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Extensive Reading and L2 Vocabulary Development: Exploring L2 Learning Experience through the L2 Motivational Self-System

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Abstract

Extensive reading (ER) has been widely recognized for its impact on vocabulary acquisition, yet its role in shaping L2 learners' affective learning experience remains underexplored. In the early 20th century, Palmer proposed ER (see Day & Bamford, 1998) to lead to enhanced reading abilities and motivate L2 learners to read. Although ER's potential in language development has been widely studied, few empirical studies have examined this connection within the framework of L2MSS. Selecting Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self-system (henceforth, L2MSS) which links learners' future self-concept to their motivation and learning behaviors as our theoretical framework, we measured offline ER's influence on not only Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary development but also on their L2 learning experience. In so doing, we selected an experimental group (EG) (N=32) and a control group (CG) (N =28) from two university-level intact classrooms who were passing their General English course. The experimental group (EG, N=32) read three proficiency-matched graded readers over an 8-week period, while the control group (CG, N=28) used only the coursebook, *Select Readings: Pre-Intermediate*. The graded readers were selected in such a way to match learners' current language proficiency as determined by an Oxford and Cambridge Quick Placement Test (OCQPT). Our participants' baseline vocabulary knowledge was assessed using a teacher-made test, while their baseline L2 learning experience was measured through Li's (2025) L2 Learning Experience Scale measuring six subcomponents: positive emotion, negative emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment. The findings showed that both groups had little knowledge of the target words before the treatment. However, post-treatment results showed that the EG significantly outperformed the CG in vocabulary knowledge and reported greater gains across multiple L2 learning experience subscales. These findings have important implications for integrating extensive reading into general English curricula to foster both lexical growth and learner motivation.

Keywords: L2 learning experience, L2 motivational self-system, extensive reading, vocabulary acquisition, EFL

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1. Introduction

Augmenting vocabulary proficiency is crucial for L2 learners. Nation (2022) asserts that L2 learning process significantly depends on vocabulary development. Traditional techniques of vocabulary training include the memorization of bilingual lists, dictionary referencing, and systematic vocabulary drills (see Strong, 2024). Despite their widespread application by practitioners, they have been deemed insufficient for fostering significant vocabulary development in L2 learners.

The earlier-mentioned methods' insufficiency is due to the fact that they lack immersive, contextualized learning environments that emulate the acquisition of natural language process (Strong, 2024). Scholars within the field of L2 learning have investigated different methods and techniques for promoting the knowledge of L2 vocabulary in and outside language classrooms (e.g., Barcroft, 2009; Eckerth & Tavakoli, 2012; Kargar Behbahani & Razmjoo, 2023; Shahipanah et al., 2025). Among the proposed techniques, reading- specifically extensive- is among the most influential techniques in enhancing L2 vocabulary learning (Horst, 2005; Senoo & Yonemoto, 2014; Suk, 2017). In the early 20th century ER was proposed by Palmer (as stated by Day & Bamford (1998)) to distinguish the term from intensive approach to reading on a pedagogical level. Suk (2017) also highlights that ER is an efficient method for developing reading abilities and motivates L2 learners to read.

Motivation is fundamental to the notion of ER, which is crucial for L2 development (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1985). Diverse experts have illustrated the crucial significance of motivation in L2 vocabulary acquisition. In 1991, Gardner and MacIntyre illustrated the significant impact of both instrumental and integrative motivation on the acquisition of French vocabulary. In a separate study, Tseng and Schmitt (2008) determined that motivational factors influence how well individuals were able to control their vocabulary learning. Tanaka (2013, 2014) further emphasized the significance of intrinsic motivation as a positive predictor of kanji proficiency.

