

Beginning to read extensively: A case study with Mako and Fumi

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Abstract

Research has shown that extensive reading offers a wide range of learning benefits to second language (L2) learners. However, most studies on L2 extensive reading are conducted collectively on groups of learners and do not provide a detailed picture of individual experience. Moreover, there are few studies conducted on the reading experiences of early L2 learners. This paper presents a longitudinal case study on the reading strategies and motivation of 2 Japanese middle school students beginning to read extensively in English. During this 2.5-year study, the researcher conducted interviews 4 times, gave tests regularly, and observed participant behavior in each reading session. The results show that the 2 participants used a variety of reading strategies and that their L2 reading motivation changed as they became increasingly fluent readers. The findings reveal significant individual differences in the use of reading strategies and support a dynamic view of L2 reading motivation.

Keywords: extensive reading, graded readers, English as a foreign language, reading strategies, motivation

Day and Bamford (1998) defined extensive reading in a second language (L2) as “an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence” (p. viii). Research on extensive reading has shown a wide range of learning benefits for L2 learners (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1995). In addition to gains in reading fluency (e.g., Bell, 2001; Kusanagi, 2004), extensive reading programs can lead to the development of good reading habits (e.g., Nash & Yuan, 1992), listening proficiency (e.g., Elley & Mangubhai, 1981), writing ability (e.g., Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Krashen, 1989), and larger and more highly automatized vocabularies (e.g., Nation, 2001). As a result, students become more interested in foreign language texts and gain confidence as readers (Day & Bamford, 1998; Mason & Krashen, 1997).

Although studies conducted in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts have revealed the efficacy of extensive reading and its major pedagogic implications, most of the participants in these studies have been junior college or university students. As these learners can read with little direct support from the teacher, the results cannot be readily applied to beginning readers. Also, the majority of studies have been conducted collectively with groups of learners; thus, detailed pictures of individual experiences with extensive reading have not been provided. One

counter-example is the qualitative self-study by Leung (2002), in which she explored both the benefits and difficulties that she encountered during her 20-week reading experience as a beginning Japanese learner. Although this study is a valuable contribution to the extensive reading literature, Leung's knowledge of Chinese characters may have helped her understand the Japanese texts, differentiating her from the average beginning reader of Japanese as a foreign language. Indeed, factors such as language distance (Muljani, Koda, & Moates, 1998) and first language (L1) orthography (Koda, 1990) have been shown to influence the ease or difficulty of acquiring reading skills in English.

In order to depict the longitudinal experience of extensive reading from the EFL learner's perspective, I conducted the present case study of two Japanese secondary-school students. In this paper I will investigate the learners' experiences of reading English extensively with a focus on the development of reading strategies and motivation.

Reading Strategies and Extensive Reading

Reading strategies can be broadly defined as the mental operations performed by a reader to achieve the goal of textual comprehension (Barnet, 1988; Kern, 1989). Successful L2 readers as well as L1 readers have been found to use a number of different reading strategies (Block, 1986; Hosenfeld, 1977).

Hosenfeld (1977, 1979) employed think-aloud, introspective, and retrospective protocols to investigate two American high school students' use of strategies in reading foreign language texts. The participants in his study, secondary school foreign language (FL) learners, as well as his general approach in which they were not explicitly taught reading strategies are similar to the present study. Hosenfeld (1984) summarized the results of his two studies and presented a list of reading strategies that successful L2 readers used, approximately half of which are directly related to vocabulary. Hosenfeld's learners (a) skip words that are not important to understanding the whole text, (b) identify the grammatical category of words, (c) use orthographic information (e.g., capitalization) and recognize cognates, (d) refer to side glosses but use the glossary only as a last resort, (e) look up words correctly, and (f) evaluate guesses. This emphasis on vocabulary is not surprising given that larger vocabularies are related to better text comprehension (e.g., Grabe & Stoller, 2002) and that guessing the meanings of unknown words using context clues facilitates reading comprehension (e.g., Huckin & Bloch, 1993). In the words of Day and Bamford (1998), "a cognitive view of the reading process makes clear that reading depends on a large sight vocabulary and background knowledge, and that students acquire these through reading large amounts of easy and interesting material" (p. 165). Vocabulary learning strategies appear to greatly influence the success of extensive reading.

Previous researchers have examined learners' use of reading strategies both qualitatively (e.g., Block, 1986) and quantitatively (e.g., Carrell, 1989; Kern, 1989). However, unlike Hosenfeld (1977, 1979), these researchers investigated whether reading strategies could be taught or how strategy use was related to reading comprehension. Moreover, most of the participants in these studies were tertiary school students (e.g., Barnet, 1988; Hayashi, 1999) or adult second language learners (e.g., Anderson, 1991). There is a need to understand more about the untutored

use of L2 reading strategies by secondary school students.

L2 Reading Motivation and Extensive Reading

In addition to reading strategies, motivation plays an important role in successful second language reading. Day and Bamford (1998) defined motivation as “what makes people do (or not do) something” (p. 27). They proposed the expectancy value model for L2 reading motivation. The model consists of four major variables: reading materials, reading ability, attitudes, and the sociocultural environment. Day and Bamford claimed that materials and attitudes are the critical variables determining motivation to read in the L2.

Empirical support for the expectancy value model (Day & Bamford, 1998) was provided by Takase (2003), who investigated Japanese university students’ FL reading motivation in an extensive reading program. She administered questionnaires to the participants and divided them into three groups (high, middle, and low reading groups) based on the amount that they read during the academic year. The results confirmed Day and Bamford’s proposal that appropriate reading materials and attitudes are more important than reading proficiency level and sociocultural environment. The results also showed that *intrinsic motivation toward reading English*, one of the L2 reading motivational sub-components that Takase identified, was one of the strongest predictors of the amount that the participants read. Moreover, Takase found that her participants’ motivation changed greatly as they proceeded through the extensive reading program.

