



THE IMPACT OF DAILY READING HABITS ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AMONG ESL STUDENTS: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of daily reading habits on English vocabulary development among ESL students, with particular emphasis on the role of reading frequency, duration, and consistency. While previous research has highlighted the importance of reading in vocabulary acquisition, limited attention has been given to the influence of habitual and self-directed reading practices in real-life learning contexts. To address this gap, the study adopts a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between daily reading behavior and vocabulary knowledge. Data were collected from 120 undergraduate ESL students using a structured reading habits questionnaire and a standardized vocabulary test. The questionnaire measured key dimensions of reading behavior, including frequency, duration, and consistency, while the vocabulary test assessed learners' lexical knowledge. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and an independent samples t-test. The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between daily reading habits and vocabulary development. Among the dimensions of reading behavior, frequency and consistency were found to be the strongest predictors of vocabulary growth, while reading duration showed a moderate effect. Furthermore, students who engaged in regular reading demonstrated significantly higher vocabulary scores compared to those with irregular reading habits. The study contributes to the field of second language acquisition by emphasizing the importance of habitual reading as a key factor in vocabulary development. It highlights the need for integrating reading into daily learning practices and provides practical implications for educators, learners, and curriculum designers in ESL contexts.

Keywords: Daily Reading Habits; Vocabulary Development; ESL Learners; Second Language Acquisition; Reading Frequency; Reading Consistency; Incidental Learning; Language Learning Strategies

Introduction

The development of vocabulary is recognized as a key element of second language acquisition, particularly for English as a Second Language (ESL) learner (Yapp et al., 2021). Vocabulary forms the foundation for the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and is related to language proficiency. Without vocabulary, learners are not able to read, write, speak and listen with confidence (Amin, 2025). Researchers such as Paul Nation have not only recognized the role vocabulary plays in language learning but also the fact that vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important factors for achieving success in a second language (Nation, 2022). Similarly, Norbert Schmitt proposes that vocabulary learning is a gradual process and learners need to be exposed to lexical items in various contexts (Schmitt, 2008). This study is also recent research, which has shown a strong link between vocabulary, reading habits and academic achievement among ESL learners (Abid et al., 2023; Wani & Ismail, 2024; Arthur, 2024).

Reading is one of the most effective ways of improving vocabulary, among other methods of vocabulary learning. Specifically, extensive reading offers learners a rich vocabulary source in context, allowing them to learn to infer meanings, notice patterns, and learn vocabulary.

Stephen Krashen's research stresses the importance of the input-rich environment and reading that can play a vital role in vocabulary learning through incidental learning (Krashen, 2004). This is also supported by early extensive reading research, which suggests the role of extensive reading in incidental vocabulary learning through extended exposure to comprehensible input (Day & Bamford, 1998; Horst, 2005). Recent research also supports the impact of reading (including reading-while-listening and contextual learning) on vocabulary learning for ESL learners (Serrano, 2023; Chandy et al., 2024; Abdulrahman & Kara, 2023).

Although the benefits of reading have been recognized, less attention has been given to the impact of daily reading habits (as compared to reading tasks) in the ESL classroom. While extensive reading programs and reading interventions in classrooms have been extensively investigated, research on the effect of learners' reading habits on vocabulary learning has received less attention. Readers' daily reading habits are not only the quantity of reading but also the habit of reading and the integration of reading into their daily routine. Theoretically, this is similar to language exposure and use, in which frequent exposure to the target language leads to better learning (Ellis, 2008). Therefore, the impact of daily reading habits should be understood to have a more comprehensive view of vocabulary learning in a natural environment (Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Edward et al., 2021; Khusniyah, 2024).

Besides the amount of reading, other factors that influence vocabulary learning through reading include the quality of the reading material, motivation and engagement. For instance, authentic and engaging reading material is more likely to sustain engagement and facilitate more processing of the vocabulary (Imtiaz, et al., 2025; Amin, et al., 2024; Imtiaz, Malik & Khan, 2024). Moreover, reading for intrinsic rather than extrinsic reasons is linked to larger vocabulary gains, as motivation leads to better reading experiences (Ariffin, 2021). This indicates that reading habits are not only concerned with the duration of reading but also with quality factors such as interest and engagement (Lekawael & Ferdinandus, 2021; Ariffin, 2021; Zhao & Huang, 2023).

The other aspect to consider is incidental versus intentional vocabulary learning. Classroom learning often emphasizes intentional vocabulary learning through rote memorization and direct instruction, but reading is largely incidental, and involves vocabulary learning through exposure to the word in context in the environment. R. Ellis argues that incidental learning plays an important role in language learning, particularly for more complex vocabulary, which is more difficult to teach explicitly (Ellis, 2008). Similarly, vocabulary learning research shows that learners can incidentally learn a significant proportion of their vocabulary through reading tasks, but the vocabulary learned is related to the reading level of the text and reader engagement (Laufer, 2003; Horst, 2005). Regular reading, then, provides an avenue for learners to learn vocabulary in context.