Building upon this foundation, the present study examines the extent to which offline ER practice might lead to enhanced L2 vocabulary development and L2 language learning experience, framed by Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self-System, which links learners' future self-concept to their motivation and learning behaviors. In our perspective, this study is significant as it tries to bridge the existing gap between ER practice and its potential in enhancing L2 vocabulary development and fostering L2 learning experience, particularly within the framework of L2MSS. By investigating the potential of offline ER practice in L2 vocabulary development and L2 learning experience, we hope that our study offers important insights into how ER practice taking place outside language classrooms can lead to enhanced vocabulary acquisition and L2 learning experience. The outcomes could have the capacity to offer important theoretical and practical implications. We hope that our findings contribute to effective L2 vocabulary instruction and effective motivational practices.

2. Literature Review

Harold Palmer and Michael West first introduced extensive reading following a pilot study conducted in India (see Loh, 2009). This word denotes the act of examining large volumes of straightforward linguistic information for comprehension without undertaking any follow-up actions. Extensive reading, considered an effective approach for enhancing language competency (Kim & Ro, 2023; Maley, 2005), prioritizes meaning above language, leading to reading for overall comprehension (Carrell & Carson, 1997).

Extensive reading enhances the growth of autonomous and confident readers (Day & Bamford, 1998). Camiciottoli (2001) contends that learners are more inclined to foster their reading fluency and speed (Walker, 1997). Consequently, they develop greater reading proficiency. Extensive reading enables learners to refine their writing style (Tsang, 1996), cultivate a thorough comprehension of vocabulary and syntax (Day & Swan, 1998), and acquire proficient spelling abilities (Krashen, 1993).

In ER, learners are supplied with a substantial volume of reading materials for individual study. Richards and Schmidt (2002) characterize ER as reading in quantity and to gain the gist of the material. Consequently, learners must read for overall comprehension, knowledge acquisition, and enjoyment (Liu & Zhang, 2018). Furthermore, with ER, learners are prompted to acquire new vocabulary accidentally, as a natural consequence of meaningful language engagement, in contrast to direct vocabulary instruction (Strong, 2024). The fundamental theoretical rationale for the prevalent application of ER in L2 learning is predicated on the necessity for learners to encounter substantial quantities of understandable input in the target language (Krashen, 1982).

Moreover, in this pedagogical approach, learners have the freedom to choose the material based on their interests which results in enhancing their motivation (Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Yamashita, 2004). Studies on ER indicate the improvement of learners' performance on reading and writing tests (Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Leung, 2002), and the inherent progression of reading fluency and intrinsic motivation in learners (Iwata, 2022; Matsui & Noro, 2010; Schutte & Malouff, 2007).

Day and Bamford (2004) proposed ten principal factors for ER programs which may increase learners' motivation. First, the material must be easy to increase learners' sense of self-efficacy and motivation. Second, the curriculum must have many reading themes for learners to choose from according to their interests and to foster deep reading and understanding. Third, learners must have the freedom and autonomy to select their topic of interest. Fourth, there should not be a limitation on how much time they can spend on reading. Fifth, learners need to read for pleasure, general information, and understanding that it can enhance their motivation, too. Sixth, although ER in the EFL context is challenging, reading is its own reward which allows readers to find intrinsic satisfaction. Seventh, the ER program should enhance fluency in vocabulary knowledge and reading speed. Eighth, learners should pick their reading speed which results in building reading

skills one-step at a time and more involvement with reading material. Ninth, in ER program teachers should help learners with finding appropriate reading material, and tenth, teachers' responsibility in being a role model for proper reading behavior.

Research on reading and ER has largely overlooked the motivational aspect of learning and the examination of motivation's function in EFL vocabulary acquisition through ER pedagogy; therefore, the literature warrants additional scrutiny in this context. L2 motivation has long been eclipsed by Gardner's seminal concept of integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985). He, distinguishing the former motivation types, presented a socio-psychological paradigm. He posited that integrative orientation stems from learners' willing to figure out the target language community and its culture, while instrumental orientation highlights the practical and utilitarian advantages of learning an L2 (e.g., for examination success, employment opportunities) (Bui & Teng, 2021). Notwithstanding the significant emphasis placed on Gardner's L2 motivation theory, numerous scholars have criticized it for its lack of applicability to educational contexts (e.g., Crooks & Schmidt, 1991), its failure to incorporate cognitive theories of learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994), and its obsolescence in globalization era (e.g., Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002). Following years of hosting conflicting findings about Gardner's (2005) seminal concept, Dörnyei introduced a novel L2 motivation model.

