

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This chapter presents the theoretical foundations relevant to understanding students' experiences in learning reading through the two sequential reading courses at the English Education Study Program. In line with the focus of this study, the discussion is deliberately narrowed to the concept of reading in the EFL context in general, followed by the core theories underlying the two courses examined in this research, namely Extensive Reading and Reading for Professional Purposes. This focus is intended to ensure that the theoretical review directly supports the reader-text-purpose relationship in comprehension and the increase of textual complexity from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes that emerged as the central pattern in the preliminary study, rather than surveying reading theory in general.

2.1.1 Reading in the EFL Context

Reading can be broadly understood as the process of constructing meaning from written text by combining word-level recognition with higher-level language comprehension. One of the most widely used frameworks for explaining this process is the Simple View of Reading, which conceptualizes reading comprehension as the product of decoding ability and linguistic comprehension. Recent empirical work continues to test and refine this framework across different languages and learner populations. (Danielsson, 2025), in a longitudinal study published in Education Sciences, found that the model remained applicable over time, although the relative contribution of decoding and language comprehension shifted as students advanced to higher grade levels, with language comprehension becoming an increasingly stronger predictor of overall reading performance.

A recent theoretical review published in Frontiers in Education further supports the continued relevance of this framework for assessing reading comprehension among multilingual and second-language learners, arguing that it provides a valid and adaptable structure for understanding how comprehension

develops across different languages and educational contexts. Applied to the context of English Education students who progress through a sequence of reading courses, this perspective suggests that comprehension difficulties in more advanced courses, such as Reading for Professional Purposes, are unlikely to stem from decoding problems alone, but rather from the growing linguistic and conceptual demands of the texts themselves, including unfamiliar vocabulary, denser syntax, and specialized academic content (Gough, Philip B.; Tunmer, 1986).

This view is consistent with the pattern identified in the preliminary study of this research, in which students reported that their reading experience became more demanding as they moved from Extensive Reading toward Reading for Professional Purposes, even though their overall evaluation of both courses remained positive. Understanding reading comprehension through this lens therefore provides a useful entry point for examining how students narrate their own developing comprehension abilities throughout the two-course sequence explored in this study.

In addition to the Simple View of Reading, the reading process itself has traditionally been explained through three complementary models: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model. The bottom-up model treats accurate word-level decoding as the foundation of comprehension, while the top-down model emphasizes readers' use of prior knowledge and prediction to construct meaning. Recent classroom-based research continues to demonstrate the practical value of these models: (Fuad Abdul Baqi; Rakhma Apriani, 2024) , in a study published in the Indonesian Journal of Language Teaching and Linguistics, found that explicitly teaching students to apply top-down processing, predicting content and using contextual cues before attending to individual words, measurably improved their reading comprehension scores. Complementing this, (Akbar Bahari; Parviz Alavinia; Mohammad Mohammadi, 2024) , in the Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, examined a computer-assisted interactive reading model and found that combining lower-level text processing (decoding) with higher-level processing (prediction and inferencing) improved comprehension outcomes while also reducing learners' cognitive load compared to instruction that emphasized only

one processing direction. These recent findings reinforce the interactive view of reading as the most instructionally useful account of how skilled comprehension develops, and they are directly relevant to this study, since students moving from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes must continually renegotiate the balance between decoding unfamiliar words and drawing on background knowledge, a balance that is likely to shift as the texts they encounter become more specialized.

Closely related to the interactive model is schema theory, which explains how background knowledge shapes comprehension: readers understand new text by relating it to schemata, organized structures of prior knowledge, and comprehension difficulties often arise not from an inability to decode words, but from the absence of an appropriate schema for interpreting a text's content or structure. Recent research continues to confirm the strength of this relationship. (Courtney Hattan; Patricia A. Alexander; Sarah M. Lupo, 2024) , reviewing evidence across multiple studies, describe the link between prior knowledge and reading proficiency as theoretically and empirically well established, particularly for content-specific academic material. In a more applied study, (Young Ah Cho; Jee Hyun Ma, 2020), published in *English Teaching*, found that explicitly activating learners' relevant background knowledge before a reading task, combined with reading strategy use, produced measurable gains in L2 reading comprehension compared to reading without such activation. A related study using digital mind-mapping to train Chinese university EFL students in schema-building strategies similarly reported improved reading comprehension outcomes, while noting that the strategy's effectiveness depended on learners actively personalizing the schemata to their own knowledge. Applied to this study, these recent findings help explain the contrast identified in the preliminary research: because Extensive Reading materials are self-selected, students can draw on existing content schemata related to their personal interests, whereas Reading for Professional Purposes exposes students to unfamiliar academic and technical topics and unfamiliar formal schemata, such as the structure of journal articles, making the course feel comparatively more demanding (Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, 1984).

