These studies have examined second language learners' reports of text features in graded readers that generated situational interest, such as novelty, surprise, sentimentality, mysteriousness, excitement, and unpredictability and how they related to topic of reading interest and comprehension. Given the relationship of interest and learning in L1 reading over decades, Eidswick (2010) notes how surprising it is "that so few studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of interest on second language (L2) learning" (p. 150).

Other L2 motivation researchers have made the connection between L2 self and motivation but not through the concept of interest. For ex-

ample, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have noted that there has been "a gradual convergence of self theories and motivation theories in mainstream psychology" (p. 80) and this is also happening in the field of second language learning motivation (see also Mercer, 2011). Dörnyei and colleagues (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, 2011) have described an L2 motivational self system, a model that is influenced by various social and psychological factors. Two primary components of Dörnyei's self system are future self guides; the ideal L2 self, the vision of who the person wants to become, and the ought-to L2 self, the vision of who the person ought to become. Rather than making use of the future self, this study examines a positive L2 reading self in the present and borrows constructs from the growing field of positive psychology, namely, interest and curiosity (Kashdan & Silvia, 2009).

Interest and curiosity as psychological constructs have been developed as key constructs within the field of positive psychology (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kashdan & Silvia, 2009). The relatively new field of positive psychology is concerned with improving well-being and living an optimal fulfilling life (Lopez & Synder, 2009; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Synder & Lopez, 2002). The many different constructs studied in positive psychology are often studied at different levels of specificity. For example, you can be hopeful at the moment, called state hope, or you could be generally hopeful on a regular basis, and this would be called trait hope. Curiosity and interest also can be addressed at these differing levels of more dispositional traits to transitory states (Kashdan, 2004; Kashdan & Silvia, 2009; Silvia & Kashdan, 2009). Much of Kashdan's (2004, 2009) work has been on trait curiosity and much of Silvia's (2005, 2006, 2008) work has been on interest as a state. Although generally speaking curiosity and interest can be considered synonymous, one way to use these concepts is to talk about "interesting things and curious people" as Silvia and Kashdan (2009) have done. For the purposes of this study, the dispositional term curious L2 readers is also synonymous with being interested in L2 reading, or having L2 reading as one of a person's interests, while the state of interest will refer to the objects in this study, in other words, interesting books.

Reading motivation
Past L1 reading motivation research suggests some overlap with a positive L2 reading self approach to L2 reading motivation. There is a growing body of research in L1 reading motivation, much of it conducted by Guthrie, Wigfield and colleagues (Guthrie, 2008; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Wigfield & Guthrie, 2010). Their research centers on an overarching concept of reading engagement that encompasses many different dimensions that relate to achievement. Important concepts and research findings are that intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, learning goal orientation, and social factors are strongly related to achievement. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explain that "if a person is intrinsically motivated to read and believes she is a capable reader, the person will persist in reading difficult texts and exert effort in resolving conflicts and integrating text with prior knowledge" (p. 408).

Mori (2002) adapted L1 research done by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) to explore L2 reading motivation with Japanese university students. She found dimensions similar to those found in L1 research. Lau (2009) also found similar L2 results to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) in a Chinese context. Although Mori found that not all of the motivational dimensions in her study corresponded to the dimensions in the L1 studies, she found that her study supported an expectancy-value approach to reading motivation where motivation results from a combination of the expectancy of success and components of subjective task value. In a follow up study (Mori, 2004), she again found support that her data could be explained largely by an expectancy-value model although some factors were difficult to interpret. She found that intrinsic value and expectancy for success were indistinguish-

able but that they were the largest predictors of TOEIC scores. In research done with Japanese high school students, Takase (2007) found that L2 intrinsic reading motivation correlated with amount of L2 reading. In another study with French as a second language, Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006) found reading self-efficacy correlated with L2 reading proficiency (r = .29). They found in their study that "reading self-efficacy positively influences reading proficiency" (p. 284). These few studies show that reading ability is related to an intrinsic factor of motivation and self-efficacy as in L1 reading contexts, but the limited number of these studies along with the other studies reviewed support Grabe's (2009) contention that, "Much more research is needed on L2 reading motivation. Theories of reading motivation that are generally supported by research should be developed for L2 contexts" (p. 190).