Yet, despite theoretical and empirical evidence of the role reading may play in vocabulary acquisition, there is little research on the benefits of regular reading for vocabulary learning in ESL learners. There has been an emphasis on single interventions and short-term studies, and a lack of studies on the long-term impact of daily reading habits. Moreover, there is a need for quantitative research examining the relationship between how often people read and vocabulary learning in ESL learners (Samaraweera, 2023; Munawir & Ramli, 2021).

The present study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of daily reading on the English vocabulary of ESL learners. Using a quantitative approach, the study seeks to investigate the relationship between reading and vocabulary learning, and to identify correlations that can inform teaching and learning practices. As such, this work contributes to the body of research on vocabulary learning through the importance of frequency and quantitative evidence of the role of reading in ESL vocabulary learning.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

Following the theoretical and empirical concerns listed in the introduction, this study seeks to investigate the effects of habitual reading on the vocabulary knowledge of ESL students. Although past studies have affirmed the role of reading in vocabulary learning, this study aims to provide a more targeted analysis of how regular, habitual reading habits affect language learners' vocabulary knowledge in a quantifiable manner. In this way, the study not only assesses the utility of reading as a learning strategy but also helps to inform our understanding of how incidental language exposure contributes to second language learning. The study is guided by the following research objectives:

- To examine the extent to which ESL students engage in daily reading habits.
- To assess the level of English vocabulary knowledge among ESL learners.
- To investigate the relationship between the frequency of daily reading and vocabulary development.
- To determine whether consistent reading habits significantly contribute to vocabulary growth among ESL students.
- To explore how reading behavior can be utilized as an effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition in ESL contexts.

In line with these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the daily reading habits of ESL students in terms of frequency and duration?
2. What is the level of English vocabulary knowledge among ESL learners?
3. Is there a significant relationship between daily reading habits and vocabulary development?
4. To what extent does regular reading contribute to vocabulary acquisition among ESL students?
5. How can daily reading habits be effectively utilized to enhance vocabulary learning in ESL contexts?

Literature Review

Reading's role in vocabulary learning has been a key focus in the field of second language learning, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching (Nation, 2022; Schmitt, 2008). Vocabulary is considered a vital component of language proficiency, impacting learners' reading comprehension, language production and communication skills (Ellis, 2008). Scholars such as Paul Nation have highlighted that vocabulary learning is not only crucial but also a challenging aspect of language learning, requiring multiple encounters, exposure and usage (Nation, 2022). Similarly, Norbert Schmitt stresses that vocabulary learning is a gradual process, encompassing both conscious and unconscious processes (Schmitt, 2008). In this regard, reading has been acknowledged as an important source of vocabulary input, which allows learners to gain exposure to vocabulary in context and develop a larger vocabulary (Horst, 2005; Laufer, 2003).

An influential theory of vocabulary learning through reading is incidental learning, which holds that vocabulary is learned implicitly (usually as a consequence of reading meaningful text). Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis proposes that language is best learned when learners are exposed to input slightly above their current level of proficiency (Krashen, 2004). Reading offers a good source of this input, particularly extensive reading, so that meaning can be inferred, patterns can be recognised, and vocabulary can be picked up (Day & Bamford, 1998; Horst, 2005). This claim has been borne out by research showing that extensive reading is beneficial for vocabulary learning (Serrano, 2023; Tabata-Sandom, 2023). But it has been noted that incidental learning may not be sufficient for less frequent or more complex

vocabulary, and that learners need to read more and engage in other learning activities (Nation, 2022; Schmitt, 2008).

In addition to incidental learning, it has also been widely researched. Intentional learning is the deliberate and conscious learning of words, such as by direct instruction, word lists and quizzes. The traditional approaches to vocabulary learning have been concerned with intentional learning, but recent research indicates the best approach to vocabulary learning is a combination of both incidental and intentional learning methods (Ellis, 2008; Schmitt, 2008). Reading has an important role in bringing together these two strategies, providing an opportunity for incidental learning of new words and intentional learning of new vocabulary (Bharati, 2022). This highlights the importance of reading's role as an integrated approach to vocabulary learning (Bharati, 2022).

There is much research about the impact of extensive reading programs on vocabulary (Amin, Said & Butt, 2025; Shah, Amin & Khan, 2025; Dash, et al., 2025). Extensive reading (reading large amounts of material for pleasure and overall comprehension) has been shown to enhance vocabulary, reading speed and language achievement (Khodaparast & Keshmirshekan, 2021; Horst, 2005). Studies emphasise the role of extensive reading in introducing a wide range of vocabulary in context, which helps to recognise and remember words. Moreover, regular readers are more likely to read the same words again and again, which is essential for vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2022). Reading words in varied contexts increases the retention rate (Zhao & Huang, 2023). This suggests frequency and repetition are important aspects of vocabulary acquisition (Chang, 2023; Abdulrahman & Kara, 2023).