Vocabulary knowledge is another factor central to understanding reading comprehension in an EFL context, and the linguistic or lexical threshold hypothesis offers a useful account of its role: learners generally need to recognize a high proportion of the running words in a text, often estimated at around 95 to 98 percent, before adequate comprehension becomes possible, since comprehension deteriorates sharply once unknown vocabulary exceeds this threshold. Contemporary vocabulary assessment research continues to refine how this threshold is measured and applied. (Tim Stoeckel; Stuart McLean; Paul Nation, 2021), writing on the limitations of vocabulary size and levels tests, caution that vocabulary thresholds must be interpreted alongside how vocabulary knowledge is actually tested, since different test formats can under- or over-estimate a learner's functional reading vocabulary. This more nuanced, recent understanding of the threshold concept offers a further explanation for the pattern reported in the preliminary study of this research: because Extensive Reading materials are deliberately chosen at or below learners' current vocabulary level, students are more likely to read above the comprehension threshold, whereas the specialized, technical vocabulary of Reading for Professional Purposes texts makes it more likely that students encounter a higher proportion of unfamiliar words, pushing comprehension below the threshold and making the course feel more difficult.

Beyond linguistic knowledge, successful comprehension also depends on readers' ability to regulate their own reading process, an ability commonly discussed under the umbrella of metacognitive reading strategies, including previewing, predicting, skimming, scanning, inferencing, and monitoring one's own understanding as reading proceeds. A substantial body of recent research confirms the impact of these strategies on EFL reading outcomes. (Bergh, 2023), in *Language Teaching Research*, found that explicit reading strategy instruction significantly improved second-language learners' academic reading comprehension. Similarly, (Maris Juhkam; Anna-Liisa Jõgi; Piret Soodla; Mikko Aro, 2023), studying rural Indonesian EFL learners, reported that regular use of metacognitive reading strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own comprehension, was associated with stronger reading performance, although the relationship's

strength varied across learners. In a related line of research, (Maris Juhkam; Anna-Liisa Jõgi; Piret Soodla; Mikko Aro, 2023), publishing in *Frontiers in Psychology*, tracked the development of reading fluency and metacognitive strategy knowledge during reciprocal teaching and found that gains in strategic awareness contributed meaningfully to reading comprehension over time. Because strategic reading behavior tends to be text- and purpose-dependent, students in this study are likely to draw on a different configuration of strategies when reading the freely chosen, general-interest texts of Extensive Reading than when reading the denser, more technical texts of Reading for Professional Purposes, where monitoring comprehension and resolving vocabulary or structural difficulties becomes considerably more effortful.

2.1.2 Extensive Reading: Theory and Practice

Extensive reading and intensive reading represent two complementary approaches to reading instruction. Extensive reading emphasizes reading large quantities of self-selected, generally easier material for pleasure and general understanding, while intensive reading focuses on shorter, more demanding texts studied closely for detailed comprehension and language analysis. A recent narrative literature review published in the *International Journal of Professional Development* synthesized current research on extensive reading in EFL contexts and concluded that its benefits extend beyond reading fluency to include gains in vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing skills, while also noting that learner motivation is central to sustaining an extensive reading habit.

(Yoichi Mikami, 2020), in an open-access study published in *Reading in a Foreign Language*, examined how goal-setting influenced learners' motivation to continue extensive reading and found that students who set and achieved personally meaningful reading goals developed a self-reinforcing, virtuous cycle of motivation and reading volume, whereas students without clear goals were more likely to disengage. These findings help explain why, in the preliminary study of this research, Extensive Reading was the course most frequently described by students as their best experience: the freedom to select personally interesting materials

appears to support both motivation and comprehension in ways that the more tightly structured Reading for Professional Purposes course does not.

The theoretical grounding of Extensive Reading is most closely associated with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which argues that language acquisition progresses when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level, and with Day and Bamford's widely cited ten principles for teaching extensive reading, which specify that the reading material should be easy, varied in topic, chosen by the learner, and read for general understanding at a pace that is faster than intensive reading, with reading itself treated as its own reward rather than something followed by comprehension tests. These principles collectively distinguish Extensive Reading from Reading for Professional Purposes at the level of course design: Extensive Reading is deliberately built around volume, choice, and enjoyment, whereas Reading for Professional Purposes, as discussed in the following section, is built around a specific professional purpose and a fixed, discipline-relevant body of texts (Krashen, 1985).

Applied to the Extensive Reading course examined in this study, these principles explain both why students in the preliminary study described this course positively and why that positive experience was not entirely free of difficulty: the freedom to select personally interesting, comprehensible material lowers the affective and linguistic barriers to reading, but students still encounter unfamiliar vocabulary and increasing text length as their reading volume grows, so that Extensive Reading functions as a gradual, learner-paced foundation for the more demanding, purpose-driven reading required in Reading for Professional Purposes (Day, R. R., & Bamford, 1998).

