



# The Power of Pleasure Reading: A Narrative Inquiry of Proficient Non-English Learners

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Pleasure reading or termed Extensive Reading (ER) in the context of language learning, is defined as reading for enjoyment, happiness or satisfaction. A considerable number of studies have shed light on the benefits of ER to English language learning in L2 context. However, no study has examined the natural process of how pleasure reading naturally builds up language proficiency. Therefore, this study is intended to divulge the obscure process of how ones unconsciously build up English proficiency by doing pleasure reading. The participants in this study are two non-English learners who have done pleasure reading for, at least, 7 years with no purpose of learning English. Within narrative inquiry framework, this study examined the participants' personal stories on the problems they tackle in doing pleasure reading. Besides, it also focused on understanding the gradual process they have been through, their motivation which makes them eager to read, and their unintentionally built-up English proficiency. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation and personal communication. The evidence showed that both participants underwent the language acquisition process in which they were not clued up about the subconscious awareness of language system obtained when reading. They got delectation of reading and simultaneously achieved language proficiency (vocabulary, reading and listening skills, and grammar). Conclusively, pleasure reading or extensive reading works on improving language proficiency of language learners who intentionally read for learning and those who read only for pleasure.

**Keywords:** pleasure reading, language proficiency, narrative inquiry

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## INTRODUCTION

Pleasure reading is literally defined as reading for enjoyment, happiness or satisfaction. In the context of language learning, pleasure reading is associated with Extensive Reading (ER) since ER is an approach to second language reading of which purpose is for learners' enjoyment. ER aims to grow out of the reading habits of learners by reading large quantities of books or other longer materials in the second language and get them like it due to fun and unburdened circumstances (Day, & Bamford 1998; Renandya 2007). Due to its purpose of enjoyment, the focus of extensive reading is on the general understanding or meaning rather than on the language features. When doing this kind of reading, in fact, the readers can choose the books that they are interested to read. They, therefore, exult over various topics and genres of reading material. Interestingly, Al-yaquubi, A., & Al-mahrooqi (2013) say that there is an argument that the ability to select books to read is one thing that makes reading enjoyable and fun.

Reading material can be considered to be language input. Great numbers of researchers in the realm of second language acquisition acknowledge the idea proposed by Krashen that one of the governing factors in acquiring a language is language input. According to Krashen's foremost hypothesis, input (comprehension) hypothesis, the input is undeniably essential to acquire a language. Additionally, [Krashen \(2003\)](#) clearly states, "we acquire language in only one way: when we understand messages; that is, when we obtain comprehensible input." This implies that when one understands the messages (s)he has read, it means that the reading material becomes comprehensible input, and then the acquisition will take place.

More clearly, the input that enables ones to acquire a language is not any inputs; it should be comprehensible, meaningful and interesting. Besides, Krashen further elucidates that the input should be slightly above ones' level of comprehensibility. Based on these criteria, pleasure reading material can be considered fulfilling Krashen's input hypothesis since it can be comprehensible, meaningful, interesting and slightly above ones' level of comprehensibility.

[Krashen \(2003\)](#), who prefers the term 'free voluntary reading' to pleasure reading, states that pleasure reading is important and gives significant contribution to second language development and language proficiency. The language development, according to [Cho, & Krashen \(2015\)](#), comprises reading comprehension, less use of dictionary, oral language, listening comprehension, and improvement in attitude toward reading. In addition to that, [Fan \(2016\)](#) says that pleasure reading foster ones' range of background knowledge and develop their active vocabulary. So, pleasure reading is deemed to be a positive activity, enhancing some aspects which can escalate ones' language proficiency. Importantly, what ones may consider for the sake of pleasure reading are narrow reading, finding compelling comprehensible input, finding a source of books, and finding a time and place to read ([Cho & Krashen, 2015](#)).