Although the benefits of reading are well recognised, there is a lack of research on the influence of daily reading habits on vocabulary learning. Previous studies have examined either reading programs or classroom interventions, which may not be directly related to one's actual reading habits (Abid et al., 2023; Wani & Ismail, 2024). On the other hand, daily reading habits represent an independent, natural use of language through both academic and leisure reading. This is in line with usage-based theories of language learning, which emphasise the importance of repeated use of language (Ellis, 2008). Students who engage in daily reading will have more frequent and prolonged exposure to vocabulary, which may lead to better vocabulary learning (Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Khusniyah, 2024).

The second factor relating to the effectiveness of reading in vocabulary learning is motivation. Learners who read for enjoyment are more likely to learn vocabulary words than those who read for academic reasons (Lekawael & Ferdinandus, 2021; Ibhara, 2022). Reading motivation is a critical factor that influences quantity and quality of reading, with learners with intrinsic reading motivation (reading interest) being more likely to read more qualitatively and frequently. This suggests that daily reading habits are a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors in terms of learner interest, the type of book read, and the reading engagement (Ariffin, 2021; Zhao & Huang, 2023). Therefore, in studying the relationship between reading habits and vocabulary learning, behavioural and motivational variables need to be taken into account (Amin, 2025; Soma, et al., 2025; Amin, Daudpota & Khan, 2025).

Moreover, the type and level of difficulty of the reading material also play a role in vocabulary learning. Reading authentic texts, such as books, newspapers and web articles, provides rich language input and exposes learners to different vocabulary and language use (Serrano, 2023). However, if the reading material is too difficult, it may not be completely understood, making the vocabulary learning process less effective. According to the theory of comprehensible input, learners should be reading materials that are slightly beyond their level for maximum learning (Krashen, 2004). This indicates that text selection is important for facilitating reading and vocabulary learning.

Although extensive work has been done on vocabulary and reading, there are some research gaps. First, some research has been done in the lab, perhaps not mimicking the natural way we read (Edward et al., 2021). Second, there is a lack of quantitative research on the particular effects of reading on vocabulary development in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom (Samaraweera, 2023; Munawir & Ramli, 2021). Third, most of the studies treat reading frequency as an independent variable rather than the primary focus, which limits the exploration of the impact of reading habits on vocabulary learning over time.

The present study seeks to redress these gaps by providing a quantitative insight into the impact of daily reading habits on ESL learners' English vocabulary. By focusing on the role of reading habits rather than interventions, the research aims to contribute to a more naturalistic understanding of vocabulary learning in a second language. This, in turn, contributes to existing research by highlighting the importance of language exposure and empirically documenting the effects of daily reading on second-language learning.

Conceptual Framework

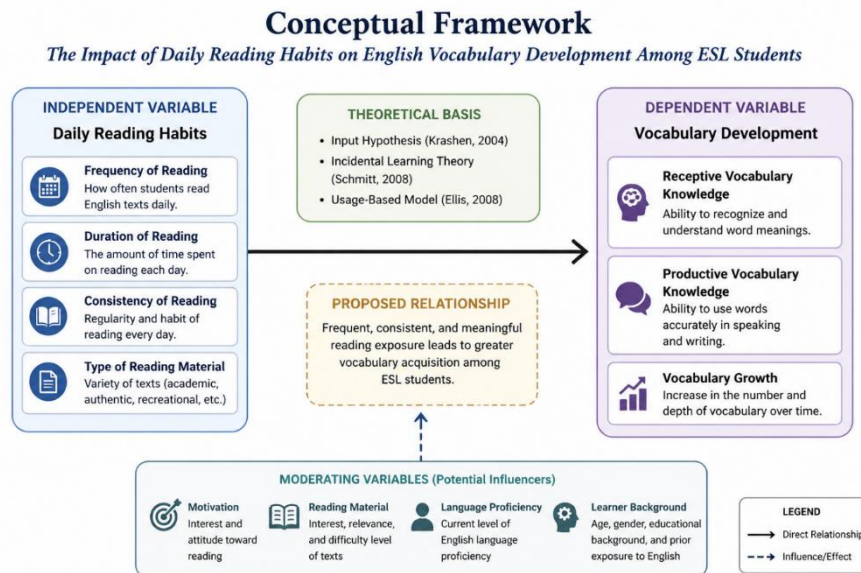
The conceptual framework for this study considers the association between the amount of time spent, time spent and consistency of reading activities undertaken by ESL learners and English vocabulary learning. It is based on theories of second language learning, including the Input Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen and usage-based theories of language learning proposed by Rod Ellis (Krashen, 2004; Ellis, 2008). These theories both stress the importance of input in vocabulary acquisition. Krashen suggests language learning happens when learners are provided with comprehensible language in context, while Ellis suggests the more exposure learners have to language, the more language knowledge they are able to acquire (Ellis, 2008). Reading provides substantial input and so is a critical factor in vocabulary learning (Day & Bamford, 1998; Nation, 2022).