The pedagogical rationale for Extensive Reading is further supported by (Nation, 2013) framework of four strands for a balanced language course: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Extensive Reading is most closely associated with the meaning-focused input strand, in which learners acquire language incidentally by engaging with comprehensible material chosen primarily for meaning rather than for explicit

language study, while also contributing to the fluency-development strand by providing learners with large amounts of easy, familiar-pattern text to read at speed. Within this framework, vocabulary growth through Extensive Reading is understood as largely incidental: research on vocabulary acquisition through reading, such as that reviewed by Waring and Nation, indicates that learners acquire new words gradually through repeated exposure in context, provided that unfamiliar words make up only a small proportion of the running text, a condition consistent with Day and Bamford's principle that Extensive Reading material should remain within learners' comprehension level.

Extensive Reading's emphasis on volume and repeated exposure also connects to automaticity theory, developed by (LaBerge and Samuels (1974), which holds that fluent reading depends on word recognition becoming rapid and effortless enough that limited attentional resources can be devoted to comprehension rather than decoding. From this perspective, the large quantity of reading required in Extensive Reading functions not merely as practice for its own sake, but as a mechanism for automatizing word recognition, thereby freeing cognitive resources for higher-level comprehension as students progress toward more demanding texts. In addition, (Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis offers a motivational explanation for why Extensive Reading is often experienced positively: because learners select their own reading material and read without the pressure of tests or grades, anxiety and self-consciousness, which Krashen identifies as key components of the affective filter, are reduced, allowing comprehensible input to be processed more effectively. Taken together, these theories suggest that Extensive Reading builds not only vocabulary and general comprehension, but also the automatized reading fluency and reduced anxiety that make subsequent, more demanding reading tasks more manageable.

Closely tied to reading fluency, reading rate and sustained engagement are increasingly studied as concrete outcomes of Extensive Reading. (Helta Anggia; Anita Habók, 2025), in a large-scale study published in Scientific Reports, examined the efficacy of online Extensive Reading among university students and found that consistent engagement with self-selected online reading material was

associated with measurable gains in English reading comprehension, with affective variables such as enjoyment and confidence playing a significant mediating role. Complementing this, (Ya-Han Yang; Hsi-Chin Chu; Wen-Ta Tseng, 2021), writing in *Reading in a Foreign Language*, examined how text difficulty within an Extensive Reading program influenced both comprehension and motivation, finding that texts calibrated to learners' comprehension level sustained motivation more effectively than texts that were too difficult, even when the more difficult texts were nominally more challenging and therefore assumed to be more educationally valuable. Within the Extensive Reading course examined in this study, the requirement to read a wide range of longer, self-selected texts can therefore be understood as functioning simultaneously as vocabulary input, fluency practice, and a motivational and affective support structure, which together help explain why students in the preliminary study associated this course with growing confidence in their reading ability.

The motivational benefits of Extensive Reading can also be explained through learner autonomy, a construct that recent Extensive Reading research has examined empirically rather than only theoretically. (E. N. Aydawati; I. Sujarwati; N. Syamsiah; M. N. Annury; S. Mariam; C. Kepirianto; Suranto; Fridolini; S. Tarwiyah; D. Sutrisno, 2025), using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis to study Extensive Reading strategy training combined with digital tools, found that configurations of instruction that gave learners genuine choice over reading material and pacing, particularly when paired with metacognitive strategy training, produced the strongest outcomes for both learner autonomy and vocabulary acquisition, more so than technology or strategy training alone. This finding is consistent with (Helta Anggia; Anita Habók, 2025) observation that affective variables mediate the relationship between Extensive Reading engagement and comprehension gains, suggesting that the freedom to choose one's own reading material operates not simply as a logistical feature of Extensive Reading, but as an active driver of the motivation and sustained engagement that make the course effective. Interpreted through this lens, the freedom and choice that define Extensive Reading in this study are not incidental design choices but a deliberate

structure for supporting the autonomy and confidence that recent research identifies as key mechanisms behind its benefits.

2.1.3 Reading for Professional Purposes: An English for Specific Purposes Perspective

Reading for Professional Purposes is best understood as a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). (Tom Hutchinson; Alan Waters, 1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which every decision about content and method is based on the learner's reason for learning English, rather than on a generic, one-size-fits-all syllabus, and they distinguish within ESP a specific strand, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), from English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Reading for Professional Purposes sits at the intersection of these two strands: it uses academic text types, such as journal articles and formal reports, but its ultimate justification is occupational, since the English Education Study Program designs the course to prepare students for their future profession as English teachers who must read and use professional literature in English. This purpose-driven design is what most clearly separates Reading for Professional Purposes from Extensive Reading, whose material is instead selected by the learner for general fluency and enjoyment rather than for a specific professional need.