Extensive reading
Returning to Palmer (1917; 1921), in addition to interest as an essential principle for language study, another principle echoed in this study is that of gradation or in this case the use of graded readers. The principles of gradation and interest often work together. Palmer (1921) points out that factors that produce interest include such things as "elimination of bewilderment" and "sense of progress achieved" (p. 91). Palmer (1917) also contrasted intensive reading where "each sentence is subjected to careful scrutiny" and may also be paraphrased, translated, or memorized, with extensive reading where "book after book will be read through without giving more than a superficial and passing attention to the lexicological units of which it is composed" (p. 205). This is similar to a more recent explanation of extensive reading which was given by Davis (1995) where he explains "pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleasurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressures of testing or marks" (p. 329).

More up-to-date studies of extensive reading have shown that it is a very effective approach to reading instruction for foreign language learners that leads to improvements in vocabulary, writing, motivation, speaking, listening, spelling, grammar, and, of course, reading abilities (Bamford & Day, 2004; Cirocki, 2009; Day & Bamford, 1998; Day, Bassett, Bowler, Parminter, Bullard, Furr, Prentice, Mahmood, Stewart, & Robb, 2011; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Iwahori, 2008; Nation, 2009). An extensive reading program generally involves students reading many stories or informative texts at an appropriate level of difficulty that readers choose themselves. This can be contrasted with intensive reading where all students in a class read a single difficult passage from a text chosen by the teacher. Seymour and Walsh (2006) state, "The best way to develop reading fluency is through extensive reading" and thus "it is important to consider how you could incorporate an extensive reading component" (p. 113) into an academic English program.

In an extensive reading program, students choose books that are personally interesting and meaningful to them, thus they are motivated to read the selected book. Over time and books the many reading successes build competence beliefs about reading that lead to an overall increase in reading motivation. The large amount of input also helps improve other language skills so that overall proficiency improves. Hunt and Beglar (2005) suggest that extensive reading should be the primary process for implicit learning because "extensive reading can maximize the amount of meaningful input accessible to learners" (p. 39).

Assessment of progress for extensive reading is different from intensive reading. For example, readers might be assessed by simply showing that they have read and understood a large number of books over the course of a semester. Beglar, Hunt, and Kite (2012) point out that few studies have been done in L2 reading research that examine large amounts of reading and fluency. Also, those that have been done tended to have problematic designs or analyses. In their carefully controlled study, they found that read-

ing for pleasure improved fluency more than intensive reading. They also found that reading graded texts improved fluency more than reading ungraded texts (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012).

What might account for the relationship between a curious L2 reader and sources of reading interest? It makes sense that a curious reader will be actively inclined to read interesting books but how does reading interesting books develop into a disposition to be a curious reader? A positive psychology explanation uses appraisal theory to understand the development of state interest to trait interest (Silvia, 2006; Silvia & Kashdan, 2009). In appraisal theory, when an object is subjectively appraised with both feelings of novelty-complexity and coping potential this arouses a state of interest. Then, as the unknown becomes known, that is, transformed into knowledge, it is no longer novel and the coping potential becomes realized. The interesting object becomes a learned object and the feeling shifts from a state of interest to a state of enjoyment. Readers abstract meaning through this process, and through their cognitive abilities they can then represent these feelings of interest and enjoyment as mental scripts. If these processes are repeated and frequent enough, this intertwining of states of interest and enjoyment become more stable and dispositional (Silvia, 2006; Silvia & Kashdan, 2009). With cognitive representations of interest and enjoyment, a person can anticipate and reflect and then may direct attention or action for continued positive experiences. The process of learning builds task knowledge and eventually domain knowledge, while the processes of successful coping build self-efficacy and eventually confidence and positive self-beliefs.

The practice of extensive reading where interesting books are fluently read at appropriate grades of difficulty is well suited to developing a positive L2 reading self. Especially in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, the novelty for students of reading second language books that they can understand may be particularly strong. In addition, the narrative flow of fictional stories with character, situation, and plot developments is a continuing source of novelty-complexity and comprehensibility (due to the graded levels). Reading with ease ensures coping potential, thus creating the conditions for interesting books. Of course, as L2 readers, students approach books with differing amounts of background knowledge acquired through their L1 or L2, so they may already possess some topic interest or interest in particular genres. This background knowledge then will affect what is novel or comprehensible, so that choice in reading materials in terms of topics and text features becomes important in maintaining interest.

The studies reviewed here suggest that in both L1 and L2 contexts there exist relationships among a positive reading self, reading self-efficacy, fluency and extensive reading. Many of these studies point out that much more research on these variables and the relationships among these variables is needed. This study is designed to address this need in a Japanese university EFL context.