This paper investigates daily reading habits, an independent variable defined as the frequency, time spent and consistency of reading activities engaged in by ESL learners. Reading habits are a behavioural variable that represents the reading activities of learners in their everyday life (Abid et al., 2023; Wani & Ismail, 2024). It is wider in scope as it encompasses reading for pleasure and independent reading, which are forms of language exposure. Vocabulary development is the dependent variable, which implies learners' vocabulary (receptive and productive). Students' vocabulary development is defined as word recognition, comprehension and use (Schmitt, 2008; Nation, 2022).

We conceptualise a positive link between frequent reading and vocabulary development. Regular high-frequency reading is expected to offer learners a high-frequency word exposure, which is supposed to result in vocabulary development via incidental and focused learning (Horst, 2005; Laufer, 2003). This is supported by the prior studies that show students who read frequently have a greater vocabulary (Tabata-Sandom, 2023; Serrano, 2023). However, the framework also suggests that there might be other variables that can impact the success of the reading, including motivation, reading level and the students' proficiency (Lekawael & Ferdinandus, 2021; Zhao & Huang, 2023). These variables are not the main focus of the study, but are possible moderators in the classroom.

In addition, the framework also acknowledges that vocabulary is acquired through multiple exposures of words in context, an important aspect of second language acquisition. Reading offers these contexts as it exposes the learner to language in context which they can infer, notice patterns and connect to their own knowledge (Krashen, 2004; Day & Bamford, 1998). This enhances vocabulary over time, enabling the comprehension and production of reading (Nation, 2022; Chang, 2023).

In summary, the conceptual framework of this study is aware of the value of regular reading as a predictor of vocabulary in ESL learners. The connection between reading and vocabulary in the framework supports the impact of exposure on second language learning (Ellis, 2008; Samaraweera, 2023).



Research Hypotheses

The current study draws on the conceptual framework and the theoretical basis of vocabulary learning, especially the Input Hypothesis and usage-based learning theory, to develop the following hypotheses to investigate the link between daily reading and vocabulary growth in English for ESL students (Krashen, 2004; Ellis, 2008; Nation, 2022). The hypotheses aim to evaluate the overall effect as well as the specific effect of reading on vocabulary development.

Main Hypotheses

H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant relationship between daily reading habits and English vocabulary development among ESL students.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant positive relationship between daily reading habits and English vocabulary development among ESL students.

Sub-Hypotheses

To examine the relationship in more detail, the study further proposes the following sub-hypotheses:

H_{1a}:

There is a significant positive relationship between the frequency of daily reading and vocabulary development among ESL students.

H_{1b}:

There is a significant positive relationship between the duration of daily reading and vocabulary development among ESL students.

H_{1c}:

There is a significant positive relationship between the consistency of reading habits and vocabulary development among ESL students.



H.d:

Students who engage in regular daily reading demonstrate significantly higher vocabulary knowledge than those who do not.

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design, using a correlational approach to test the relationship between reading habits and English vocabulary acquisition of ESL students. This study adopts a quantitative approach as it allows for the variables under investigation to be quantified and statistical analyses conducted to establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables. The correlational design is distinct from experimental designs, which manipulate variables, in that it examines naturally occurring behaviour, and it is appropriate for this study, which is exploring students' reading behaviours as they happen in the classroom setting. The study adopts a positivist paradigm which recognises that relationships between variables can be measured and examined empirically. This is in line with the purpose of the study which is to measure reading habits and vocabulary knowledge and determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between these variables.

The study participants were 120 undergraduate ESL students from a public university. A convenience sampling method was used for practical reasons, as the participants were easily accessible and fit the criteria of being current learners of English as a second language. The students ranged in age from 18 to 24 years and comprised both male and female students to retain a certain level of diversity in the sample. Participants had all studied English language previously and had an intermediate level of English proficiency, ensuring that they could engage with the reading material and answer the vocabulary assessment. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, and participation was voluntary. Participants were given informed consent and were informed that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous and would only be used for academic and research purposes.