Because ESP courses are organized around learners' specific purposes, they typically expose students to a narrower but more demanding register than general English instruction: specialized terminology, formal academic conventions, and genre-specific structures such as the introduction-methods-results-discussion pattern common in journal articles. This register shift, rather than a general decline in reading ability, offers a theory-based explanation for why students in the preliminary study of this research consistently described Reading for Professional Purposes as more difficult than Extensive Reading. Where Extensive Reading builds general reading fluency through freely chosen, comprehensible texts, Reading for Professional Purposes deliberately narrows the reading diet to the discourse students will need as practicing English teachers, requiring them to read more critically, purposefully, and analytically rather than simply for volume or enjoyment.

Viewed through this ESP lens, the sequence from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes examined in this study mirrors a common pattern in ESP course design, in which learners first build general language proficiency before moving into a needs-based, specific-purpose stage. This framing gives the present study a clear theoretical basis for treating the two courses not as unrelated requirements, but as a deliberate developmental pathway, one that moves from broad, learner-selected reading toward the specialized, profession-oriented reading that English Education students will continue to rely on throughout their careers as English teachers.

A defining methodological principle of ESP, and by extension of Reading for Professional Purposes, is needs analysis, the systematic process of identifying the specific language and skills that learners require for their target situation. (John Munby, 1978) early needs analysis model and (John, 1988) subsequent refinement both emphasize that ESP course content should be derived from a careful analysis of the texts, tasks, and communicative demands learners will actually encounter, rather than from a generic English syllabus. Applied to Reading for Professional Purposes, this principle explains why the course is built around journal articles and professional reports rather than the more general, learner-selected material used in Extensive Reading: the reading diet is deliberately shaped by the target need of comprehending the discourse of the English teaching profession.

The genre-specific structures encountered in Reading for Professional Purposes can further be understood through (John M. Swales, 1990) genre analysis, particularly his Create a Research Space (CARS) model, which describes how academic research articles follow a recognizable rhetorical pattern of establishing a research territory, identifying a gap or niche, and occupying that niche through the presentation of the current study. Awareness of such generic, move-based structures allows readers to predict how information is likely to be organized within a text, such as the introduction-methods-results-discussion pattern noted earlier, and to read more strategically by anticipating where key information, such as the research problem, methodology, and findings, is likely to be located. For students transitioning from Extensive Reading, where texts are not bound by a fixed generic

structure, to Reading for Professional Purposes, where genre awareness becomes essential for efficient comprehension, this body of genre theory offers an additional explanation for why the course demands a qualitatively different reading approach, one that relies on recognizing structural and rhetorical patterns in addition to decoding vocabulary and sentence-level meaning.

The vocabulary demands of Reading for Professional Purposes can be further understood through the distinction between general high-frequency vocabulary and academic vocabulary, word families that recur frequently across academic texts from a range of disciplines but appear comparatively rarely in general or conversational English. Because Reading for Professional Purposes centers on journal articles and formal reports, students are required to master this academic vocabulary layer in addition to the general vocabulary they build through Extensive Reading, a layer that is largely absent from the freely chosen, general-interest texts typical of the earlier course. Recent vocabulary assessment research by Stoeckel, McLean, and Nation (2021) further indicates that learners' command of this academic vocabulary layer is often overestimated by simple vocabulary size tests, meaning that the real gap between students' general vocabulary and the specialized vocabulary demanded by professional and academic texts may be larger than test scores alone suggest. This additional vocabulary burden offers a further, more specific explanation, alongside the lexical threshold and register shift discussed above, for why students in the preliminary study of this research consistently identified unfamiliar academic and technical terms as a primary source of difficulty in Reading for Professional Purposes.

Reading for Professional Purposes also requires students to move beyond literal comprehension toward critical reading, the ability to evaluate a text's argument, evidence, and underlying assumptions rather than simply extracting factual information. Recent intervention research demonstrates that this ability can be directly cultivated through instruction: a 2024 study published in *Cogent Education* examined the effects of explicit reading strategy training on Ethiopian university students and found that learners who received structured strategy training over a twelve-week period showed significantly greater gains in both reading

strategy use and critical reading ability than a comparison group that did not receive such training. This finding is particularly relevant to Reading for Professional Purposes, where the assessment practices require students to summarize, critique, and respond analytically to journal articles, since it suggests that the critical reading skills the course demands are not simply a byproduct of exposure to harder texts, but a trainable competence that develops through deliberate practice. This critical orientation marks a further point of contrast with Extensive Reading, where the primary goal is fluent, enjoyable comprehension of self-selected material rather than the evaluative, analytical engagement demanded by academic and professional texts, and it offers an additional, recent theoretical basis for why the shift from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes is experienced by students not merely as a change in text difficulty, but as a qualitative shift in what it means to read successfully.