Furthermore, Taguchi et al. (2009) assert that Zoltan Dörnyei's proposed theory provides two contemporary motivation conceptualizations by Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001), along with studies in personality psychology related to possible selves, identity, self-regulatory processes, and self-discrepancy theory.

Boo et al. (2015) assert that the L2MSS has significantly influenced the motivation domain, inciting an extraordinary surge of interest evidenced by several studies globally (Al-Hoorie, 2018). The L2MSS theory comprises three primary dimensions: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. The first component, as articulated by Dörnyei (2005), is defined as the L2-specific aspect of one's ideal self. Consequently, this idealized mental self would serve as a catalyst to bridge or diminish the distance between the present self and the envisioned self. Ryan (2009) asserted that the optimal L2 self is associated with integrativeness and accounts for a greater variety in learners' intended efforts.

The second dimension refers to the traits that an individual believes they should possess based on perceived duties, obligations, or responsibilities (Papi, 2010). Therefore, to prevent adverse results and fulfill expectations, the learner must exhibit certain skills or qualities. Taguchi et al. (2009) indicated that familial influences and prevention-oriented instrumental factors (e.g., avoiding exam failure) impact learners' motivational behavior. In a further study, Csizér and Kormos (2009) noted a positive correlation between the second dimension of Dörnyei's motivational theory and parental encouragement.

The third dimension of this motivational paradigm pertains to learners' experience in the L2. In contrast to the other two aspects of this motivational theory, the third-dimension disregards

future-oriented self-guidance and emphasizes on the assessment and evaluation of the current situation. In the previously referenced study (Csizér & Kormos, 2009), it exerted the most significant impact on motivated behavior.

Thus, as said earlier the literature on reading/ ER has paid scant attention to the motivational behavior of learners and processes regarding vocabulary learning. So, the present investigation aims at filling this gap by examining how offline ER (i.e., the type of ER which not only happens outside classrooms but also language learners go through the reading material at their leisure time) can lead to vocabulary development. In doing so, taking L2MSS as the theoretical base, we measure the interplay between offline ER and L2 learning experience. Therefore, the following research questions are tackled:

1. Does offline extensive reading lead to vocabulary development among Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does offline extensive reading practices interplay with Iranian EFL learners' L2 learning experience?

3. Method

3.1. Design

As we mainly aim to ascertain the potential of offline ER practices in vocabulary development and L2 learning experience, we adopt a pretest posttest design with a CG to measure the lexical gains through offline ER and the effect of this practice on EFL learners' L2 learning experience.

3.2. Context and Participants

Setting in the context of a large university in Iran, we selected two intact classes of freshmen and sophomores with equal gender distribution passing their General English course. Randomization resulted in an EG (N= 32) and a CG (N=28). Their age ranged from 18 to 29, and they all reported being monolingual in Persian. Additionally, none of the participants reported to have ever traveled to an English-speaking country. These participants had all studied English as a compulsory course for 6 years during their previous studies at junior and senior high schools in Iran. In order to measure the learners' English language proficiency, an OCQPT was administered, based upon which all the participants had A2 and B1 command of English. It is of significant importance to highlight that to minimize the likelihood of the diffusion effect (see Ary et al., 2019 for full description), the two classes were selected from two different faculties (i.e., the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Faculty of Engineering) of a single university.