The study used two assessment tools to gather data: a reading-habits questionnaire and a vocabulary test. The questionnaire on reading habits was used to assess students' reading practices across a range of variables, such as frequency, duration, regularity and reading material. The questionnaire was comprised of twenty items and used a five-point Likert scale from "never" to "always" to quantify reading practices. The items were adopted from previous research on reading habits and were tailored to the ESL context of this study. The second instrument, a vocabulary test, was designed to measure participants' vocabulary knowledge. The test contained thirty multiple choice items that tested both receptive vocabulary (being able to recognise and comprehend words) and contextual vocabulary knowledge (being able to use context to understand words). The items in the test were developed based on frameworks of vocabulary assessment and learning, such as those developed by Paul Nation, to ensure that the test was fit for purpose and appropriate for the age and ability of the participants.

We ensured the validity and reliability of the instruments to support our findings. Content validity was established through expert review, in which two experts in applied linguistics reviewed the questionnaire and the vocabulary test to ensure that the items represented the constructs of interest. A pilot study with a sample of 20 ESL students who did not take part in the study was then carried out. The findings from the pilot study were used to refine the instruments through clarifications and removal of any obscure items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure reliability, and the results showed a coefficient of 0.82 for the questionnaire on reading habits, suggesting a high degree of reliability. Similarly, the coefficient for the vocabulary test was 0.79, indicating that it was also reliable and produced consistent and reproducible results.

Data collection was conducted over a two week period in a classroom environment. The first task was for participants to complete the questionnaire on reading habits, which took about ten to 15 minutes. They were then presented with the vocabulary test, which took around twenty minutes to administer. Participants were given instructions to ensure they understood the nature and structure of each instrument and the researcher was available to answer any questions. The responses were then gathered and entered into the data. The data were then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data, answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the participants' reading habits and vocabulary scores. Inferential statistics involved the use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient in order to test whether there is a correlation between daily reading habits and vocabulary scores. Furthermore, an independent samples t-test was used to compare vocabulary levels between students who exhibited reading habits and those who did not. A statistically significant level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted, as is typically used in social sciences for determining if the relationship between two variables is statistically significant.

Descriptive Analysis of Daily Reading Habits

The first research question, which seeks to understand the reading habits of ESL students, was answered by using descriptive statistical analysis. The findings are shown in the tables below:

Table 1

Frequency of Daily Reading

Reading Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely (1–2 times/week)	18	15%
Occasionally (3–4 times)	32	27%
Regularly (5–6 times)	40	33%
Daily	30	25%
Total	120	100%

The findings in Table 1 suggest that a large number of ESL students read regularly. In particular, 33% of the students reported they read regularly (5-6 days per week) and 25% reported reading every day. However, 27% reported that they read occasionally and 15% reported that they read rarely. This result implies that while reading is a widespread activity among the sample, there is some degree of variation in reading frequency. The presence of both frequent and infrequent readers makes it possible to explore how reading frequency may impact vocabulary learning. This finding speaks to the first aim of the study and shows that the daily reading habits of ESL learners are not consistent across individuals.

Table 2

Duration of Daily Reading

Duration (per day)	Frequency	Percentage
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Less than 15 min	25	21%
15–30 minutes	38	32%
30–60 minutes	34	28%
More than 1 hour	23	19%
Total	120	100%

Table 2 shows the time spent reading by ESL students. The findings reveal that most students (32%) read for 15-30 minutes per day, followed by 28% who read for 30-60 minutes. Fewer students (19%) read for over an hour a day, and 21% of students reported reading for less than 15 minutes a day. The results indicate that while the majority of students read, their reading time is more moderate than long. This exposure may be beneficial in terms of vocabulary learning, but longer reading times are generally associated with greater vocabulary gains due to increased exposure to the input. The diversity in reading duration found in this study offers a variable for inferential analysis.

Table 3

Consistency of Reading Habits

Consistency Level	Frequency	Percentage
Inconsistent	30	25%
Moderately Consistent	46	38%
Highly Consistent	44	37%
Total	120	100%

As indicated in Table 3, the majority of the participants are moderately to highly consistent readers. That is, 38% of the students reported moderate consistency, and 37% reported high consistency. On the other hand, 25% of students demonstrated low consistency. This indicates that many ESL students have established somewhat consistent reading patterns, which is key to vocabulary learning. Regular language exposure is a key factor in vocabulary retention, as repeated exposure to vocabulary items helps consolidate knowledge and understanding. The inclusion of both types of readers in the sample enables comparison in the following analyses.

Table 4

Type of Reading Material

Type of Material	Frequency	Percentage
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Academic Texts	42	35%
Online Articles	30	25%
Storybooks/Novels	28	23%
Mixed Reading	20	17%
Total	120	100%

Table 4 shows the types of reading materials explored by ESL students. Here we can see that the most common reading materials are academic texts (35%), articles online (25%) and novels or story books (23%). The least common type of reading was mixed reading (17%). This pattern suggests that ESL students' reading is mainly motivated by academic purposes, but many are also engaged in reading for leisure or information. Reading a variety of reading materials is important for vocabulary learning, as different texts provide students with different vocabulary items and their meanings. Academic texts are likely to expose students to formal and domain-specific vocabulary, whereas novels and online articles may provide more contextualized language in a more natural manner.