2.1.4 Reading Comprehension as a Multidimensional Process

The theories already discussed above provide a foundation for understanding reading comprehension as an interaction among linguistic processing, prior knowledge, and strategic control. This subsection does not replace those theories; rather, it strengthens them with a more recent account of second-language reading. (Grabe, W., & Stoller, 2011a) describe reading as a multidimensional ability in which word recognition, syntactic processing, comprehension processes, background knowledge, and strategic control work together. Their second edition updates the research base and includes specific discussions of reading fluency, comprehension processes, cognitive issues, reading models, digital reading, and the application of reading research to instruction and assessment. This recent synthesis is particularly relevant to the present study because the participants are university EFL learners who move from one reading context to another.

From this perspective, reading comprehension should not be interpreted as a single skill that remains identical across different texts. The same student may comprehend a general-interest text successfully but experience difficulty with an academic article because the latter requires additional processing. The difference may involve vocabulary, background knowledge, syntactic density, discourse

organization, or the purpose of the reading task. Therefore, the students' reports of increasing difficulty from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes can be understood as a change in reading demands rather than simply a decline in students' ability.

(Grabe, W., & Stoller, 2011a) also emphasize the importance of efficient word-to-text processing for fluent reading. When readers can process familiar words and structures relatively automatically, more attentional resources can be devoted to constructing meaning across sentences and paragraphs. This point reinforces the role of Extensive Reading already discussed in this chapter. High-volume reading of accessible texts can provide repeated opportunities to process familiar language, while later professional reading can require students to allocate more attention to unfamiliar vocabulary, specialized concepts, and rhetorical relationships.

This multidimensional perspective is relevant to the present study because students may experience different patterns of development across reading contexts. For example, a participant may say that she reads faster after completing Extensive Reading but still struggles to understand the argument of a research article. Another participant may report that academic vocabulary is difficult but that she has learned to use headings, abstracts, and contextual clues to compensate. These accounts cannot be adequately represented by a single score. They require attention to the different processes that students perceive as changing over time.

2.1.5 Reading Fluency and Automaticity

Reading fluency is an important bridge between Extensive Reading and more advanced forms of reading. Fluency generally involves reading with sufficient accuracy, speed, and ease so that comprehension is not continuously interrupted by effortful word recognition. The earlier automaticity theory retained in this chapter explains the cognitive basis of this process, while recent second-language reading research provides updated support for the importance of efficient processing. (Grabe, W., & Stoller, 2011a) specifically discuss the building blocks of fluency and the speed of word-to-text processing as central components of reading development.

Automaticity does not mean that all reading should be fast. Skilled readers vary their speed according to purpose and difficulty. A student may read a simple story quickly for general understanding but slow down when examining the methodology of a research article. Consequently, the development of fluency should be understood as increased control over reading rather than speed alone. This distinction is important for Reading for Professional Purposes, where effective reading often requires selective slowing down at points where evidence, terminology, or argumentation needs close attention.

Extensive Reading supports this development by giving learners large amounts of relatively accessible text. Repeated exposure allows common vocabulary and grammatical patterns to become more familiar. As processing becomes more efficient, students may report that they no longer need to translate every sentence or stop at every unfamiliar word. Such changes are meaningful indicators of students' perceived reading development because they show how students experience the transition from effortful to more efficient reading.

At the professional stage, however, fluency must be combined with flexibility. A professional reader needs to know when to skim, when to scan, when to read carefully, and when to reread. Therefore, the development from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes is not simply a movement from slow reading to fast reading. It is a movement toward more purposeful control of reading speed and attention.

2.1.6 Background Knowledge, Schema, and Text Comprehension

The schema theory already included in the earlier version of this chapter remains important because readers interpret new information through knowledge they already possess. Recent second-language reading research continues to support the importance of background knowledge. (Grabe, W., & Stoller, 2011a) include background knowledge among the cognitive resources that influence reading comprehension, while contemporary research continues to examine how knowledge interacts with language proficiency and text demands.

Background knowledge can be particularly important when students read professional texts. An English Education student who already understands concepts

such as formative assessment, communicative language teaching, or curriculum design may interpret a related article more easily than a student encountering those concepts for the first time. Knowledge of the topic can help readers predict information, interpret technical terms, and connect separate parts of an argument.

Extensive Reading can contribute indirectly to background knowledge because students encounter a broad range of topics and genres. When learners choose texts about education, culture, technology, or other areas of interest, they accumulate knowledge that can later support comprehension. Nevertheless, professional reading may introduce concepts that are much more specialized. This explains why students may still experience a substantial increase in difficulty even after completing a successful Extensive Reading course.