Prior to Takase’s (2003) study, Mori (2002) examined FL reading motivation by administering a questionnaire to Japanese university students. The participants took reading courses in which the Science Research Associates (SRA) multilevel reading laboratory was used extensively. Mori found that in terms of long-term reading behavior, *intrinsic value of reading and learning English* (one of the L2 reading motivational sub-components she identified) were significant predictors of the amount that the students read. Mori also reported that when the students had worked on the same task (i.e., reading SRA) for a long period of time, the sense of accomplishment or satisfaction that they gained from doing the task diminished; eventually, some readers experienced decreased motivation for continuing that task. Mori then proposed that more studies are needed to investigate how motivation changes over time.

Among the sub-components of L2 reading motivation identified by Mori (2002) and Takase (2003), *intrinsic value* (or *intrinsic motivation*) appears to be one of the strong predictors of the amount that students read. Certain important aspects of this sub-component, such as curiosity and involvement, are related to learners’ decision to engage in an activity as well as their decision to do the activity for its own sake (see Deci & Ryan, 1985). Although intrinsic motivation is a construct in general motivation models, it is also likely essential for FL reading because it (a) prompts learning activities outside the school setting (Maehr, 1976), (b) is strongly related to the amount and breadth of reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), (c) facilitates a positive emotional experience (Matsumoto & Sanders, 1988), and (d) lowers learners’ anxiety levels (Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996).

However, if students do not have a pre-existing interest in reading in an L2, it may be difficult for them to develop intrinsic motivation. In such instances, situational interest plays an important part in enhancing intrinsic motivation (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Thus, Hidi and Harackiewicz pointed out that “(a) certain text characteristics such as ease of comprehension, novelty, surprise, vividness, intensity, and character identification contribute to situational interest, and (b) interesting text segments produce superior reading comprehension and recall” (p. 153). It can be inferred that those same text characteristics can increase foreign language learners’ situational interest and therefore enhance their intrinsic motivation.

In sum, the success of an extensive reading program may be determined to a substantial extent by the types of books that are made available to students. Direct support for this idea was provided by Takase (2003), who reported that providing appropriate reading materials was a crucial factor for enhancing her participants’ L2 reading motivation. Indirect support exists in the work of Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000), whose work endorses the notion that reading materials can positively affect students’ intrinsic motivation, as well as the studies of Mori (2002) and Takase (2003), who both concluded that intrinsic motivation is related to the amount that students read in the L2. These studies indicate that how reading materials influence reading motivation is an important issue to consider when designing an extensive reading course.

With respect to motivation in general, Dörnyei and Skehan (2005) claimed that “motivation does not remain constant, but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process” (p. 240). Likewise, FL learners’ L2 reading motivation might change as they continue reading extensively. Although a few researchers (see Mori, 2002; Takase, 2003) have investigated changes in the reading motivation of groups of students in extensive reading courses, there is a need to closely examine individual learners’ motivational changes qualitatively.

In order to address the gaps in the research reviewed above, I conducted the present longitudinal case study. The primary purposes of this study were to investigate (a) two EFL learners’ use of L2 reading strategies and (b) their L2 reading motivational changes over a period of two and half years.

Two research questions were posed:

1. What reading strategies did the two participants employ in extensive reading, particularly when they came across unknown words?
2. How did the participants’ L2 reading motivation change during their 2.5-year extensive reading experience, and how did the reading materials influence this motivational change?

Case Study

Stake (1995, 2000) defined a case study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, whether that case is represented by a person, a group of people, or an institution. The case in a case study should be viewed as a “bounded system” (Smith, 1978), a single coherent

entity. The bounded system can also include the broader context in which the system is situated.

Although case studies have a role in providing rich insights about teaching and learning processes in second language acquisition research, there are potential drawbacks. They include (a) unsystematic procedures, (b) the influence of biased views on the direction of the findings and conclusions, and (c) insufficient basis for scientific generalization (Yin, 2003). In order to mitigate these drawbacks as much as possible, the present study provides a rich description, using multiple data collection methods (i.e., methodological triangulation).

The main method of data collection in this study was face-to-face interviews conducted at intervals of 9–12 months over a 2.5-year period of study. These data were supplemented by observational and testing data. The observational data were obtained by observing participants in their four weekly reading sessions. I then recursively analyzed these notes for salient patterns and exceptions. These patterns and exceptions were then correlated with the other data source, the testing. Lastly, I checked my interpretations with two critical readers who were not connected to the study as well as with the two participants.

Participants

The participants in this study, Fumi and Mako,¹ both aged 14 at the beginning of the study, were cousins and good friends.² When the study began in 2001, both were 2nd-year female Japanese students attending two different private junior high schools in Tokyo. Although they were beginning readers of English, they had passed The third-grade Society of Testing English Proficiency (STEP) test, a nationally administered English proficiency test in Japan.³ While most public junior high schools offer three or four 50-minute English lessons per week, as students at private schools, Fumi attended six 50-minute classes and Mako four 70-minute sessions per week. In addition, Fumi had one 50-minute English conversation class and Mako had one 70-minute conversation class a week, both of which were taught by native English speakers.

Fumi and Mako became high school students in April 2002, the 2nd year of the study. In high school, Fumi had four 50-minute reading classes and one 50-minute grammar class per week, and Mako attended four 70-minute reading sessions and one 70-minute grammar session. In both girls' reading classes, they usually translated English sentences from textbooks into Japanese and were provided neither extensive reading nor rapid reading activities. As supplementary reading, they read a single graded reader chosen by their English teacher as a summer vacation assignment. For instance, in their 1st year of high school, Fumi read *Titanic* (Penguin Readers Level Three: 1,200 headwords), and Mako read *Matilda* (Penguin readers Level Three: 1,200 headwords).