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis of Vocabulary Development

For the second research objective, which is to compare the vocabulary proficiency of ESL students, descriptive statistics were calculated based on the vocabulary test.

Vocabulary Test Performance

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low (0–10)	20	17%
Moderate (11–20)	54	45%
High (21–30)	46	38%
Total	120	100%

The findings in Table 5 show that most students are in the moderate to high vocabulary proficiency categories. In particular, 45% of the students scored moderate while 38% scored high in their vocabulary knowledge. Only 17% were identified in the low category. These results indicate that, on average, the participants have a satisfactory vocabulary, although there is a proportion of the population with low vocabulary proficiency. The range in vocabulary achievement presents an ideal opportunity to investigate the impact of reading on vocabulary. This investigation addresses the second aim of the study by determining the vocabulary level of the participants.

Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistics were used to meet objectives three and four of the study and to test the hypotheses. In particular, to test the relationship between daily reading and vocabulary performance, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied, and to test the differences between vocabulary performance in groups of students with different reading habits, an independent samples t-test was adopted. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted.

Table 6

Correlation between Daily Reading Habits and Vocabulary Development



Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-value	p-value
Daily Reading Habits	3.42	0.78		
Vocabulary Development	19.85	5.12	0.62	0.000

The findings reported in Table 6 show that there is a significant positive correlation between students' daily reading habits and their vocabulary learning outcomes ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). This correlation implies that students who read more often and regularly have a greater vocabulary. The correlation of 0.62 is a strong positive correlation, suggesting that reading habits are an important factor in predicting vocabulary development.

The level of significance ($p = 0.000$) indicates that this relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. These results strongly support the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that there is a positive relationship between reading habits and vocabulary outcomes for ESL students. As such, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Theoretically, this finding is consistent with theories of language acquisition put forth by Stephen Krashen and Rod Ellis, which stress the role of ongoing language input. The result indicates that regular reading offers learners multiple exposures to words in context, aiding vocabulary learning.

Table 7

Relationship between Reading Frequency and Vocabulary Development

Variable Pair	r-value	p-value
Reading Frequency & Vocabulary	0.58	0.000

The correlation results in Table 7 show a strong positive association between frequency of reading and vocabulary ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that students who read more often have higher vocabulary scores. The magnitude of this correlation implies that exposure is a crucial aspect of vocabulary learning as repeated exposure to words improves recognition and recall.

This result confirms hypothesis, H_{1a} , that frequency of reading has an impact on vocabulary. This finding also supports the notion that frequent exposure to texts provides more opportunities for incidental learning of vocabulary, and so enhances language proficiency.

Table 8

Relationship between Reading Duration and Vocabulary Development

Variable Pair	r-value	p-value
Reading Duration & Vocabulary	0.49	0.001

According to Table 8, the correlation between reading duration and vocabulary is moderately positive ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.05$). This means students who read for longer periods have stronger vocabulary, but the correlation is not as strong as with reading frequency.

This result suggests that although duration is crucial, it may not be as crucial as frequency to vocabulary achievement. This finding supports hypothesis H_{1b} , indicating that the duration of reading plays an important role in vocabulary development. The weaker correlation coefficient indicates that frequency may be more important than duration.

Table 9

Relationship Between Reading Consistency and Vocabulary Development

Variable Pair	r-value	p-value
Reading Consistency & Vocabulary	0.61	0.000

Table 9 shows a positive correlation between the consistency of reading and vocabulary development ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$). This means that students who read regularly over time are likely to have higher vocabulary scores.

This result supports hypothesis H_{1c}, and suggests that frequent and consistent exposure to language input is crucial for vocabulary development. Consistency would appear to be one of the strongest determinants of vocabulary growth, as it leads to repeated exposure to new words, which is vital for vocabulary retention and comprehension.

Table 10

Comparison of Vocabulary Scores Based on Reading Regularity

Group	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Regular Readers	70	22.10	4.20		
Irregular Readers	50	16.75	5.10	6.12	0.000

The independent samples t-test results shown in Table 10 suggest that there is a significant difference between the vocabulary scores of regular and irregular readers ($t = 6.12$, $p < 0.05$). Regular readers show [considerably] higher vocabulary scores than irregular readers.

This result is consistent with hypothesis H_{1d}, and demonstrates a strong positive effect of regular reading on vocabulary. The substantial difference in mean scores underscores the significance of reading habits for language acquisition.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

The inferential analysis allows us to answer the research questions. The findings suggest that reading habits play a important role in enhancing the vocabulary skills of ESL students. The results confirm all alternative hypotheses (H₁, H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c} and H_{1d}), while rejecting the null hypothesis.