3.3. Instruments

Several instruments helped us measure the lexical gains through offline ER and the interplay between offline ER practice and the L2 learning experience in an Iranian EFL landscape. Primarily, the learners were studying *Select Readings* (pre-intermediate) as their main textbook. In the

experimental group, the learners were assigned three graded short stories published by Penguin Readers (Pearson), namely, *Titanic*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Romans* (all level 3). Additionally, an OCQPT helped us measure the learners' proficiency in L2 English. All the participants scored between 18 and 39, which shows that they had A2 and B1 command of English. After measuring their proficiency in L2 English, we designed an instructor-made test assessing the participants' baseline knowledge of the target words used in the graded readers. In doing so, we ensured that the assessed words were not the target words in the main textbook (*Select Readings*). The researcher-developed test included 60 items, including multiple-choice, matching, and blank-fill exercises. We used a KR-21 formula to measure the reliability index of the instrument. The calculated index indicated that the instrument was highly reliable (r=773). Talking about the validity of the instrument, three PhD holders in TEFL confirmed the instrument's content validity. Furthermore, we used a Known-Group technique (Ary et al., 2019) to ensure the test's construct validity. That is to say, the test was given to a group of language teachers (N=15) whose performance on the test substantially diverged from our participants on the pretest, ensuring the construct validity. We developed another vocabulary test based on the three graded short stories. The format of this instrument was similar, but it contained different items. We followed the same procedures to ensure the instrument's reliability, content, and construct validity. We administered this second instrument as a posttest during the last session to measure the lexical gain. In addition to the tests of vocabulary, Li's (2025) L2 Learning Experience Scale which is founded on the L2MSS was administered twice, once on the pretest and once on the posttest. The scale included 26 items, each assessed on a Likert scale from one to five points. It involved six subcomponents: positive emotion, negative emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment.

3.4. Treatment and Data Collection Procedures

The treatment for both conditions (i.e., EG and CG) differed. The experimental condition, in addition to studying the main textbook (i.e., *Select Readings*), engaged in ER practice, while the CG did not. Specifically, the treatment aimed to uncover the effect of engagement with the offline ER practice on lexical gain and L2 learning experience. In doing so, the experimental learners were assigned three graded readers, namely, *Titanic*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Romans* (Penguin Readers, Level 3). They were asked to go through one graded reader every four weeks so all three short stories could be completed over a course of twelve weeks. The offline nature of the ER practice allowed students to read independently outside the classroom. In order to promote active learning, the experimental learners were asked to keep a reading journal in which they wrote unfamiliar words and summaries of the chapters so they could go through the journal time and again to deepen their learning.

In contrast, a standard curriculum set forth by the university using Select Readings as the main textbook was followed for the control condition. The treatment for this comparison group

involved instruction limited to the textbook content, including reading comprehension and vocabulary activities. Unlike the experimental learners who engaged with offline ER practice, no additional reading materials (i.e., graded readers) were assigned to the control learners. In so doing, the treatment for this group mainly prioritizes comprehension and vocabulary activities and in-class discussions on the chapters of the textbook. The course instructor explained and provided feedback on the activities as appropriate. However, she did not assign any offline activities aiming to promote reading beyond the textbook.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

We conduct the data analysis in two primary stages: lexical gains, using independent samples t-tests, and MANOVA to assess the interplay between offline ER practice and Iranian EFL learners ' L2 learning experience. According to Pallant (2020), an independent sample t-test helps compare the means of two independent groups. For this reason, we initially conduct independent sample t-tests to compare and contrast the learners' baseline vocabulary knowledge in both groups. We conduct another t-test to compare the learning gains on the posttest to determine whether the EG significantly outperformed the CG. Lastly, we conduct a repeated measures MANOVA to gauge the treatment's influence on the L2 learning experience, as MANOVA determines the effects of an independent variable on two or more dependent variables (different subscales of L2 Learning Experience in this study). The MANOVA analysis assesses ER practice's effect on all subscales of the L2 Learning Experience Scale. The conduct of MANOVA is appropriate as it allows the analysis of multiple dependent variables simultaneously (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

4. Results

4.1. The Influence of Offline ER on L2 Vocabulary Development

As exhausted above, t-tests measure the impact of offline ER practice on L2 lexical gain. To run this test, we needed to verify the normalcy assumption. Thus, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was run.

Table 1

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Pretest Scores	Posttest Scores
N		60	60
Normal Parameters	Mean	4.766	9.183
	Std. Deviation	1.382	4.412
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.167	.156
	Positive	.133	.156
	Negative	-.167	-.155
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.294	1.211
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.070	.107

The K-S test, as revealed in Table 1, substantiates the normality assumption on both occasions (p>.05).