Pleasure reading, or ER for the context of language learning, is a blindingly interesting area of study with regard to its contribution to language development. It greatly attracts the attention of researchers to explore this topic more comprehensively. Considerable numbers of research, thus, have focused on the power of pleasure reading and research evidence has been able to show great benefits and significant contribution of pleasure reading on grammar mastery ([Collentine 2010](#); [Khansir & Deghani 2015](#); [Stokes, Krashen & Kartchner 1998](#)), vocabulary ([Atilgan 2013](#); [Chen, Chen, Chen & Wey 2013](#); [Pigada & Schmitt 2006](#)), writing ([Lee & Hsu 2009](#); [Sakurai 2017](#)), students' positive attitude toward reading ([Yamashinta 2013](#)), language development ([Mason 2011](#)), and reading performance ([Morgado 2009](#); [Sheu 2004](#); [Tanaka & Stapleton 2007](#); [Yamashinta 2008](#)).

Some researchers, in the context of language learning, have shown the benefits of ER to language structure mastery. A correlational study conducted by [Stokes, Krashen, & Kartchner \(1998\)](#) was intended to find the best predictor of learning subjunctive in Spanish.

The amount of formal study they had in Spanish, the length of residence in Spanish Speaking country (in month), the amount of free reading they had and the adequacy of subjunctive instruction in class served as the predictors. Among the predictors, free reading was the best predictor of subjunctive accuracy and specific instruction of subjunctive served as the second-best; however, specific instruction of subjunctive in class was not significantly correlated. Furthermore, [Khansir, & Deghani \(2015\)](#) carried out experimental research to find out the effect of ER activities on grammar mastery. The findings of the study showed that ER activities significantly improved students' grammar mastery.

Additionally, empirical evidence has attested that ER contributes to students' writing development and some aspects of writing ([Lee & Hsu 2009](#); [Mermelstein 2015](#); [Sakurai 2017](#)). [Lee & Hsu \(2009\)](#) conducted an experimental study in an attempt to examine the impact of ER on writing ability. The participants of this study were 86 third-year vocational college students in Taiwan who were considered less successful than other college students in Taiwan. The students in the experimental group devoted 50 minutes in each period to do the self-selected reading. The result reported that ER practice made a significant difference in all aspects being assessed in this study, namely fluency, content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. In reference to their study, [Mermelstein \(2015\)](#) carried out the similar work which involved larger number of participants: 221 undergraduate students in Taiwan. In his study, the students undertook sustained silent reading for 15-20 minutes in the classroom and then they were also required to continue ER practice outside the classroom, at least 3 pages of reading text. Frankly, this study provided longer time of ER practice than Lee and Hsu's study. The subscales assessed, however, were similar: fluency, content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The result showed significant improvement on 5 subscales excluding organization. Furthermore, another correlational study, conducted by [Sakurai \(2017\)](#), revealed that the contribution of amount of hours doing ER to overall writing was affirmative. Nevertheless, among some aspects of writing (task achievement, coherence and cohesion, vocabulary and grammar) measured in her study, ER was particularly significantly correlated to the aspects of vocabulary and grammar.

More importantly, ER undoubtedly offers great advantage to the improvement of language proficiency. [Renandya \(2007\)](#) reflected on his journey in acquiring English. He says, "My own personal experience also provides confirmation for the key role of extensive reading (p.136)." He affirms that despite six years of studying English in high school in Indonesia, his level of proficiency in English was close to being non-functional. Therefore, he applied for admission into an English teacher training college in Indonesia and got accepted.

All lectures were conducted in English, so he had to endeavor hard to cope in class. Then, he started to read drama series which got him addicted to reading. "I would read and read and read until my eyeballs popped out (p.137)," that is how he expressed his addiction to reading. This eventually gave much contribution to his language development. He even performed extremely well on grammar tests compared to those who took hours and hours preparing for the tests.

Another case observed by [Mason \(2011\)](#) also showed a similar finding to Renandya's. Mason observed a middle-aged man, Mr Tanaka, who did ER after 20 years of not learning English. His last encounter with English was a long time ago. After hearing about language acquisition and language development, he was interested to read for enjoyment. He noted down all books he has read within two years. In fact, he has read over 10.000 pages in the two-year period. Then, he took TOEIC test twice: six months after his first reading and one year after the first test. His scores were 475 and 655, respectively. The improvement of his reading score was significant that was from 220 to 325.