For the present study, background knowledge is therefore treated as part of the explanatory framework rather than as an isolated variable. When students describe a professional text as difficult because the topic is unfamiliar, their experience can be interpreted through schema theory. When they report that a text became easier after the lecturer explained the topic or after they read introductory material, their responses provide evidence of how background knowledge supported comprehension.

2.1.7 Reading Motivation, Affect, and Learner Autonomy

Motivation and affect remain important components of the theoretical framework because the present study investigates experience rather than achievement alone. The earlier discussion of Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and learner autonomy is retained as a foundational explanation, while recent Extensive Reading research provides contemporary evidence that affective factors can influence engagement. (Helta Anggia; Anita Habók, 2025), for example, examined online Extensive Reading among university learners and reported relationships among engagement, affective factors, and reading comprehension.

Motivation is especially relevant to Extensive Reading because the approach depends on sustained reading volume. Students are more likely to continue reading when materials are interesting, accessible, and connected to personal goals. (Yoichi Mikami, 2020) showed the relevance of meaningful goal-setting to continued

engagement in Extensive Reading. The implication is that reading quantity is not merely a requirement imposed by the lecturer; it can become part of a self-sustaining reading habit when students perceive progress and purpose.

Learner autonomy is closely connected to choice. When students can select texts and manage part of their reading process, they can develop a greater sense of responsibility for learning. However, autonomy does not mean that students receive no guidance. Students may still need support in selecting appropriate materials, establishing realistic goals, and developing strategies for dealing with difficulty. This balance between freedom and guidance is relevant to interpreting students' positive experiences in Extensive Reading.

Affective responses can change when students enter professional reading. Academic texts may create anxiety because they contain unfamiliar terminology, dense information, and formal rhetorical structures. Confidence developed through Extensive Reading may initially help students persist, but the increased demands may also reveal new weaknesses. Therefore, a student's experience may include both continuity and disruption: previous reading habits remain useful, while new emotional and strategic demands emerge.

2.1.8 Reading Purpose and Strategic Flexibility

Reading purpose is one of the most important concepts for distinguishing the two courses. Readers do not process every text in the same way because the purpose determines what information deserves attention. Reading for enjoyment generally allows readers to tolerate some uncertainty and continue with the overall meaning. Reading a professional article for an academic task may require locating a specific claim, understanding a research method, evaluating evidence, or extracting information for later use.

Strategic flexibility therefore becomes an important indicator of mature reading. A flexible reader can change strategies according to the task. Skimming can be efficient when deciding whether a text is relevant. Scanning can be useful when searching for a date, definition, or result. Close reading is appropriate when interpreting a complex argument. Note-taking and summarizing become useful when information must be remembered or integrated with other sources.

This concept connects directly with the transition investigated in this study. Extensive Reading primarily trains students to sustain reading for meaning and enjoyment, whereas Reading for Professional Purposes requires them to control reading according to professional objectives. The challenge may therefore be experienced not simply because the words are harder, but because students must learn a new answer to the question: “What am I reading this text for?”

2.1.9 Academic and Professional Genre Awareness

The earlier discussion of Swales’ genre analysis remains a relevant theoretical foundation for professional reading. Recent reading scholarship strengthens this perspective by treating genre and text structure as resources that readers use to construct meaning. Academic and professional texts are organized according to recognizable communicative purposes. Research articles, reports, teaching materials, and policy documents do not present information in identical ways.

Genre awareness can reduce the cognitive burden of professional reading because readers can anticipate where particular kinds of information are likely to appear. For example, a research article normally introduces a problem, reviews relevant work, explains a method, presents findings, and discusses implications. A reader who recognizes these functions can approach the article selectively instead of treating every paragraph as equally important.

For English Education students, genre awareness is particularly valuable because future professional activities may require reading many different educational texts. Teachers may consult research articles for professional development, curriculum documents for instructional planning, assessment materials for evaluation, and teaching resources for classroom practice. Reading competence therefore includes the ability to recognize the purpose and organization of professional genres.

The movement from Extensive Reading to professional reading can consequently be interpreted as a movement from broad genre exposure to more conscious genre-based reading. Extensive Reading may expose students to narratives, popular articles, essays, websites, and other materials. Professional

reading requires students to recognize how a particular genre organizes knowledge and how that organization can guide comprehension.

2.1.10 Critical Reading for Professional Purposes

Critical reading extends comprehension beyond identifying what a text says to considering how and why the author makes a particular claim. In professional contexts, readers may need to evaluate evidence, identify assumptions, compare sources, recognize limitations, and decide whether a conclusion is justified. The earlier discussion of critical reading is therefore retained and expanded rather than replaced.