Table 2

Group Statistics of Vocabulary Development on the Pretest

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest Scores	Experimental	32	4.812	1.533	.271
	Control	28	4.714	1.212	.229

Table 2 illustrates comparable subpar performance across the EG (N=32, M=4.812, SD=1.533) and CG (N=28, M=4.714, SD=1.212) on the pretest.

Table 3

Independent Samples Test of Vocabulary Development on the Pretest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest Scores	Equal variances assumed	2.339	.132	.272	58	.786	.09821	.36054	-.62349	.81992
	Equal variances not assumed			.277	57.455	.783	.09821	.35496	-.61245	.80888

Table 3 demarcates that the difference between the two conditions' baseline performance was not statistically significant (t=.272, df=58, p>.05).

Table 4

Group Statistics of Vocabulary Development on the Posttest

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest Scores	Experimental	32	12.593	2.960	.523
	Control	28	5.285	1.718	.324

Table 4 demonstrates a sharp increase in the EG learners' lexical gain (N=32, M=12.593, SD=2.960) compared to the comparison condition (N=5.285, SD=1.718).

Table 5

Independent Samples Test of Vocabulary Development on the Posttest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest Scores	Equal variances assumed	3.148	.081	11.473	58	.000	7.308	.636	6.032	8.583
	Equal variances not assumed			11.865	50.815	.000	7.308	.615	6.071	8.544

Table 5 demonstrates a substantial disparity in lexical acquisition between the two circumstances, favoring the EG following the intervention (t=11.473, df=58, p=.001).

4.2. The Influence of Offline ER on L2 Learning Experience

We conducted a MANOVA to measure offline ER's impact practice on L2 learning experience. As the L2 Learning Experience Scale encompasses 6 subscales, we decided to run MANOVA as this inferential test of significance helps determine the effect of ER practice on multiple dependent variables in one go.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of L2 Learning Experience

	Group	Time	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Positive Emotion	Experimental	Pretest	2.500	.508	32
		Posttest	4.468	.507	32
		Total	3.484	1.112	64
	Control	Pretest	2.357	.487	28
		Posttest	1.607	.497	28
		Total	1.982	.617	56
Negative Emotion	Experimental	Pretest	2.468	.507	32
		Posttest	1.687	.470	32
		Total	2.078	.625	64
	Control	Pretest	2.607	.497	28
		Posttest	1.571	.503	28
		Total	2.089	.720	56
Engagement	Experimental	Pretest	2.687	.470	32
		Posttest	4.562	.504	32
		Total	3.625	1.061	64
	Control	Pretest	2.464	.507	28
		Posttest	1.535	.507	28
		Total	2.000	.687	56
Relationship	Experimental	Pretest	2.656	.482	32
		Posttest	4.531	.507	32
		Total	3.593	1.064	64
	Control	Pretest	2.464	.507	28
		Posttest	1.464	.507	28
		Total	1.964	.712	56
Meaning	Experimental	Pretest	2.343	.482	32
		Posttest	3.468	.507	32
		Total	2.906	.750	64
	Control	Pretest	2.571	.503	28
		Posttest	1.607	.497	28
		Total	2.089	.694	56
accomplishment	Experimental	Pretest	2.375	.491	32
		Posttest	3.500	.508	32
		Total	2.937	.753	64
	Control	Pretest	2.500	.509	28
		Posttest	1.678	.475	28
		Total	2.089	.640	56
Total Score	Experimental	Pretest	15.031	1.204	32
		Posttest	22.218	1.156	32
		Total	18.625	3.806	64
	Control	Pretest	14.964	1.104	28
		Posttest	9.464	1.551	28
		Total	12.214	3.079	56