When they started extensive reading, Fumi and Mako's reading rates were 72 and 58 word per minute respectively. During the 2.5-year period of study, Fumi and Mako nearly doubled their reading rates (see Table 1). It is interesting to note, however, that Fumi and Mako's reading rate on the fourth measurement were lower than on the third one. The third measurement was administered soon after reading *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (hereafter *Harry Potter IV*), using a Stage 2 graded reader (700 headwords), whereas the fourth one was administered after reading *Stravaganza: City of Masks* (hereafter *Stravaganza*), using a Level 4 graded reader

(1,700 headwords). It may be that the level of the book used for the fourth measurement was much higher than that of the book used in the third measurement (see the instrument section for the method used in the reading rate measurements).

Table 1. *Reading rate test results (words per minute)*

	Feb. 2001	Nov. 2001	Apr. 2002	Jun. 2003
Fumi	72	106	183	137
Mako	58	99	128	111

Procedure

Fumi and Mako started extensive reading in February, 2001. Around that time I tutored the two girls when they needed help preparing for midterm or final examinations. They had studied English for 2 years at school but had no experience with extensive reading. Because of their lack of experience with extensive reading, I decided to introduce them to it and to study the results.

At the outset of the study, I told Fumi and Mako that extensive reading had two purposes: (a) to develop their English reading fluency and (b) to allow them to enjoy the natural pleasure of reading. I also explained that, while extensive reading could benefit them in these ways, they could quit any time they wished. I also advised them to (a) select the books themselves, (b) stop reading if they did not find the book interesting, (c) do not look up words in a dictionary but ask me questions or consult the glossary, and (d) read for pleasure. In addition, I asked them to be participants in my case study, and I obtained consent from them and Mako's mother to use the interview and observation data for research purposes.

During the study, I acted as both researcher and tutor. As a tutor, I sat close to them, read materials of my own silently in English, and responded to their questions about stories and word meanings. I also helped with their book choices and added glosses to several books.

Fumi and Mako had 15-minute reading sessions 4 times a week. They came to my study whenever they wanted to read. They did not come if they were busy preparing for their midterm or final exams or for special school events. Aside from these busy periods, they continued to read for approximately 15 minutes each session. However, when they were reading *Harry Potter IV* (see Appendix C for a record of their reading times) and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (hereafter *Harry Potter V*), they read for more than 15 minutes.

Fumi and Mako sometimes sat together and read graded readers, but usually they came and read separately. However, as they started to read extensively, they often talked about their reading experiences when they met. Neither ever said that they wanted to stop extensive reading prior to the end of the project in August, 2003.

Materials

Graded readers from the Oxford Bookworms Series (Oxford University Press), Penguin Readers (Pearson Education Limited), and Sanyusha Rainbow Series (Sanyusha) as well as three books written for native speakers of English, *Harry Potter IV*, *Harry Potter V*, and *Stravaganza*, were employed as reading materials in this study (see Appendices A, B, & F for a list of the books

they read). Graded readers are classified into several levels according to the number of headwords. The levels of Oxford Book Worms Series are called stages; they are Stage 1 (400 headwords), Stage 2 (700 headwords), Stage 3 (1,000 headwords), Stage 4 (1,400 headwords), Stage 5 (1,800 headwords), and Stage 6 (2,500 headwords). The levels of Penguin Readers are called levels, which are Level 1(300 headwords), Level 2 (600 headwords), Level 3 (1,200 headwords), Level 4 (1,700 headwords), Level 5 (2,300 headwords), and Level 6 (3,000 headwords). The levels of Sanyusha Rainbow Series are shown by using the number of headwords (e.g., 800 word, 1,000 word, and 1,200 word levels).

The participants began with Stage 1, moved to Stage 2, and then to Stage 3. This process was based on Nation and Wang's (1999) suggestion that the learners be exposed to high-frequency words repeatedly by reading graded readers. Nation and Wang argue that learners will successfully acquire vocabulary if the following conditions are met: (a) the learners read a minimum of five books at each level, (b) the reading is done at a rate of around a book per week, and (c) direct study of the new vocabulary occurs for the first one or two books when learners are just getting started or moving to a new level. It was difficult to satisfy conditions (b) and (c) in the present study, but Fumi and Mako read 5–10 books at each level, spending approximately 1–2 weeks per book and progressed to higher level graded readers smoothly.

Although learners should ideally choose books for themselves in an extensive reading program (Day & Bamford, 1998), I selected the first two books (*The Wizard of Oz* and *The Monkey's Paw*) for Fumi and Mako in order to provide glosses. In the first book they read, I provided marginal glosses for the words that Fumi and Mako had not yet learned in their English classes, as represented in their English textbooks. Ko (2005) summarized the benefits of glosses as (a) helping readers understand new words accurately, (b) helping readers build a bridge between prior knowledge or experience and new information in the text, and (c) making students less dependent on their teachers and allowing for greater autonomy. Nation (2001) advocated that glosses are most effective when placed in the margins of the text in order to minimize interruption while reading is in progress. Regarding the effect of glosses given in an L1 and an L2, research has shown controversial results (see Bell & LeBlanc, 2000; Jacobs, Dufon, & Fong, 1994; Ko, 2005), but Ko suggested that L2 glosses can be more effective for the learners at a high proficiency level. However, I still decided to provide L1 glosses because Fumi and Mako were beginning readers of English. I advised them to check the gloss when they did not know the meaning of a word. For the second book, I listed all the running words by using RANGE (Nation & Heatley, 2003), compared them, and added marginal glosses for the 42 words that Fumi and Mako had not yet encountered in their first graded reader. As a result, they seemed to be able to start the extensive reading without much difficulty with vocabulary.

From the third graded reader onward, Fumi and Mako made their own choices from the books I brought to the session. The choice was free for each of the individual participants although they tended to choose a book that the other was reading. As for *Harry Potter IV*, they asked me to let them read it in English because they had thoroughly enjoyed reading the first three books of the series in Japanese. From the third graded reader onward, no glosses were provided except for proper nouns. However, copies of the glossaries in the back of the graded readers were annotated with Japanese translations for easy reference.