Recent intervention research provides support for explicit development of critical reading. A 2024 study in Cogent Education reported that structured reading strategy training improved university EFL learners' reading strategy use and critical reading ability. The finding is relevant to the present study because professional reading requires deliberate analytical engagement. Students cannot always rely on general comprehension strategies when they need to evaluate research or professional recommendations.

Critical reading is also connected to information literacy in contemporary digital environments. Students increasingly encounter professional information through online journals, repositories, websites, and social platforms. They need to determine whether information is relevant and credible and to distinguish evidence-based claims from unsupported statements. Thus, Reading for Professional Purposes in contemporary higher education may involve both textual comprehension and informed evaluation of information sources.

From the perspective of students' experiences, critical reading can represent an important turning point. A student may initially believe that successful reading means understanding every sentence. Later, the student may learn that successful professional reading also involves identifying the author's purpose, locating evidence, comparing arguments, and deciding what information is useful. Such a change represents development in the student's conception of reading itself.

2.1.11 Digital Reading in Contemporary EFL Contexts

Digital reading has become increasingly relevant to university students. (Grabe, W., & Stoller, 2011b) include digital reading as a distinct area in their updated account of reading research, reflecting changes in how learners access and process written information. Digital environments provide rapid access to large amounts of text, but they can also create new demands involving navigation, selective attention, hyperlinks, screen reading, and source evaluation.

For Extensive Reading, digital platforms can expand students' access to self-selected materials. Learners may choose electronic books, online articles, blogs, educational websites, or other digital texts according to interest and level. The advantage is accessibility and variety, although digital distractions can interfere with sustained attention. The quality and level of digital material also need to be considered when students are expected to read extensively.

For Reading for Professional Purposes, digital access is particularly important because many academic and professional texts are encountered online. Students may need to locate journal articles, download research papers, search within documents, compare several sources, and organize information for academic tasks. These activities make digital navigation and source evaluation part of contemporary professional reading competence.

Digital reading should therefore be viewed as an extension of the existing reading framework rather than as a completely separate skill. The same processes of vocabulary access, comprehension, background knowledge, strategy use, and critical evaluation remain important, but the digital environment can change how readers locate, select, and manage information.

2.1.12 The Developmental Relationship Between Extensive Reading and Reading for Professional Purposes

The preceding theories can be integrated into a developmental interpretation of the two courses. Extensive Reading provides opportunities for breadth: students encounter substantial amounts of accessible English, develop reading habits, build vocabulary, practice fluency, and experience reading with a degree of autonomy. Reading for Professional Purposes provides specificity: students encounter

discipline-related vocabulary, academic genres, professional purposes, critical reading demands, and more deliberate strategy selection.

The relationship should not be understood as a simple cause-and-effect sequence in which Extensive Reading automatically produces success in professional reading. Instead, Extensive Reading can provide resources that may support later development, including greater familiarity with English text, vocabulary exposure, reading stamina, and confidence. Professional reading then adds new competencies that are not necessarily acquired through extensive reading alone, such as genre analysis, academic vocabulary, critical evaluation, and purpose-specific strategy use.

This distinction is important for the present study because students may perceive different benefits and challenges across the two courses. For example, a student may report that Extensive Reading helped her become more familiar with English texts, read more fluently, and feel more confident, while journal articles in Reading for Professional Purposes may remain difficult because of academic vocabulary and complex information. These experiences can be understood theoretically as a combination of fluency and affective development from Extensive Reading and the new demands of professional literacy in Reading for Professional Purposes. The transition is therefore better understood as an expansion of reading competence rather than a replacement of one type of reading by another.

The sequence can be summarized as a movement from breadth to specificity, from general fluency to professional literacy, and from learner-selected reading to purpose-driven reading. However, the pathway is expected to be individual and non-linear. Students enter the courses with different levels of vocabulary, background knowledge, motivation, strategy awareness, and prior reading experience. Their responses can therefore reveal both common patterns and important differences in students' experiences.

2.2 Relevant Previous Research

Several previous studies provide useful points of comparison for the present research, particularly studies that examine students' experiences, reading comprehension, Extensive Reading, Reading for Professional Purposes, and factors

influencing students' reading development. These studies provide insights into students' reading experiences and the challenges they encounter in different learning contexts.