Inspired by [Renandya's \(2007\)](#) reflection on his journey with English and the observation carried out by [Mason \(2011\)](#) as well as considering that there has been no study examining the natural process of how pleasure reading naturally builds up language proficiency, we eagerly report a case that we have observed for years. The two participants in this narrative are non-English learners who have done pleasure reading for, at least, 7 years with no purpose of learning English. They acquire English proficiency which is proven by their high score of the TOEFL test. The research question in this study is: "How do non-English learners unconsciously build up English proficiency through doing pleasure reading?"

We believe that this study is important for the body of knowledge on pleasure reading. It provides the evidence that, besides improving the language proficiency of language learners who intentionally read for enjoyment while learning, extensive reading or pleasure reading also improves the language proficiency of those who just read for pleasure. Moreover, This narrative will elaborate the problems the participants tackle in doing a lot of pleasure reading, the gradual process they have been through, their motivation which makes them eager to read, and their unintentionally built up English proficiency. As an implication for English learners, they can be more encouraged to do extensive reading and to learn from the participants' experience.

TABLE 1 / The participants' demographic information

Name	Gender	Age	Educational Background	Length of Formal English Learning Experience	Length of Informal English Learning Experience	Length of Doing Pleasure Reading
Anna	Female	22	Undergraduate Program in Geography Education	6 Years in High School	-	7 years
Jason	Male	31	Undergraduate Program in Japanese Language and Graduate Program in Education Development	6 Years in High School	-	14 years

In this present study, the process of how the participants build up language proficiency through pleasure reading was analyzed through their narrative which was drawn from three sets of data collection: in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation and personal communication. Semi-structured interviews were done 5 times which lasted for 1 hour/ session for each participant. They shared detailed experiences on how they started reading, what motivated them, what their early encounter with English novels was, and how they tackled problems coming up during their early encounter. They were also asked to describe what attempts that they made to understand the story and how they eventually got the hang of reading. These interviews were done in Bahasa Indonesia to get whole picture of the

## METHODS

The present study is intended to divulge the obscure process of how ones unconsciously build up English proficiency by doing pleasure reading. Thus, in terms of research methodology, narrative inquiry is deemed appropriate for investigating the underlying process and motives. Narrative inquiry is "narratively inquiring into experience and thus allows for the intimate study of individuals' experiences over time and in context ([Given 2008 p.541](#))."

There were two participants in this narrative (Anna and Jason, pseudonym). Anna graduated with bachelor degree in Geography education from one of the universities in Malang, East Java. She is a Javanese who grew up in Blitar, one of the cities in East Java. She speaks Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia interchangeably. The second participant was Jason. He lived in Padang and grew up there. He is a lecturer who teaches Japanese in one of the universities in Padang, West Sumatera. Previously, he spent two years in Japan to get his Master's degree. During his study in Japan, he mostly communicated using Japanese since it was the medium of instruction there. These two selected participants shared common ground in which they have grown their fondness of English through pleasure reading even though both hated English learned at school or formal education. Also, they never took any informal English learning outside the school.

The participants' demographic information is presented in Table 1. Which was drawn from three sets of data collection: in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, and personal communication. Semi-structured interviews were done 5 times which lasted for 1 hour/ session for each participant. They shared detailed experiences on how they started reading, what motivated them, what their early encounter with English novels was, and how they tackled problems coming up during their early encounter. They were also asked to describe what attempts that they made to understand the story and how they eventually got the hang of reading. These interviews were done in Bahasa Indonesia to get whole picture of the narrative comprehensively without missing any single detail and to provide flexibility for the participants in narrating their story.

Next, observation and personal communication were done many times intensely. The observation focused on investigating the novels that they were reading at the very moment, while the personal communication has focused on the content of the novels they were reading at the time. We have done observation and personal communication with Anna, the first participant, for more than 3 years. For the second participant, Jason, the observation and the personal communication have been conducted for 10 months.

After the data were collected, we analyzed the data and presented the results in the form of narrative. To ensure the validity, we consulted the participants about the narrative. We made several revisions until we got their confirmation of the rightness of the narrative.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study is intended to enunciate how doing pleasure reading unintentionally builds on the participants' English proficiency and what process they have been through in doing pleasure reading. Their recounts bespeak their intense eagerness to read even though their early encounter with English novels was challenging due to their limited knowledge of English. As they kept reading and dealt with the problems faced along the way, they eventually got the sense of reading English writing. Furthermore, their starting point and whys and wherefores of pleasure reading were rather different. Anna started reading English novels because she has been very fond of reading since she was a kid; the ground of her language development is entirely from reading. Unlike Anna, Jason's jumping-off point was his fondness of games which led him to do pleasure reading. Nevertheless, both of them have done pleasure reading driven by their willingness to read, not by force. The detailed accounts of the process they have been through in doing pleasure reading are presented below.