Once Mako and Fumi began to read the *Harry Potter* books and *Stravaganza*, however, I provided approximately 20 marginal glosses on each page for the words they had not learned at school. The vocabulary levels of the participants seemed much lower than those of the young L1 readers targeted by these books.⁴ Regarding grammar, Fumi and Mako had no apparent problems while reading graded readers, and even in *Harry Potter* and *Stravaganza*, there were only a few sentence structures (e.g., subjunctive and subject-verb inversion) they had not explicitly been taught at school.

Instrumentation

Data were collected primarily through interviews while observations during the reading sessions and testing were used for additional information (see Appendix E for interview questions).

Semi-structured interviews. The two participants engaged in semi-structured interviews in Japanese four times: June (Mako) and July (Fumi) 2001 (while they were reading at Stage 2), April 2002 (*Harry Potter IV*), December 2002 (*Stravaganza*), and January 2004 (4 months after they stopped extensive reading). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The excerpts from the interviews introduced in this paper are all translated from the original Japanese by the researcher.

Observations. During each reading session, I took fieldnotes on their behavior (e.g., asking a question, yawning, and laughing) and on their statements (e.g., how they enjoyed reading, how difficult books were for them, and to what extent they understood the stories⁵). As a researcher, I acted as a participant observer, as well as an interviewer and test provider. I had read all the graded readers and books and often talked about the stories and characters with them in the reading sessions. To help me interpret their thoughts and feelings and achieve an *emic* (insiders') perspective, I attempted to have similar experiences to Fumi and Mako.

Reading rate measurements. The participants' reading rates were measured four times: February 2001; November 2001; April 2002 (after reading *Harry Potter IV*), and June 2003 (after reading *Stravaganza*). In the first and second measurements, their reading rates were calculated as they read Stage 1 graded readers (*The Monkey's Paw* for the first measurement and *One Way Ticket* for the second). In the third and fourth measurements, a Stage 2 graded reader (*Earrings from Frankfurt*) and a Level 4 graded reader (*Women in Business*) were chosen respectively, because Stage 1 readers were considered to be rather easy for them at this point. The lengths of the texts were 4,720 words (1st measurement), 5,620 words (2nd measurement), 6,590 words (3rd measurement), and 14,690 words (4th measurement). For each measurement, the two participants read the whole book using 4–8 reading sessions, and the reading rates were then calculated by dividing the running words of the book by the time (minutes) they spent reading it.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What reading strategies did the two participants employ in extensive reading, particularly when they came across unknown words?

Fluent and skillful readers seem to use more strategies than the average reader (Ahmad & Asraf, 2004). Fumi and Mako mentioned a number of lexical reading strategies, which suggests that their extensive reading experience in the study may have allowed them to develop use of these strategies. Their interviews and my observations suggest that they used the strategies shown in Table 2. The taxonomy of reading strategies was mainly based on Hosenfeld (1984), but additional strategies reported by the participants, such as grouping words and using a dictionary, were added to the reading strategy list.

Table 2. *Reading strategies Fumi and Mako used*

Referring to glossaries and marginal glosses
Grouping words
Using background knowledge
Guessing word meaning, evaluating guesses, and learning vocabulary
Using a dictionary

Referring to glossaries and marginal glosses. Fumi and Mako consulted glossaries and marginal glosses when they came across unknown words, and this is likely to have helped them comprehend the stories. Fumi said in the second interview that she would have given up reading *The Wizard of Oz* (the first book) without the help of marginal glosses and that it was easier and quicker to look up a word in the glossary than to check a dictionary. During the period when they read graded readers from Stage 1 to Stage 3, Fumi and Mako referred to the glossaries quite frequently (they marked the words they looked up in the glossaries). Fumi looked up 11 words while Mako looked up 9 in the glossary when they read *The Death of Karen Silkwood* (Stage 2); Fumi looked up 14 words while Mako looked up 7 when they read *Tooth and Claw* (Stage 3). However, when reading at Stage 4, they did not refer to glossaries as frequently. Moreover, except for *The Hound of The Baskervilles*, all the graded readers they had read since the middle of July 2002 were Penguin Readers, which had no glossaries. That is to say, Fumi and Mako gradually reduced the number of words they consulted in the glossaries of graded readers, and they finally were able to read without referring to glossaries.

Both Fumi and Mako accessed glossaries and glosses in different ways. Fumi stated that she did not think about the pronunciation of the words she looked up in the glossaries—she was concerned purely with meaning:

When I check a word meaning, I don't think about pronunciation. I pick up only the meaning from the Japanese word so I can continue reading in English. For example, if I learn that *trousers* means *zubon*, the pronunciation of *zubon* does not come to mind. Only the meaning stays in my mind. I also extract meanings from words when reading in English, so there is no English sound in my mind. A word meaning comes into my head, so the glosses in Japanese do not bother my reading of the story in English. (Fumi in the 2nd interview; hereafter [Fumi, 2])

Mako, on the other hand, always “heard” pronunciation of words in the text while reading.

I always hear the sounds of English pronunciation in my mind while reading in English. [Mako was reading *Harry Potter*.] If I cannot pronounce an unknown word, I stop reading and check the marginal gloss first. But when I can pronounce an unknown word,

I continue reading until the end of the sentence. If I cannot understand the meaning of the sentence, I go back to the word to check the gloss. (Mako in the 2nd interview; hereafter [Mako, 2])

She further stated,

When I check the meaning of a new word and understand it in Japanese, I read the sentence again by substituting the Japanese translation for the word. For instance, when I learned *radioactive* meant *hoshano* in the glossary, I understood the sentence “Hot means radioactive” [in *Death of Karen Silkwood*] as “Hot means *hoshano*.” (Mako, 2)

Thus, when Fumi consulted glosses or glossaries, she picked up only the image of a new word’s Japanese meaning, substituted the word for the image, and understood the whole sentence. In contrast, Mako reported that when she came across an unknown word that she could pronounce, she read a sentence including the word once, went back to the word, consulted the glossary, substituted the word for the Japanese meaning, and in that way understood the sentence. Mako’s way of consulting glosses seemed inefficient, but for her it must have been the best strategy without interrupting the flow of her reading. This appeared to be Mako’s main approach at least around the time of the second interview.