Researcher (Year)	Focus/Topic	Method	Key Findings	Relevance/Gap to This Study
Danielsson (2025)	Testing the applicability of the Simple View of Reading model across learner populations and developmental stages	Longitudinal quantitative study testing a reading comprehension model	The model remained applicable over time, but the relative contribution of decoding and language comprehension shifted as learners advanced to higher levels	Supports this study's assumption that reading demands shift as learners progress through developmental stages; however, its quantitative design cannot capture how students themselves perceive and narrate that shift, a gap the present qualitative descriptive study addresses through students' own accounts across the two sequential reading courses.
Fuad Abdul Baqi & Rakhma Apriani (2024)	The effect of explicit top-down processing strategy instruction on students' reading comprehension	Quantitative study measuring reading comprehension test scores	Explicitly teaching students to predict content and use contextual cues before attending to individual words measurably improved their reading comprehension scores	Confirms the value of explicit strategy instruction discussed in this study's theoretical review, but measures the outcome through test scores rather than describing how students themselves experience and adapt their strategies as they move from Extensive Reading into Reading for Professional Purposes, a gap the present study addresses
Helta Anggia & Anita Habók (2025)	The efficacy of online Extensive Reading among university students and its relationship with affective variables and reading comprehension	Large-scale quantitative study	Consistent engagement with self-selected online reading material was associated with measurable gains in reading comprehension, with enjoyment and	Supports the link this study draws between Extensive Reading, confidence, and motivation; however, its large-scale quantitative design does not capture individual students' own

			confidence playing a significant mediating role	accounts of difficulty and change as they move into the more demanding Reading for Professional Purposes course
Aydawati et al. (2025)	Integrating Extensive Reading strategy training with digital tools and its relationship to learner autonomy and vocabulary acquisition	Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)	Configurations of instruction that gave learners genuine choice over material and pacing, combined with metacognitive strategy training, produced the strongest outcomes for learner autonomy and vocabulary acquisition	Reinforces the importance of choice and autonomy in Extensive Reading highlighted in this study's framework, but its configurational analysis is limited to Extensive Reading alone and does not examine students' experiences as they transition into Reading for Professional Purposes
Hattan, Alexander, & Lupo (2024)	The role of prior knowledge activation in helping students make sense of academic texts	Narrative review synthesizing evidence across multiple studies	The link between prior knowledge and reading proficiency is theoretically and empirically well established, particularly for content-specific academic material	Provides theoretical support for the schema-related challenges students encounter in Reading for Professional Purposes, but as a synthesis of existing studies it does not gather firsthand accounts of how students themselves experience these shifting knowledge demands
Hutchinson & Waters (1987)	The concept and principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), including its branches English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)	Conceptual/theoretical work; foundational framework underlying the ESP approach to language teaching	ESP is defined as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions about content and method are based on the learners' reasons for learning, in contrast to English for General Purposes (EGP)	Provides the direct theoretical basis for why Reading for Professional Purposes is designed differently from Extensive Reading, since its purpose is specific to students' future profession as English teachers

Taken together, these previous studies indicate that students' reading experiences are influenced by various factors, including reading materials, reading purposes, vocabulary knowledge, motivation, reading strategies, and the learning context. The studies also show that students may experience different levels of

difficulty and development when engaging with different types of reading activities and texts. However, research specifically examining students' experiences across the sequential reading courses of Extensive Reading and Reading for Professional Purposes remains limited. Therefore, the present study focuses on students' experiences across these two courses in order to understand the challenges, strategies, perceptions, and changes that students experience as they progress from general

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical review above, this study conceptualizes students' reading comprehension development as a continuous process shaped by the interaction between the reader, the text, and the purpose of reading, unfolding across two sequential reading courses. As students move from Extensive Reading to Reading for Professional Purposes, they encounter texts of increasing length, complexity, and specialization, which require them to draw on expanding vocabulary knowledge, more deliberate reading strategies, relevant background knowledge, and a growing sense of confidence in their own reading ability. Because these elements—vocabulary, reading strategies, background knowledge, and confidence—may interact differently for each student, students' experiences are expected to vary even though they are exposed to the same curriculum. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying and describing how students perceive these factors in their learning experiences across the two sequential reading courses. The conceptual flow of the study can be summarized as follows.

Extensive Reading (Semester 3)	Reading for Professional Purposes (Semester 4)	Students' Learning Reading Experience
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As shown above, the two sequential reading courses are connected through students' learning experiences in reading comprehension. The study explores students' experiences through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and interprets their responses using the theoretical perspectives of reading comprehension in the EFL context, the principles of Extensive Reading, and the English for Specific Purposes perspective on Reading for Professional Purposes discussed in Section 2.1.

This conceptual framework further assumes that the interaction among these elements does not remain constant across time; rather, the salience of each factor is expected to shift depending on the specific demands of each course. Vocabulary and lexical threshold concerns remain present throughout Extensive Reading, since building a broad vocabulary base is central to sustained, high-volume reading, whereas questions of academic schema, genre familiarity, and self-efficacy are expected to become more salient as students move from Extensive Reading into Reading for Professional Purposes. By considering the different demands of each course, this framework is intended to remain sensitive to the different challenges students encounter in Extensive Reading and Reading for Professional Purposes, rather than assuming that a single factor operates uniformly throughout the learning process.