### 1.1 Anna

Anna's growing love toward reading stories was developed in her early childhood which was maneuvered by her father. When she was in pre-school, her father bought her magazines with stories and pictures. Since then, she collected magazines and short stories. Her fond of reading is undeniably strong. Her growing interest of books, especially novels, did not fade away as she got into primary school and secondary school.

In fact, reading has become her killing-time activity since then. However, since middle school her preferences had changed from young adult genre to the fantasy genre, which became her favorite genre. Due to her longing for a novel, he used to go to public library to borrow books and has finished reading all the novels available in the public library. The first English novel she read was Inheritance series which has 4 thick books in the series. The first, second and third novels that she read were in Bahasa Indonesia. "I went to library so often that I have finished reading all the novels available. I once got like an award because I went there so often. I got Rp.600.00, for the prize and it was so much for me."

In senior high school, Anna got into one of the best schools in which most of students were from international school. Anna's hobby of reading novel kept growing Unfortunately, when she had finished reading the third series of Inheritance, the last book was not available. Then, she found English version of all books. Her high curiosity and eagerness became her intrinsic motivation to read English version of the Inheritance series even starting from the first book in this series again. Moreover, her first encounter of English novel was a quiet of struggle due to her limited knowledge of English. "It was hard because I literally checked every word in dictionary. I did not get bored consulting the dictionary. However, I got frustrated sometimes when I forgot the vocabulary that I already checked. It took a lot of effort and patience to finish one novel at that time."

Looking at her struggle of reading English novels, she reflected that the joy of reading the original script was the earth-shattering reason that drove her to read. She, however, was not interested in learning and mastering English. Literally speaking, she did not intentionally learn English. She just liked reading English novels which were the sole reason doing this pleasure reading. This inevitably improved her English significantly which was proven by her TOEFL score. "I was not sure my English ability in senior high school since we mostly learned about the vocabulary and grammar. I realize that I was not really good at English. My classmates once glowered at me when I mispronounced words. This situation motivated me to read English novels again. This time was much more intense. The next English novel I read at senior high school was Percy Jackson. The interest of fantasy novels kept growing. After one novel was finished, I read another one until I am addicted to it. My English skill, as a result, was getting better. Before graduating from the school, every student needed to take TOEFL test and my TOEFL score was quite high, 517. Meanwhile, majority of students in my class got around 450."



Reading has become inseparable part of her. As the time passed by, the use of dictionary was much less intense. When she came across difficult words, she simply read and kept going. As she kept reading, she eventually figured out the meaning of those words by understanding the context of the story. She used the strategy of guessing meaning from context quite frequently. However, when she found such less-frequently-used words that she hardly understood the sentences, she did consult dictionary.

Anna kept reading as she got into college where we met her for the first time. During the first month spending time with Anna, we found out that she was fond of reading and so did I/Author 1). Luckily, we (Anna and I/Author 1) share the same interest in reading fantasy stories. As a matter of fact, pleasure reading directly improved Anna's reading skill. For a couple times, I/Author 1 had opportunity to discuss the story line and the conflicts in the novel that we (Anna and I/Author 1) were currently reading and played game of guessing some expressions/ idioms. Her recount of story being read, described in Bahasa Indonesia, was clearly and precisely elaborated and it was in accordance with my/Author 1's understanding on the story line, which attested that she had deep understanding on the story. Besides, she knew the circumstances when the expression such as killing time, piece of cake, speak of devil, pull yourself together, spill the beans/ spill the tea, don't cry over the spilt milk, and every cloud has silver lining are used. In the expression of "speak of the devil", for instance, she elaborated that this is used when we were gossiping about someone, then that person suddenly appeared.

As she read more and more English novels, she became accustomed to reading English texts. She even once compared reading the same page of an English novel and the translated version (in Bahasa Indonesia) and she found that reading the original version (in English) made more sense than reading the translated version. She did not get the sense of what the author intended to say when she read the translated version of the novel.