Grouping words. Fumi and Mako said in the second interview that multi-word groupings came to their minds while reading in English. Fumi’s examples were *I don’t know, he said, in English,* and *next to*. Mako’s examples were *there was, hotel doors, went to, look for,* and *white hair*. These examples might show they could group words into noun phrases (e.g., *white hair*), verb phrases (e.g., *look for ~*), and prepositional phrases (e.g., *in English*). They also picked up formulas like *I don’t know*. Fumi and Mako did not really remember when they had started to use such a word-grouping strategy, but this strategy is one of the factors that probably enabled them to read English faster.

Using background knowledge. Both learners revealed that they used background knowledge extensively in L2 reading. They said that knowledge of stories that they had previously read in Japanese or seen in movies (e.g., *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pocahontas*) facilitated their reading comprehension. Fumi stated,

I sometimes guess the meaning of a word while reading *Harry Potter*. From seeing the movie and reading three books from the *Harry Potter* series, I have learned the personality of each character. I also know a lot about Hogwarts’ [the wizards’ school’s] life. So I can imagine the settings, and I can guess what a person wants to say. For example, funny things by Ron, nasty things by Malfoy, magic theories by Hermione! This helps me guess word meanings. (Fumi, 2)

She also stated the following:

Even if the level of an English book is higher than our reading abilities, we can read it if we have knowledge about the topic. Of course, it depends a lot on the vocabulary level whether the book is accessible or not, but if a topic is familiar to us, we can read a book

even though the vocabulary level is a little higher. (Fumi in the 4th interview)

On the other hand, when Fumi and Mako read *Monkey's Paw*, they had difficulty understanding the climactic scene in which the dead sons were revived in the cemetery. The girls could not imagine the horrifying sight because in Japan dead bodies are traditionally cremated before burial. This cultural difference made the story hard to understand and as a result caused difficulty in guessing from context. Also, Mako mentioned in the first interview that *The Witches of Pendle* was difficult because she had little knowledge about the Middle Ages and witch trials. She mentioned that she understood what was happening in the story after hearing about the historical background. In later stages of their extensive reading as well, they complained that lack of background knowledge had a negative influence on their reading comprehension when they read stories with unfamiliar settings (e.g., *David Copperfield* and *Stravaganza*). These examples may show that the use of background knowledge (top-down skills) is critical when reading extensively because it can help compensate for a lack of bottom-up skills, as is claimed in research on schema theory (e.g., Hudson, 1982).

Contextual guessing, evaluating guesses, and learning vocabulary. Mako had little difficulty guessing from context from the earlier stage of her extensive reading experience, but she said in the second interview, "I could not guess word meanings so skillfully before I started to read graded readers." She was glad that she often succeeded in guessing word meanings in school lessons. In her second interview, she reported,

Usually I guess word meanings from context, and it works quite well. First, I consider whether the word refers to a human, an animal, a plant, food, or an action. Sometimes I can tell which part of speech the unknown word is, but that is not important. I imagine whether the word has a good meaning or a bad meaning. For example, when I read about a lawyer saying [in *A Christmas Carol*] "Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back in less than five minutes and I'll give you three shillings," I thought that *shilling* meant a good thing that could be given as a reward. (Mako, 2)

She then explained how she evaluated her own guesses:

Even if I cannot guess the meaning of a new word, I don't worry about it if I understand the content of the sentence. If I come across that word again and again in the book, the meaning will become more precise. I can also check whether my guess is correct or not when I encounter the word again [in a different context]. Finally I find the correct meaning. (Mako, 2)

In contrast, Fumi did not like to guess from context. She consulted the glossary and asked me questions about new words more often than Mako. Interestingly, Fumi preferred syntactic clues, whereas Mako preferred semantic clues when guessing. Fumi stated,

Around the time I read *Dracula* [the 11th book], I was able to tell which parts of speech the unknown words were. For example, [a word ending with] *~ly* is an adverb, [a word ending with] *~ty* is a noun, and "be + ~" is a verb followed by a noun or adjective. But I didn't try to guess the meaning. (Fumi, 2)

Although Fumi reported that she had not tried to guess the word meaning before reading *Harry Potter IV*, the number of questions Fumi asked in each session began to decrease around the time she finished reading *Dracula* (the 11th book). Fumi asked 14 questions, 20 questions, and 15 questions for the 9th, 10th, and 11th books respectively; but after the 11th book, the total number of questions she asked for 12th–33rd graded readers was 24—approximately one question per book (see Appendix D). Thus, it can be speculated that identifying the grammatical category of words facilitated reading comprehension to a certain degree or that she used the context to guess although she did not notice it at this stage.

Related to the strategy use for new words, Fumi explained the difficulty of learning vocabulary:

To learn new vocabulary while reading a graded reader is just like putting information in a document file of a computer. The information will be deleted unless we save the document. Similarly, even if I have learned word meanings while reading a book, the memory will go away while I am sleeping. There were several words I encountered recurrently in graded readers. I have learned them. They are *brave*, *appear*, and *terrible*. I learned *brave* in *The Wizard of Oz*, but I forgot it quickly. When I learned the word in my English class later, I recalled that I had learned it in *Oz*, but I soon forgot the meaning. After that, I came across the word *brave* again and again in other graded readers. Then I learned the word. (Fumi, 2)

Mako also described her difficulties in learning vocabulary in similar terms. It might be true that learners guess word meanings and temporarily memorize them while reading graded readers, but the meanings of the words do not necessarily stay in the learner's long-term memory. Related to this point, Leung (2002) indicated that “the phenomenon of forgetting the meaning of certain vocabulary could be caused by insufficient exposure or reinforcement of words” (p. 12). That is, if the learning of a word is not soon reinforced by another meeting with the word, the learning may be lost (Nation, 1997). Leung's comment and the two girls' interviews suggest that recursive and sufficient exposure to unknown words through extensive reading aids the learning of new words.