Research Questions

The research questions are designed to address whether or not interest-in-L2 reading, a component of positive L2 reading self, and self-efficacy, a compnent of L2 reading motivation can be developed and fluency improved through the use of extensive reading.

Research question 1:
    Can extensive reading increase students' positive L2 reading self as measured by an L2 reading interest measure?

Research question 2:
    Can extensive reading increase students' L2 reading motivation as measured by a L2 reading self-efficacy measure?

Research question 3:
    Is there a relationship between gains in L2 reading interest and gains in L2 reading self-

efficacy?

Research question 4:
    Can extensive reading improve reading fluency as measured by reading speed with comprehension?

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study are 244 first year female Japanese students in a public university in western Japan. Most of the participants were 18 or 19 years old, an age that can be characterized as the developmental period known as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood is a period in life where developmental changes and identity explorations are still ongoing. The selection of these participants was based on a convenience sample drawn from 16 academic English reading classes taught by six different teachers. The teachers were all using the same syllabus framework and using similar books given by the academic program. The participants were from three different departments: International Liberal Arts, Environmental Science, and Food and Health Sciences. The mean TOEFL score of the participants was 440 with a standard deviation of 20. Given the standard error of measurement of the TOEFL, these students can be considered to be at a similar level of proficiency to each other. The participants filling out the questionnaire were told that participation was voluntary, would not affect their grades, and promised that anonymity would be maintained.

Instrumentation

The motivational instruments used in this study were based on well-established theory in the general educational psychology literature. The L2 reading interest measure created for this study was derived from the theory and research on reading interest. The measure uses seven items (e.g., "I like to learn new things by reading in English"; alpha reliability = .85). The six response options ranged from *this is definitely not true of me* to *this is definitely true of me*.

L2 reading self-efficacy here refers to the belief in being capable of successfully reading and understanding written texts at different levels for task differing in levels of difficulty. The L2 reading self-efficacy measure was created for a previous study (Lake, 2013; alpha reliability .86). Seven items for the L2 reading self-efficacy measure were created based on a review of the literature previously described (e.g., "I can read and understand newspaper articles in English"). The six response options ranged from *this is definitely not true of me* to *this is definitely true of me*.

The reading speed and comprehension measures were taken from Quinn, Nation, and Millet (2007). Participants read 550-word passages and the number of words was divided by minutes to get a reading rate in words per minute (wpm). Comprehension tests were then given on those same passages. Three reading speed and comprehension tests were given at the beginning of the course and three given at the end with averages for each three used as a measure that followed the recommendations for "a very conservative scoring system" given in Nation (2009, p. 63; see also Macalister, 2010). Reading speed with comprehension was measured in a subset of the extensive reading group due to the lack of access to all the participants for measuring reading speed. The numbers of books read were simple counts of how many graded readers were read over the semester. The levels of the graded readers were mostly "starter", "level 1", or "level 2" in a multilevel series from a variety of publishers of graded readers.

Procedures

L2 reading interest and L2 reading self-efficacy were measured at the beginning of the semester. In 8 of the 16 classes, students were encouraged to read many easy graded readers. Students kept a reading log with the titles of the books they read. In these classes, referred to as the extensive reading classes, the class average of number of books read exceeded one per week,

conforming to suggestions from the literature (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Nation & Wang, 1999; Waring, 2011). In the other half of the classes, students were encouraged to read graded readers but were told to write short blogged book reports. Although not strictly controlled, students spent roughly the same amount of time using graded readers but because some of the time was spent on writing the blogged book reports, less time was spent on actual reading. Although many graded readers were read, the books were too few in number to be considered extensive reading, that is, fewer than one per week was read. These classes thus functioned as a control group for the extensive reading group. It is possible that all students would improve on the measured constructs so it is important to include a control group so that comparisons can be made. Also, control groups should be involved with activities that could potentially be as instructionally effective. In addition, in all classes a traditional course book with difficult grammar and vocabulary was also used for tasks in intensive reading.

At the end of the semester the L2 reading interest and L2 reading self-efficacy measures were given again. Reading speed was again measured in a subset of the extensive reading group (those taught by the author). The total number of books read was tabulated.

Rasch analysis was conducted on the four sets of motivational variables. Rasch analysis is a type of item-response analysis that creates interval measures with known item parameters. Items and students were measured using the same interval logit scale. Once the item parameters are known they can be used through a process known as "anchoring" to measure students at both the beginning and the end of the semester. For the scales used in this study, item parameters were found using Rasch analysis and then these same parameters anchored for the end-of-semester administration. This allows for interval measures of student gains or losses with known precision and error.