Additionally, Anna constantly acquires English as she was unconsciously aware of language system without fully knowing the reason. In doing TOEFL test, for instance, she just knew which one was the answer without critically analyzing every part of sentence. "In answering the questions in TOEFL test, more importantly I understand the general drift of the text. For 'Error recognition' part, my strategy is "not thinking but reading". I just read and choose the part that, in my opinion, does not fit."

Another indirect contribution of pleasure reading is that to Anna's listening skill. Her fond of reading English novels leads to her preference to watching movies with English subtitles. This automatically enables her to get accustomed to listening to English pronunciation while reading the subtitles. She knows well how the words are pronounced. Now, she can break free from the English subtitle when watching movies and discovery channel program, one of her favorite programs. "When I am about to watch a movie, I always try to search for subtitles in English. If I use subtitles in Bahasa Indonesia, it will be confusing for me."

In this narrative, acquiring English and improving English proficiency were the cornerstones of pleasure reading. Her recount of long journey reading hundreds of books, approximately 350 novels, in the last seven years is a milestone of her life which leads her to higher English proficiency. Recently, she took a TOEFL test and her score was 573.

## 1.2 Jason

Jason was born in Padang, the capital city of West Sumatera and grew up there. In primary school, he had not been yet introduced into English. It can be said that his early encounter with English was in middle/ secondary school and it did not leave a good impression. He underwent a quiet struggle to learn English in class. "I learned English formally for the first time when I was in junior high school and I hated it. I preferred to learn Arabic because English was boring. The main reason was English grammar which was the only focus in the learning process, particularly the use of is, am, and are. Thus, I became reluctant to study English and my English score was constantly around 70."

During his 3-year study in junior high school, he did not grow any love of English lesson. This situation slightly improved in better way when he was in senior high school. The turning point in his fondness of English was when he was firstly introduced to a game, Harvest Moon in 2004. He had to understand the English vocabulary visualized in the game in order to keep playing. As the game he was playing got harder, his effort and cupidity got bigger. When he played RPG (Role Playing Game), for example, there were long narratives of the game. He, then, brought along a dictionary as an attempt to understand the story-line presented in the game. By this fact, his addiction to game has become the sole reason for his willingness to eliminate his detestation of English. His motivation assuredly has played a huge role in growing his eagerness to understand English.

Furthermore, his addiction to games then led him to do pleasure reading, especially reading novels. Unlike Anna who has grown the fond of reading since she was a kid, Jason was not exactly enamored of reading until he found out that one of his favorite games was adopted from a novel which then made him eager to read. Using his prior knowledge of English built up during playing games, he began to read the first English novel, Romance of Three Kingdoms, which had 1200 pages. This happened when he was in first-year college, exactly in 2005. His first encounter with English novel was not really arduous since he had got the hang of reading long narratives in games, but he still used a dictionary to find out the meaning of some technical terms. Since then, he did a lot of pleasure reading of various genres (fiction and non-fiction) and various topics (geography, education, literature and history). Among the topics, his enthusiasm has lied on the historical topics especially on East Asian History (Chinese, Japan, and Mongol), Middle East and Near East History, European History, and North American History.

His longing for knowledge about what happened to the world in the past has compelled him to read any English journals and books about historical events, wars, and so on. Besides, his knowledge of history of the world is certainly mesmerizing as he has recounted the history of some historical events.

During the two-year period of his early encounter, he used a bilingual dictionary. After two years, he gradually began to use a monolingual (English-English) dictionary since the technical terms found in the book were not available in bilingual dictionary. What is more, since he has become accustomed to reading English texts, he then confidently commenced to use English subtitle while watching movies.

Apparently, the process that Jason has been through, starting from reading the vocabulary visualized in the Harvest Moon game and the long narratives narrated in the RPG game to reading thousand pages of book, was gradually assured. His deliberate transition was determined by his readiness to move up to higher level and driven by his strong intrinsic motivation. Doing a lot of pleasure reading evidently has contributed to his English mastery, especially in reading skill, vocabulary mastery, and grammar competence. His listening skill also has developed as it was indirectly influenced by reading English subtitles. In terms of reading, Jason's recount on comprehending the story showed that he, most of the time, unconsciously has employed the strategy of guessing meaning from context, as he described: "When I read and find some words that I do not know, I read the following sentences and guess what they mean. For example, once I found the term "crown jewel" and I did not know what it was, by seeing the explanation (the following sentences), I found out that it was a sacred precious thing in a kingdom, even though I did not precisely know the shape of it. It happens a lot when I read. I eventually know what the term is when I finish the story."