Using a dictionary. Fumi mentioned in the first interview that although she could understand the meanings of sentences and short paragraphs, she had difficulty understanding a whole story or a plot of a graded reader. She thought that her lack of vocabulary was one of the reasons for her insufficient comprehension and said, “After coming across unknown words, I cannot understand the crucial part of the story. I skip some words, guessing that they're not so important, but then, I cannot understand the story. It often happens.”

As mentioned above, Fumi gradually became able to guess meaning from context and started to use the strategy often while reading *Harry Potter*, but she complained,

When reading in Japanese, I easily understand the relationships among sentences. So I enjoy the story. But in English, I cannot enjoy a story even though I understand every sentence. Sometimes I lose sight of the plot of the story, or I cannot figure out the atmosphere of the story. That's why I want to know the meaning of every word. If there

are unknown words, it is more difficult to think of a picture of the setting and to understand the relationships among the sentences. (Fumi, 2)

She also stated,

Even when I got immersed in an interesting story like *Harry Potter IV*, I could not understand 100% of the story. One reason for my imperfect comprehension was incorrect guessing. When I read the Japanese version, I realized I misunderstood some word meanings. For example, I thought Cho was crying loudly in one scene, but in the Japanese version Cho was weeping quietly. (Fumi in the 3rd interview; hereafter [Fumi, 3])

It appears that incorrect guesses of unknown words caused inappropriate understanding of discourse organization and as a result made Fumi's reading comprehension less precise. As Halliday and Hasan (1979) indicated, cohesion is realized through word choice, as well as through grammar; thus, accurate word comprehension and rhetorical organization might work in combination. In order to improve her discourse competence, Fumi might have needed to know the meanings of all the words in a text, because she continued asking me for definitions when she confronted unknown words that were not in the glossary. Finally while reading *Harry Potter V*, she decided to look up all the unknown words in the dictionary. She had to look up several words on each page, but consulting a dictionary did not seem to interrupt her reading in English. She said in the fourth interview, "*Harry Potter V* is much more interesting than *Harry Potter IV* because I looked up new words in a dictionary."

Summary. To summarize, the participants' use of the reading strategies is shown in Table 3. The four columns correspond to the intervals between the four interviews.

Table 3. *L2 Reading strategies Fumi and Mako used*

	2001 Apr.–01 Jun.		01 Jun.–02 Apr.		02 Apr.–02 Dec.		02 Dec.–03 Aug.	
	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako
Glossary ⁶	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-		
Grouping words	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+
Background knowledge	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Guessing	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Dictionary	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-

Note. +: Strategy was used. +/-: Strategy was used at first, but rarely used later. -: Strategy was rarely used. ?: Neither the interviews nor the observations reveal whether the strategy was used.

In response to the first research question, it can be said that Fumi and Mako used various lexical reading strategies, as the participants in the studies of Hosenfeld (1977, 1979) did. Both girls referred to marginal glosses, grouped words in chunks, used background knowledge, identified the grammatical categories of unknown words, guessed word meanings from context, and evaluated their guesses.

Fumi and Mako's reading strategies shared many commonalities, maybe because they developed them through similar experiences in extensive reading. However, they employed different strategies when confronted with unknown vocabulary: Mako preferred to guess from context,

whereas Fumi favored using a dictionary. This might be largely caused by the difference in their learning styles: Mako was comfortable with ambiguity and did not care about details, while Fumi disliked ambiguity. For instance, when she translated a complex sentence from her high school English textbook, Fumi first figured out the sentence structure, checked the meanings of unknown words, and then translated it into Japanese. For this type of learner, consulting a dictionary is a helpful strategy, particularly if they read advanced-level books in which the sentence structures and vocabulary are difficult for them. Mako, on the other hand, insisted from the first interview onward that a dictionary should not be used in extensive reading. The individual difference found in their dictionary use may support Carson and Longhini's (2002) statement that strategies are not as modifiable as we have thought because they are strongly influenced by learning styles.

Another reason why Fumi stuck with the dictionary might be found in her L2 classroom experience. In secondary school EFL classes in Japan, English teachers generally advise students to look up new words in order to translate word-for-word from English to Japanese (Hayashi, 1999). Fumi's habit of using the dictionary had been formed since she started studying English in junior high school. Furthermore, Fumi attended a high-level academic high school. In her reading classes, she learned grammar and vocabulary in a decontextualized way and engaged in word-by-word translation exercises of compound and complex sentences. In relation to this, Fumi stated in the fourth interview, "My English teacher advised us to understand English texts precisely." The teacher's advice might also have encouraged her to use a dictionary as an L2 reading strategy in extensive reading.

However, this might be only a partial explanation because Mako is also a product of the same educational system. Mako said that her English teachers told her to look up new words in a dictionary. Because she could understand English lessons without doing so, Mako had not formed a habit of dictionary use until she realized its benefit in high school. It appears that their formal educational experiences and learning styles interplayed and caused different preferences in their dictionary use.

Research Question 2: How did the participants' L2 reading motivation change during the 2.5-year extensive reading experience and how did the reading materials influence this motivational change?

As mentioned earlier, Fumi and Mako came to the extensive reading sessions several times a week. According to my observations, they seemed to enjoy reading in English.⁷ They continued reading for 2.5 years, but after their school schedule became rigid because of the need to study for university entrance exams, they stopped coming as often. At that point, they read extensively only once every few weeks and finally discontinued altogether in the summer of 2003.

There are probably several reasons why Mako and Fumi stopped at this time. Exam preparation was certainly one reason—they needed all the free time to prepare for their exams. Also, when I asked them during our interviews, they told me that extensive reading had little relevance to the decontextualized use of language that was featured in the exams they were preparing for. However, there may have been additional reasons why they stopped reading extensively.