As Table 6 indicates, there was a more or less similar performance between the EG (*M*= 2.500, *SD* =.508) and the CG (*M* =2.357, *SD*=.478) on the baseline measure of positive emotion. However, the EG reported an enhanced positive emotion (*M*=4.468, *SD* =.507) compared to the CG (*M* =1.607, *SD*=.497) on the posttest. The table further reveals a similar trend between the treatment group (*M*=2.468, *SD*=507) and the control condition (*M*=2.607, *SD*=.497) on the pretest of negative emotion. Although both groups exhibited a lessened negative emotion on the posttest, a more or less similar performance was observed between the ER group (*M* =1.687, *SD* = .470) and the CG (*M* =1.571, *SD*=.503). Regarding the pretest measure of engagement, a similar trend was detected between the ER group (*M* =2.687, *SD*=.470) and the comparison condition (*M* =2.464, *SD*=.507). However, based on the table, the EG exhibited a heightened engagement (*M*=4.562, *SD*=.504) compared to the CG (*M*=1.535, *SD*=.507) on the posttest. Concerning the relationship subscale, we observed a similar trend between the EG (*M*=2.656, *SD*=.482) and the CG (*M* =1.464, *SD*=.507) on the pretest. Nonetheless, the EG showed a heightened relationship (*M*=4.531, *SD* =.507) as opposed to the CG (*M* =1.464, *SD* =.507) on the posttest. Apropos the meaning subscale, we see a by and large similar performance between the experimental condition (*M* =2.343, *SD* =.482) and the CG (*M* =2.571, *SD*=.503). Notwithstanding, as opposed to the control group (*M*=1.607, *SD*=.497), the EG showcased an elevated meaning (*M*=3.468, *SD*= .507). With regard to the accomplishment, a similar baseline performance was observed between the EG (*M* =2.375, *SD* =.491) and the CG (*M* =1.678, *SD* =.475). However, the EG reported an increased accomplishment (*M* =3.500, *SD* =.508) compared to the CG (*M* =1.678, *SD* =.475) on the posttest. In total, although no substantial difference existed between the EG (*M*=15.031, *SD* = 1.204) and the CG (*M* =14.964, *SD* =1.104) on the pretest measure of the L2 Learning Experience Scale, the EG showed a notable increase in their L2 learning experience (*M* =22.218, *SD* =1.156) compared to the CG (*M* =9.464, *SD* =1.551).

Table 7

Multivariate Tests of L2 Learning Experience

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.994	2915.079	6.000	111.000	.000	.994
	Wilks' Lambda	.006	2915.079	6.000	111.000	.000	.994
	Hotelling's Trace	157.572	2915.079	6.000	111.000	.000	.994
	Roy's Largest Root	157.572	2915.079	6.000	111.000	.000	.994
Group	Pillai's Trace	.903	172.058	6.000	111.000	.000	.903
	Wilks' Lambda	.097	172.058	6.000	111.000	.000	.903
	Hotelling's Trace	9.300	172.058	6.000	111.000	.000	.903
	Roy's Largest Root	9.300	172.058	6.000	111.000	.000	.903
Time	Pillai's Trace	.650	34.285	6.000	111.000	.000	.650
	Wilks' Lambda	.350	34.285	6.000	111.000	.000	.650
	Hotelling's Trace	1.853	34.285	6.000	111.000	.000	.650
	Roy's Largest Root	1.853	34.285	6.000	111.000	.000	.650
Group * Time	Pillai's Trace	.891	151.598	6.000	111.000	.000	.891
	Wilks' Lambda	.109	151.598	6.000	111.000	.000	.891
	Hotelling's Trace	8.194	151.598	6.000	111.000	.000	.891
	Roy's Largest Root	8.194	151.598	6.000	111.000	.000	.891

A MANOVA was conducted to measure to influence of offline ER practice on L2 learning experience. Based on the statistics presented in Table 7, the EG outperformed the CG on the measures of L2 learning experience (Wilks' Lambda=.097, F=172.058, p=.001) with a large effect size (Partial eta squared=.903). Additionally, a substantial effect was observed for time (Wilks' Lambda=.350, F=34.285, p=.001) with a large effect size (partial eta squared=.650). Furthermore, we detected a substantial interaction between group and time (Wilks' Lambda=.109, F=151.598, p=.001) with a large effect size (partial eta squared=.891).