It appears to us that predicting and making inference were the mostly used strategy when he ran across difficult words. Besides, since he did not get any explicit reading instruction, he solely employed his background knowledge related to the topics to make the sense of the novels/books he read. Hence, he chiefly deployed a cognitive strategy to comprehend the story he read. In addition to reading, his lexical richness has also constantly developed. His narrative emphasized that the words which are commonly used for communication have been no longer a problem; only the technical terms on particular areas have been challenging. This is due to the fact that he has been continuously exposed to English sentences.

Additionally, this also applies for grammar. Pleasure reading has made him unconsciously aware of language system after being exposed to hundreds, thousands of examples. This practice has made him an automatic user of English grammar without imbibing any theories of grammar. Thus, when taking a TOEFL test, his strategy was simply reading the sentences then using his intuition which was drawn from experience. "In doing a TOEFL test, I just used my experience in reading because I often read, watch and listen. You know what, I just found out after asking my fellow English lecturers that in simple present tense if the subject is singular, we add '-s' to verb.

Seriously, I did not know it. I thought all were the same. I do not know the reason why we use 'have' or 'has' as I often read and listen to the conversation in games such as "enemy has been defeated" or "you have been defeated". Then, I think if we use the subject 'you', we have to use 'have'; if the subject is 'she', we use 'has'. However, I do not know the concrete reason." Another improvement is in his listening skill which has improved significantly due to his ardor for watching movies with English subtitles. As he read the subtitles, he simultaneously listened to the audio which made him know how the words were pronounced. It is even greater now since he is able to watch western movies without subtitles. Similar to reading, when he was faced with a listening test, what he did was to bring along his prior knowledge on the topics and on how the words sound to understand the audio. Therefore, he mostly employed cognitive strategy to make the sense of what he was listening.

It seems that the gradual process that he underwent took a fair bit of work. This process, nevertheless, has greatly contributed to his English proficiency which was proven by his TOEFL score. Before this narrative is made, 7 English lecturers and 2 Japanese lecturers, including Jason, took a TOEFL test at the university where Jason works. Astoundingly, Jason's TOEFL score was extremely high (590); he even outperformed one of the English lecturers who had lived-in English-speaking country for two years and some lecturers who have learned English for years. He has done TOEFL test several times before and the scores were around 550. Shockingly, what Jason has done is just reading whatever he likes to read: novels, encyclopedias, journals of historical events, and narratives presented in games.

The contribution of pleasure reading to language development is very compelling ([Day, & Bamford 1998](#); [Krashen 2008](#); [Renandya 2007](#)). Moreover, [Cho & Krashen \(2015 p.141\)](#) elucidate, "Substantial progress in a second language can take place through reading, and without pain. In fact, it can be extremely pleasant, so pleasant that some people will gladly continue doing it, which helps to ensure continuous progress." Most of the studies conducted previously, however, focused on the benefits of doing Extensive Reading (ER), the term used in the context of language learning, outside and inside the class as a part of learning instruction. Unlike those studies, this study is intended to find out the impact of doing pleasure reading on language proficiency of ones who have no intention of learning English. The findings of this study provide inescapable evidence of the power of pleasure reading in achieving higher level of proficiency for those who read only for enjoyment.

The evidence showed that both participants underwent the language acquisition process in which they were not clued up about the subconscious awareness of language system obtained when reading. In acquiring a language “we are not aware we are acquiring, when we are acquiring, and after we acquire, we are not aware that anything has happened ([Krashen 2008 p.180](#)).”

In the realm of SLA, the probability of L2 acquisition taking place after passing a critical period is still in debate. Some argue that acquisition will not take place as ones have passed the critical period, and some others think otherwise ([Lightbrown, & Spada 1999](#)). Nonetheless, these findings provide the evidence that language acquisition may occur with the help of massive amount of input. The input in this case is pleasure reading material. More importantly, the benefits of pleasure reading are undeniably powerful.