Sense of achievement and interest in graded readers. From the beginning, Fumi and Mako's reading motivation was strongly influenced by interest in the materials and realization of achievement. Fumi said in the second interview, "I am proud that I have read a lot of books in English. I feel satisfied when I read English with no difficulty." She also stated,

Extensive reading is fun. I enjoyed it when the story was interesting. For example, I liked *The Wizard of Oz*, *Goodbye, Mr. Hollywood*, *New Yorker*, and *The Secret Garden*. But it was tough for me to read boring stories like *Jungle Book*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *Ethan Frome*. (Fumi, 2)

While reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Fumi complained that she could hardly predict what would happen next. Similarly, Mako said that she had to reread paragraphs when incredible events happened (e.g., a baby suddenly changed to a pig). In contrast, Fumi said in the first interview that she had enjoyed solving riddles while reading *Goodbye, Mr. Hollywood*. Mako also expressed that guessing while reading a mystery story was exciting.

Regarding the reading materials, Mako described her joy of reading extensively in English as follows:

I have enjoyed reading graded readers. Most of the books were interesting. It is fascinating that I can understand an English story that I haven't read in Japanese. I feel satisfaction when I finish reading one book. When I read *New Yorker*, *The Death of Karen Silkwood*, and *Skyjack!*, I could understand how the characters felt, their personalities, and the atmosphere of the stories just like I do when reading in Japanese. So I really enjoyed those stories. (Mako, 2)

As Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) maintained, certain text characteristics, such as ease of comprehension and novelty, contribute to situational interest. Such interesting reading experiences might have facilitated the two girls' reading comprehension and enhanced their intrinsic motivation: Both enjoyed most of the stories in the graded readers and read them without difficulty. They were also happy to find out that they could read English books. As novice readers, the sense of achievement and satisfaction resulting from reading graded readers might have motivated them to do more reading. They therefore continued reading for a year and read around 20 graded readers.

Flow experience, intrinsic motivation, and L2 reading confidence stimulated by Harry Potter. At the end of January 2002, Fumi and Mako became highly motivated to read *Harry Potter IV*. Reading this book had a special meaning for them because a Japanese version had not yet been published. According to my observations, Fumi and Mako seemed to be enjoying *Harry Potter IV* with the help of their own background knowledge, the word list, and the glosses that I provided. As Fumi and Mako read more, the length of the reading sessions increased (see Appendix C). After the 10th session of reading *Harry Potter IV*, Fumi and Mako consistently read for more than 30 minutes, and from around the 16th session their reading sessions often lasted over an hour. When they reached the climactic scenes in the book, Fumi read for 2 hours straight and Mako read for 3 hours. Both girls were surprised to find that they had spent such a long time reading.

In these and other sessions, Fumi and Mako might have had a “flow experience.” According to Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989), *flow* refers to the state of mind and body when people are completely involved in one activity while highly motivated or engaged. While having a flow experience, according to these authors, (a) our concentration is very deep, (b) we are not worried about failing, and (c) time passes very quickly. Fumi said, “The moment I read a passage of *Harry Potter*, the story comes to mind directly. I feel as if the story directly hits, or automatically ‘enters’ my brain” (Fieldnote, June 25, 2003). It appears that both emotion and cognition are highly activated when a reader is completely immersed in a story.

Moreover, the experience of reading *Harry Potter IV* might have had effects on the two girls’ confidence in reading English. They wanted to read in English independently without the help of the researcher:

Although the vocabulary is difficult, *Harry Potter* is much more interesting to read than graded readers. For me, romantic stories about boys and girls of my age are appealing. If I finish reading *Harry Potter*, I want to read the black books of Stage 4. I’ll also try to read a book by Darren Shan in English by myself. I don’t need your [the researcher’s] help. (Fumi, 2)

I am enjoying reading *Harry Potter* differently than the way I enjoyed graded readers. By the end of spring vacation, I want to move up to Stage 4. And I’ll read *Harry Potter* by myself. I think I can. (Mako, 2)

Preference for authentic texts and less interest in graded readers. Thanks to their confidence as L2 readers, Fumi and Mako’s motivation to read in English became very high while they were reading *Harry Potter IV*. However, when they finished reading it, their motivation to read graded readers decreased, and they did not find graded readers as interesting as before. They were looking for stories of adventure, love, and fantasy that were similar to the *Harry Potter* series. Responding to their interests, I provided them with *Stravaganza*, which was recommended by my friend as a relevant book for teenage girls. The vocabulary of this book was more difficult than that of *Harry Potter*, and their limited background knowledge could not help them guess the meaning of new words from context. The setting of the story was an imaginary city that reminded me of Venice. Although they did not get as deeply involved in reading *Stravaganza*, the story seemed to be interesting for Fumi and Mako when compared with those of graded readers. They said,

If I finish reading *Stravaganza*, I don’t want to read black books any more. I want to read a story about a boy and a girl in their adolescence, 13–16 years old. The best setting is that the boy and the girl are junior high school kids, and they feel innocent love for each other. And the story has to depict their emotions and the scene in detail. If the story is about their adventures, it should be a long story and the adventure should not be a simple one. It is preferable if the translated version has not been published. (Fumi, 3)

Stravaganza is difficult but interesting because the story is full of fantasy. If I finish

reading it, I want to read original works, not black books. For example, this [*David Copperfield* rewritten for a graded reader] was not interesting. It's something like a story about daily life from the distant past. Like a story about the life of ordinary people. (Mako in the 3rd interview)

Like the young readers in Coady's (1997) study who tended to prefer romantic novels and adventure stories, Fumi and Mako liked the same genres. In addition, it is of interest that Mako saw the life of *David Copperfield* as that of an ordinary person. The reason may be that the original story of *David Copperfield* was simplified and condensed in the graded reader, with so many events happening one after another in only 92 pages. Once they knew how interesting unsimplified stories were, Fumi and Mako might have wanted to read original works that depict the characters' emotions, events, and settings in detail. However, their English proficiencies, especially their vocabulary level, were not such that they could read authentic texts.⁸ Accordingly, they had difficulty finding relevant and interesting materials after reading *Harry Potter IV*. Leung (2002) stated that L2 readers' excitement was quickly replaced by confusion and frustration if they had a hard time finding appropriate materials. Fumi and Mako seemed to have lost some of their motivation for the same reason.