Results

This study has examined reading motivation at two levels, a more dispositional L2 reading self-concept level measured by L2 reading interest, and a more functional activity-based level measured by L2 reading self-efficacy. These two measures were administered twice, at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester, to a treatment group that consisted of students reading graded readers during the semester and a control group that also blogged book reports and read fewer graded readers. Also measured were two important components of reading ability; fluency as measured by a reading speed measure, and comprehension as measured by reading comprehension tests. These were also measured at the beginning and the end of the semester by the researcher in his classes as a subset of the total extensive reading sample. Finally, statistical results of dependent-means t-test were calculated.

Research question 1 asked if extensive reading can increase students' positive L2 reading self as measured by L2 reading interest. For the experimental group, as Table 1 shows, measured L2 reading interest significantly gained from the beginning ($M = .04$, $SE = .13$) to the end of the semester ($M = .53$, $SE = .14$), $t(119) = -4.73$, $p < .001$, $r = .40$. In the reading and reviewing control group reading interest increased from the beginning ($M = .21$, $SE = .14$) to the end of the semester ($M = .28$, $SE = .12$), $t(123) = .71$, $p > .05$, although this was not significant. This medium effect size (Cohen, 1988) in such a short period for the extensive reading group on reading interest is an important finding because dispositional constructs such as reading self-concept often take years to develop and become more stable with age; thus a substantial increase over a single semester shows that improvement is possible and can be one of the goals of a reading curriculum.

Research question 2 asked if extensive reading can increase students' situational and funtional motivational competece as measured by L2 reading self-efficacy. Table 2, shows that L2

Table 1. *L2 Reading Interest for experimental and control groups*

	Books	RI 1		RI 2					
	M (SD)	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	RI Gain	*df*	*t*	*r*
Extensive Reading (*n* =120)	16.9 (7.5)	0.04	1.39	0.53	1.49	0.49	119	-4.73***	.40
Blogged Reviews (*n* =124)	9.1 (3.9)	0.21	1.51	0.28	1.36	0.07	123	-0.71 *ns*	

　　Note. RI = L2 Reading Interest; units in logits.

　　1 = Time 1; 2 = Time 2; Books = Number of books read;

　　t-tests *** = *p* < .001; *ns* = not significant *p* > .05.

reading self-efficacy significantly gained from the beginning (*M* = -.39, *SE* = .15) to the end of the semester (*M* = .57, *SE* = .14), *t*(123) = -7.06, *p* < .001, *r* = .54. In the reading with control group L2 reading self-efficacy increased from the beginning (*M* = .25, *SE* = .15) to the end of the semester (*M* = .38, *SE* = .15), *t*(123) = -1.24, *p* > .05, although this was not significant. This large effect size for the extensive reading group on L2 reading self-efficacy is an important finding because reading self-efficacy leads to important reading outcomes such as reading fluency, engagement, and strategy use.

Research question 3 asked if there is a relationship between gains in L2 reading interest and gains in L2 reading self-efficacy. A Pearson product-moment coefficient was calculated between the gains in these measures. There was a significant relationship between gains in L2 reading interest and gains in L2 reading self-efficacy, *r* = .52, *p* < .001.

Table 2. *L2 Reading Self-efficacy for experimental and control groups*

	Books	RSE 1		RSE 2					
	M (SD)	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Gain	*df*	*t*	*r*
Extensive Reading (*n* = 120)	16.9 (7.5)	-0.39	1.67	0.57	1.54	0.96	119	-7.06***	.54
Blogged Reviews (*n* = 124)	9.1 (3.9)	0.25	1.68	0.38	1.70	0.14	123	-1.24 *ns*	

　　Note. RSE = L2 Reading Self-efficacy; units in logits.

　　1 = Time 1; 2 = Time 2; Books = Number of books read;

　　t test *** = *p* < .001; *ns* = not significant *p* > .05.

Table 3. *Reading speed and reading comprehension*

Reading:	Beginning of semester		End of semester						
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Gain	Gain%	*df*	*t*	*r*
Speed	125.45	20.84	158.91	32.5	33.47	27%	70	-10.18***	.77
Comp.	75.21	14.54	78.59	9.83	3.38		70	-1.66 *ns*	

Note. *n* = 71; Reading speed in words per minute;
Comp. = Reading Comprehension in percentages;
***= *p* < .001

Research question 4 asked if extensive reading improved fluency as measured by reading speed with comprehension for a subset of the extensive reading group. As shown in Table 3, reading speed significantly gained from the beginning (*M* = 125.45, *SE* = 2.47) to the end of the semester (*M* = 158.91, *SE* = 3.86), *t*(70) = -10.18, *p* < .001, *r* = .77, or to put it another way, on average, reading speed increased by 33.5 words per minute, a 27% increase, or over a 2,000 words per hour increase.