In addition, the data show that various aspects of reading habits - especially frequency and regularity - are critical factors in vocabulary development. Although time spent reading also plays a significant role in vocabulary acquisition, it seems to have a somewhat weaker influence than other variables. In summary, the findings demonstrate that reading habits play a significant role in ESL vocabulary development.

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the effects of habitual reading on English vocabulary development of ESL learners with a specific focus on the frequency, duration, and consistency of reading. The study's results offer compelling empirical evidence in support of the key hypothesis that regular reading plays an important role in vocabulary development. More significantly, they not only establish a correlation between reading and vocabulary development but also reveal insights into the multifaceted nature of reading activities and their impacts on vocabulary development (Abid et al., 2023; Wani & Ismail, 2024).

Perhaps the most notable finding of the study is the positive link between daily reading and vocabulary growth. The correlation analysis showed that students who read more often and more regularly have greater vocabulary knowledge. This result is in line with the claims of the Input Hypothesis in language acquisition, which highlights the significance of comprehensible input in the process of learning a foreign language (Krashen, 2004). Reading offers learners

ongoing exposure to vocabulary in context, enabling them to infer its meaning and consolidate vocabulary knowledge through repeated exposure (Horst, 2005; Day & Bamford, 1998). The results are also in line with the usage-based view of language acquisition, which draws attention to the importance of language input in the incremental construction of language skills (Ellis, 2008).

The research also revealed that frequency of reading is a strong predictor of vocabulary progress. Participants who indicated more frequent reading scores showed significantly higher vocabulary scores than those who read less frequently. This result supports the view that vocabulary learning is largely a function of exposure to words (Nation, 2022). This repeated exposure helps students to better understand and use words in a variety of contexts (Zhao & Huang, 2023). This finding aligns with other studies that have found that frequent reading leads to improvements in receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge through incidental learning (Serrano, 2023; Abdulrahman & Kara, 2023). The focus on frequency also suggests the need to embed reading into everyday life, rather than as a discrete academic task.

The research also showed that reading consistency is important for vocabulary learning. The positive relationship between consistency of reading and vocabulary suggests that consistent reading is key to long-term language learning. In contrast to intermittent reading, regular reading provides a continuous exposure to new words, which helps in retaining them and preventing loss of words previously learned (Tabata-Sandom, 2023). This finding echoes the more general learning principle in second language acquisition that learning is most effective when exposure to the second language is gradual and additive (Ellis, 2008). It also indicates that it may be more advantageous to establish consistent reading habits rather than short but intensive reading periods.

Although the time spent reading was also found to have a significant positive effect on vocabulary learning, it was less influential than frequency and consistency. This indicates that while time spent reading is important, it may not be as significant as frequency and consistency. Perhaps this is because more frequent but shorter reading sessions help increase vocabulary exposure, which is crucial for vocabulary retention, while less frequent but longer reading sessions may lead to less exposure (Chang, 2023). The finding has implications for language teachers as it suggests that regular reading, even for shorter durations, may be more beneficial than occasional but longer reading sessions.

Another key result of the study is the difference in vocabulary between regular and irregular readers (Khodaparast & Keshmirshakan, 2021). The regular readers' vocabulary performance was significantly better than the irregular readers'. This finding offers robust evidence for the practical significance of reading habits in language learning, and the contribution of self-directed learning in vocabulary building (Lekawael & Ferdinandus, 2021). It also indicates that reading is not just an additional practice but an important part in language development, especially in ESL classrooms where opportunities for using the target language may be scarce outside school.

The results of this study also add to the body of literature by contributing to a gap in research about the influence of regular reading habits on vocabulary learning. Unlike most existing studies that have explored the effects of structured reading programs and classroom-based interventions, this study highlights the role of daily and self-initiated reading habits (Samaraweera, 2023; Munawir & Ramli, 2021). The finding that regular reading practices play an important role in vocabulary development offers a more accurate picture of language learning in natural settings. This is especially significant in the context of ESL learning, where students may engage in self-study to support classroom learning.

The study, however, is not without limitations. The convenience sample used may restrict the generalisability of the results, as it may not be representative of all ESL students. Moreover, the study mainly relies on quantitative data on reading habits and vocabulary knowledge, which may not fully reflect the intricacies of the learning process (Edward et al., 2021). The findings could be further supported by future studies that implement more varied sampling strategies and use qualitative approaches to better understand the learners' perceptions of reading.