5. Discussion

By conducting this study, we primarily examined offline ER's effect practice on vocabulary development and L2 learning experience among Iranian EFL learners. To achieve these objectives, we used the L2MSS as the theoretical framework guiding the conduct of this study. Our findings mainly revealed that learners engaged in offline ER practice showed a notable increase in their vocabulary knowledge in L2 lexical gain compared to the control group, which only showcased a slight increase in their vocabulary knowledge. The statistical analyses, furthermore, showcased that offline ER practice positively influenced learners' L2 learning experience, particularly in subscales including positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment, while we failed to detect any significant changes in negative emotion.

We firmly believe that, by tackling the effect of offline ER in lexical gain and L2 learning experience, which is an area that has received scant attention among L2 researchers, our study fills in the critical gap that currently exists in knowledge. As reviewed in detail above, previous studies mainly concentrated on how cognitive features intersect with vocabulary learning. However, our study attempted to advance the field by focusing on how engagement in offline ER interacts with L2MSS as well as lexical gain. In doing so, our findings contribute to the enrichment of the body of knowledge that currently exists and open new avenues for examining the motivational dimensions of language acquisition through language learning and instructional practices that take place outside the physical classrooms.

In its totality, our experiment contributes to a novel perspective on ER by exploring how engagement in offline and independent ER practice not only enhances vocabulary development but also impacts L2 learning experience. While the existing scholarship emphasises the impacts of ER mainly on vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Horst, 2005; Senoo & Yonemoto, 2014; Suk, 2017), our findings contribute to a broader dialogue and highlight the potentiality of offline ER practices in not just vocabulary development among EFL learners but also L2 learning experience. In doing so, the integration of L2 learning experience as a crucial construct of the study verily adds blood and flesh to understanding the interplay between offline ER and cognitive and motivational variables. While previous studies mainly centred on the effects of ER on language development without

paying significant attention to the motivational dimensions, our study addressed a critical gap in the literature.

Our findings are in line with not just the theoretical framework but also the empirical background highlighted above. For Nation (2022), vocabulary plays a critical role in L2 learning. As our experimental participants engaged in offline ER practice for an extended period of time, it is potentially possible that their vocabulary development led to their heightened L2 learning experience. Strong (2024) also made similar points, pointing out that traditional ways of teaching vocabulary are inadequate because they lack contextual richness. Our results support these points. It is probably the contextualized, tranquil, and meaningful nature of offline ER that leads to both growth in lexical gain and L2 learning experience among the experimental group.

Based on our findings, the positive influence of offline ER practice is not limited to vocabulary development. In our findings, the motivational benefits of ER are totally salient. The participants engaged in offline ER practice reported a higher level of L2 learning experience, including but not limited to engagement, positive emotion, and accomplishment, which is in line with Bamford's (2004) principles for effective ER. Additionally, these results find resonance with the arguments made by Hitosgui and Day (2004) and Yamashita (2004), who showed that engagement with ER practice motivates learners and, in so doing, fosters intrinsic satisfaction and contributes to a deeper engagement with the content being read.

In addition to the theoretical and empirical background surrounding vocabulary acquisition, our findings are closely consistent with the dimensions of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2MSS, which primarily highlights the role of learning environment in fostering motivation (Papi, 2010). Therefore, it could be argued that learners' attitudes toward their current experiences impacts their motivational behavior. The offline ER group's significant improvements across a variety of the L2 learning experience dimensions showcase how offline ER could smooth the path for a positively motivating context resonating with learners' immediate needs. In addition to this, the autonomy and self-directed nature of the offline ER practice seems to be consistent with the ideal L2 self, which, in turn, fosters motivation to bridge the gap between the readers' current and aspired linguistic selves.