It may be possible to increase reading fluency at the expense of reading comprehension. When reading for fluency Quinn, Nation, and Millet (2007) make the point that readers do not read for perfect accuracy but suggest "about 70% accuracy" (p. 4). As shown in Table 3, reading comprehension did not decline. Comprehension scores increased from the beginning (*M* = 75.21, *SE* = 1.74) to the end of the semester (*M* = 78.59, *SE* = 1.18), *t*(70) = -1.66, *p* > .05, although not significantly, or to put it another way, average reading comprehension was maintained at the same time reading fluency increased.

Discussion

This study has shown that important components of reading development can be improved over the course of a semester through extensive reading. L2 reading fluency and motivation significantly improved and, more importantly, large effect sizes were found for important components measured.

Second language reading motivation was conceptualized at two different levels: a more stable dispositional level, as a positive L2 reading self, operationalized as L2 reading interest; and a more dynamic situational and functional motivational level, operationalized as L2 reading self-efficacy. Second language reading interest, as with other dispositional variables, is by definition more stable and impervious to change. However, due to the relatively large numbers of books read a moderate effect was found. The more dynamic variable of L2 reading self-efficacy is more susceptible to change and thus had a larger effect size.

A limitation of this study is that it used counts of books rather than standard words to measure amounts of reading as advocated by Beglar, Hunt, and Kite, (2012). Across many teachers and classrooms, it was not possible to gather data at the word level. On the other hand, for low L2 reading ability students, what probably matters to a large degree for motivation is the frequent choosing of interesting books and the frequent feelings of success from completing books, an affective quality not captured by word counts alone.

Another limitation of this study was the small numbers of participants and convenience sampling of both control and experimental groups. With larger numbers, it may be possible to test a structural model of reading motivation for example.

It is worth noting that the control group that

blogged book reviews of their reading had gains that were not significant. This group showed no improvements in L2 reading interest or self-efficacy, although this may have been due to the perceived burden of writing compared to reading. This group also read graded readers but not enough to be considered extensive reading, suggesting that a threshold effect may exist. In addition, there may have been other language gains that were not measured, such as improvement in writing. Furthermore, they were not tested for improvements in reading speed.

Conclusion

Bean (2008) noted that in the context of L1 reading programs, teachers and administrators "involved in developing a comprehensive reading program must think about how motivation to read is incorporated into the overall plan" (p. 21). In an EFL context, Komiyama (2009) suggested "teachers need to reconsider our reading pedagogy and move beyond traditional approaches that focus on vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. Strengthening and maintaining student motivation are crucial to reading instruction because reading in an L2 requires a lot of time, effort, and perseverance" (p. 37). Echoing points made in this study, Komiyama continues that teachers "need to be aware of links between motivational approaches and reading development; we need to nurture student motivational orientations that are most likely to yield positive results" (p. 37).

Building L2 reading fluency and a positive L2 reading self or identity is important because, as Hudson (2007) pointed out, "Our long-term goal is to have students who do not stop reading when the reading class is over" (p. 29). Reading ability and motivation should be learning that transfers outside the classroom for current and future academic purposes, for possible professional career development, and for personal growth, enjoyment, and well-being. Developing an intrinsic motivation to read in an L2 lays the foundation for traditional and emerging litera-

cies for a lifetime of L2 reading. In addition, a positive L2 reading self may contribute toward a positive L2 self that motivates overall L2 development (Lake, 2013).

This study showed that it is possible to make significant gains in differing levels of L2 reading self-concept in groups reading extensively. As in L1 reading studies, the various terms used to denote a positive reading self-concept—interested in L2 reading, curious L2 reader, and L2 reading as one of a person's interests—are similar terms for a positive L2 reading dispositional self that highlights an important aim of reading instruction: development of the reader. While situational interest has provided important insights into reading material and the initial stages of reading interest, and while topic or an individual interest may be an important motivational aspect that can be connected to L2 reading, what is ultimately important for continuing improvement in an L2 is for a reader to be interested in the act of reading—a curious reader.

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