In summary, the interpretation of results emphasises the importance of reading habits every day for the vocabulary of ESL students. The findings show that regular, frequent, and purposeful reading practices lead to improved vocabulary learning, which aligns with both theoretical and empirical views of second language learning (Nation, 2022; Krashen, 2004; Bharati, 2022). This study not only supports the role of reading as a language learning strategy but also offers implications for teachers and language learners to enhance vocabulary learning.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of daily reading habits on the vocabulary learning of second language students, and to provide an understanding of what different aspects of reading habits, in particular frequency, duration and consistency, play in vocabulary learning. The study used a quantitative correlational design, which established empirical connections between the frequency of reading and vocabulary. The study's results shed new light on the value of reading as a component of second language learning.

One of the major findings of the study is that the act of reading is positively and significantly associated to vocabulary learning of ESL learners. Students who read more frequently and regularly have a larger vocabulary than those who read less frequently and regularly. This finding echoes the main thrust of the study that vocabulary learning is not a process that is solely dependent on classroom teaching but highly influenced by self-learning strategies. Hence, reading becomes a powerful tool for students to encounter words in context and, subsequently, to comprehend and retain them as vocabulary.

The study also shows that of all the reading aspects, the most important for vocabulary learning is the regularity of reading. Students, who read often, even for short periods of time, are likely to have higher vocabulary scores than their counterparts who read less often. This suggests that the language input exposure is more critical than duration of reading. Readiness is crucial in highlighting the learning of vocabulary, where exposure to language is incremental and repeated. However, while time spent reading was also considered important, it was considered less important, suggesting that spending long hours reading without consistency may not be beneficial.

The research also emphasizes the importance of consistency in reading and its effect on vocabulary improvement. Students who read regularly performed better in the vocabulary test, demonstrating the benefits of regular reading. This suggests the importance of building reading habits as part of language learning techniques, particularly in ESL contexts where there may be limited access to English outside of the classroom. It also emphasizes the role of learner autonomy in language learning, as active engagement in reading is more likely to lead to success.

The findings of this study are consistent with theories of second language learning - the Input Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen and the usage-based approach advocated by Rod Ellis. They emphasize the role of ongoing input during learning. The results of the current study confirm these theories by demonstrating that regular reading practices as a means of providing continuous input have an effect on vocabulary learning.

The current study not only supports the theories, but also contributes to previous research by addressing the gap in research about the effects of routine and independent reading practices



on vocabulary learning. For instance, although there are several studies on the impact of reading intervention and classroom tasks initiated by teachers, the current study highlights everyday reading practices. The focus on daily reading practices offers a more comprehensive understanding of vocabulary learning in the real world. This is particularly crucial in ESL classrooms where students frequently undertake self-study.

The study has limitations. The study used a convenience sample, which could limit the generalizability of the findings as this sample might not be representative of all ESL students. As well, the reading habits are self-reported, which may introduce biases or inaccuracies. Also, the quantitative nature of the study, while helpful in determining correlations, does not account for the more qualitative elements of reading, such as reader engagement and motivation. The results suggest that further studies are needed to supplement the findings of this study.

Overall, the study confirms that regular reading has a substantial, measurable influence on ESL learners' vocabulary development. By establishing a link between reading and vocabulary learning, this study highlights the importance of teaching and engaging students in reading, and the benefits of habit formation in developing vocabulary.

Recommendations

The findings of the study provide several recommendations for teachers, students, curriculum developers and researchers.

For teachers, language practitioners should encourage regular reading in students to learn the language. Educators should focus not only on what is being taught in class, but also get students to practice reading regularly outside of class. They can do this through reading assignments, recommendations of appropriate reading materials, and opportunities for students to derive meaning from the texts. Teachers should also emphasize the need for frequent reading, as the study suggests reading should be done on an ongoing basis, rather than in intensive bursts.

For students, the study emphasizes the role of independent reading in vocabulary learning. Students need to learn to take responsibility for their own learning and read regularly. Regular reading for short periods can significantly impact on vocabulary development. Learners should also read suitable materials of their interest and ability, as this can enhance their motivation and interest, and thus make reading a good learning strategy.

Curriculum developers should make sure that ESL classes include extensive reading for vocabulary development. Providing a range of academic and non-academic reading materials for students can help students receive adequate language input. And providing tasks that incorporate vocabulary from reading can help consolidate the learning. Findings from the study suggest that, rather than being something additional or "added on", reading should be part and parcel of language learning.

At the institutional level, it's recommended that schools and other education institutions provide facilities to encourage reading. This includes providing access to libraries, online reading programs and reading programs that encourage regular reading. Creating a reading culture in schools may improve language learning and achievement.

Finally, future research should explore the relationship between reading and vocabulary with a variety of participants and methods. For example, other variables such as motivation, reading strategies and reading materials may be investigated to understand the vocabulary learning process. Furthermore, qualitative approaches could be used to explore language learners' reading experiences and perceptions of reading, which will help us understand the reading process. Longitudinal designs can be used to investigate the long-term impact of reading.

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