That engagement in offline ER practices facilitates vocabulary development and L2 learning experience reveals multiple implications for a variety of stakeholders in language pedagogy. One of the most significant groups of stakeholders benefiting from our findings is language learners. Language teachers are advised to help learners select level-appropriate and engaging reading materials to not only develop their learners' vocabulary knowledge but also enhance their overall L2 learning experience. In providing opportunities for offline ER practices, L2 learners are given the autonomy to go over their reading materials at their leisure time which can enhance their motivation and support a positive overall language learning experience. In so doing, language teachers play a crucial role by creating a supportive context where offline ER is worshiped as a meaningful and encouraging activity.

Our findings have implications for materials developers, as well. The current results highlight the need for these stakeholders to develop a wider range of level-appropriate and diverse materials so the learners could select among them based on their interest and needs for the offline ER practices. These materials should appeal to the readers' interests by including a variety of genres, themes, and cultural contexts. Materials developers, moreover, are advised to create supplementary resources including lexical glossaries and comprehension questions to help develop incidental vocabulary acquisition and enhance learners' learning motivation and experience. Besides, the digital adaptations of the materials might lead to a heightened accessibility increasing the opportunities for offline ER practices.

In addition to language teachers and language materials developers, syllabus designers can benefit from the findings of our study. We encourage syllabus designer to integrate offline ER practices are a main element of their language syllabi to enhance their learners' vocabulary development and overall L2 learning experience. As opposed to the traditional syllabi which mainly focus on traditional vocabulary instruction, syllabi should devote specific time for independent offline ER practice and provide guidance on how the ER principles could be implemented. Furthermore, syllabus designers are advised to include training sessions for learners on how to resort of effective reading strategies to hone not only their readings skills, but also to enhance their vocabulary development and L2 learning experience. In so doing, we are of the opinion that syllabus designers could not only provide language learning with excessive amount of language input, but also develop their vocabulary knowledge and motivation.

Moreover, this study important implications for L2 teacher educators. As the study emphasizes the dual benefit of engaging in offline ER as a means for vocabulary growth and an overall boost to the L2 learning experience of learners, it raises awareness on the need to prepare future language teachers to be equipped for delivering ER practices in their own classrooms. We encourage L2 teacher educators to highlight the reasoning behind ER being grounded in the same theoretical principles that govern level-appropriate input and the L2MSS so that potential teachers can anticipate how ER can lead to linguistic and motivational benefits. In addition, teacher training programs should prepare teachers with practical strategies for choosing and implementing appropriate and engaging ER materials, to promote learner autonomy, to monitor progress in motivating and engaging ways. These elements can be integrated into teacher education curricula, and can allow educators to educate a generation of teachers who can utilize the potential of ER to create rich, contextualized learning environments that cater to the objectives of language pedagogy.

6. Conclusion

We set out this study to assess the impacts of offline ER on vocabulary development and L2 learning experience among university-level Iranian EFL learners. Our findings primarily unmasked that offline ER practices result in a notable vocabulary development. Furthermore, our findings

determined that engagement with offline ER practice supports an enhanced L2 learning experience. Our findings showed how offline ER affected L2 learners' positive emotions, engagement, meaning, relationships, and accomplishments. These results suggest that ER is an invaluable practice that not only leads to vocabulary development but also enhances learners' overall L2 learning experience.

In spite of its contributions to the theoretical and pedagogical discourse surrounding offline ER practice, this study has some limitations. First of all, the study included a relatively small sample size and was conducted in a particular cultural and educational landscape, potentially limiting the findings' generalizability to other cultural and educational contexts. Furthermore, our study mainly relied on quantitative measures of vocabulary development and L2 learning experience, which leaves learners' deep perceptions and experiences relatively understudied. Therefore, we suggest that future researchers conduct qualitative studies (e.g., narrative inquiries and/or phenomenological studies) and portfolio assessments not only to gain a deeper insight regarding the contributions of the offline ER practice on L2 learning experience but also on vocabulary development. In addition, our findings lacked a delayed posttest, which leaves the long-term influence of offline ER practice on both vocabulary development and L2 learning experience unexplored. We encourage prospective researchers to conduct longitudinal studies to understand how offline ER practice might, in the long run, affect L2 vocabulary development and learning experience.

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