First and foremost, aspect developed is vocabulary. In this study, the participants’ recounts show that they have developed massive amount of vocabulary. They could break free from the dictionary while reading. Besides, the vocabulary and expressions encountered in daily communication have been no longer a problem. As a matter of fact, incredible numbers of studies have proven that lexical richness is one of the results of ER ([Atilgan 2013](#); [Pigada & Schmitt 2006](#); [Suk 2017](#); [Tiryaki & Tütüniş 2012](#)). [Tiryaki & Tütüniş \(2012\)](#) conducted experimental research on the impact of ER and they revealed that experimental group experienced the increasing number of vocabulary compared to control group. Besides, a case study conducted by [Pigada & Schmitt \(2006\)](#) discovered that 65% of target vocabulary was enhanced. More clearly, in terms of spelling, ER strongly enhanced spelling ability even from little exposure; in terms of meaning and grammatical knowledge, they were enhanced, but not as strong as spelling. Additionally, [Atilgan \(2013\)](#) investigated the improvement in students’ writing observed from the vocabulary used after doing ER. The findings showed that the students in experimental group produced more content words and showed a wide range of vocabulary used. Overall, in terms of ER, these studies agree that the vocabulary growth is a result of massive exposure. The more frequent they meet the vocabulary, the longer it stays in long term memory.

Not only does ER impact vocabulary development, but it also governs students’ reading comprehension ([Rezaee & Nourzadeh 2011](#); [Suk 2017](#)). It is surely not the sole reason; however, it undoubtedly plays a huge part in comprehending the text. Skillful readers are able to recognize the words automatically and effortlessly ([Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch 2004](#)). In terms of language structure, pleasure reading builds on readers’ awareness of language structure in a subconscious way. Both participants have built what Krashen calls as “intuition toward language structure as a result of large amount of comprehensible input”. Both participants have been likely able to notice the difference between correct sentence and incorrect one by reading and using their intuition. Anecdotal evidence and empirical evidence have been able to overwhelmingly support this finding.

For anecdotal evidence, ([Renandya 2007](#)) narrated his story when he did amazingly well in grammar test outdoing other students who have done a lot of grammar practice. Besides, [Mason \(2011\)](#) observed a middle-aged man who did pleasure reading for two years which resulted in his higher score of TOEIC. For empirical evidence, a great deal of empirical studies have also shown positive results in which ER significantly affects as well as contributes to students’ grammatical competence measured from grammar tests ([Khansir & Deghani, 2015](#); [Mason 2011](#); [Rodrigo, Krashen & Gribbons, 2004](#)) and observed from students’ writing ([Lee, S., & Hsu 2009](#); [Mermelstein 2015](#); [Sakurai 2017](#)).

## CONCLUSION

All in all, it is undeniable that what both participants have been through in the beginning was a big endeavor. However, as they kept reading, they got delectation of reading and achieved language proficiency (vocabulary, reading and listening skills, grammar) simultaneously. Arguably, pleasure reading works on improving language proficiency of either language learners who learn intentionally or those who just enjoy reading such as the participants in this study. Unlike in schools in which language aspects are learned separately, pleasure reading trains the readers to use any means necessary to comprehend the text as a whole which results in their language development.

Finally, the present study has contributed to the body of knowledge on pleasure reading especially on how pleasure reading unintentionally builds on language proficiency and what the process ones can go through in doing pleasure reading. Additionally, this narrative provides an implication for English learners, the ones who intentionally read for learning English, to be motivated and encouraged to do pleasure reading and to learn from the participants’ experience. Unfortunately, this study did not appraise the speaking ability of these participants due to the fact that they are not in circumstances which require them to communicate in English. Unlike reading and listening as receptive skills, speaking is a productive skill in which the learners should buckle down to months, even years, of practice to be able to use it in communication. In other words, mastering speaking skill takes a lot of efforts and determined practice. Given the evidence of the participants’ language development in some aspects; vocabulary, reading and listening skills, and grammar, further research is needed to investigate the impact of pleasure reading on speaking competence in order to dig up this issue more comprehensively.

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