It is certain that their motivation to read graded readers had decreased after reading *Harry Potter IV*, but around that time they became interested in reading authentic texts. They mentioned,

I accessed an English website and read an interview with Daniel [the actor who played Harry Potter in the movie]. I could understand what he said in the interview. (Fumi, 2)

I bought *Seventeen* in the US last summer, but I didn't read it at that time. Recently, I read it. There were a lot of new words, but I didn't care. I think I understood about half. I also accessed an English web site called *Cartoon Network*. It was interesting, but kind of hard for me to understand. (Mako, 2)

This situation was similar to that of the higher proficiency students in Takase's (2003) study. In her study, the students' motivation to read graded readers decreased, but they developed an interest in reading English outside the extensive reading classes.

Entrance examinations. Finally, when faced with the upcoming entrance examinations, Fumi and Mako discontinued the extensive reading although they had already read more than 200 pages of *Harry Potter V*. As mentioned above, they might not have thought that extensive reading was helpful for passing the exam. Fumi might have chosen to do grammar exercises rather than to continue pleasure reading as a strategy to pass her university entrance examinations.⁹ She said in the last interview that her experience with extensive reading improved her reading speed, but that she was afraid that her reading comprehension was not solid. Mako, who had always enjoyed sharing her reading experiences with Fumi, stopped the extensive reading when she was told that Fumi had also stopped reading. It may be true that the entrance exam was one of the crucial factors that made the two girls discontinue the extensive reading, but it may also be true that other factors, such as a decrease in their interest in graded readers, a tendency towards more independent reading, and the difficulty of finding appropriate books, had affected their motivation to continue extensive reading.

Summary. The change in the participants' motivation to read extensively and the factors that influenced this change, including the factors related to reading materials, are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *Fumi and Mako's motivation to read in English in extensive reading and the factors that influenced their motivation*

	2001 Apr.–01 Jun.		01 Jun.–02 Apr.		02 Apr.–02 Dec.		02 Dec.–03 Aug.	
	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako	Fumi	Mako
Motivation to read extensively	+	+	‡	‡	+	+	±	±
Realization of achievement	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?
Interest in graded readers	+	+	+	+	±	±	-	-
Interest in authentic texts	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+
Concern about the entrance exam	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+

Note. +: Motivation was high. / Factor was found. ‡: Motivation was high and increasing. ±: Motivation was decreasing. / Factor was found but becoming less salient later. -: Factor was rarely found. ?: Neither the interviews nor the observations reveal whether the factor was found.

In response to the second research question, the two participants' L2 reading motivation increased as they enjoyed reading and recognized their achievement. At this stage, reading graded readers might have been a novel and challenging task for them. They said they felt satisfied each time they finished a book or moved up to the next stage of graded readers. Their sense of achievement made their perceived competence higher, and that might have facilitated their intrinsic motivation.

While reading *Harry Potter IV*, Fumi and Mako were deeply immersed in the story, and that made them confident and motivated them to read other authentic texts in English. However, after that, they had a hard time finding interesting materials that were appropriate for their level of proficiency. Moreover, after reading *Harry Potter IV*, they may not have realized the sense of achievement as strongly as before when finishing one graded reader. Partly for this reason, their motivation to continue extensive reading seemed to have decreased (cf. Mori, 2002; Takase, 2003). To sustain learners' L2 reading motivation for a long period of time (1 year or more), provision of more novel, challenging, or attractive reading materials may be necessary. Such materials cannot be provided entirely by teachers but must be partly discovered by the learners themselves in book stores, libraries, and websites. It may be that Fumi and Mako were on the verge of becoming autonomous readers once they finished reading *Harry Potter IV*. Around that time, Fumi was reading a Darren Shan book while Mako was reading *Harry Potter I*, without my support. Therefore, what I should have done as a tutor at that time was not to provide them with higher level graded readers but to find authentic materials that would have been more accessible to them such as novels written for teens by Judy Blume and to encourage them to read their favorite books wherever and whenever they liked them.

Although they stopped coming to my study to read extensively in the summer of 2003, I had no sense that they had permanently given up reading for pleasure in English. I hoped that, after they

entered a university, they could find interesting and relevant books by themselves. Indeed, Fumi stated in the last interview, “I would like to have a job which requires me to use English, because I think we need to use more English in the future, and above all, I like English!” She also said she wanted to read *Nature* and *Newsweek* after entering a university. Mako said she wanted to study abroad in the future. She described the joy of extensive reading as that of directly understanding English texts without the intervention of the Japanese language. Both said that they would finish reading *Harry Potter V* after becoming university students.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study may have pedagogical implications for (a) materials provided to learners, (b) reading strategies, (c) reading motivation, and (d) the role of the teacher in extensive reading.

Regarding reading materials, there should be graded readers with vocabulary levels of around 4,000–5,000 words. In the meantime, in order to support students, teachers can fill the gap between graded readers and authentic texts by providing glosses, previewing vocabulary, and activating students’ background knowledge. Fumi and Mako had difficulty finding interesting books that were at an appropriate level of difficulty after reading *Harry Potter IV*. Other L2 readers who are graduating from graded readers might have a similar problem, because even after going through the highest level graded readers (2,500 headwords, Oxford Bookworms, or 3,000 headwords, Penguin Readers) L2 readers do not have the vocabulary needed to read authentic texts comfortably (Nation & Wang, 1999).

With respect to strategy use, teachers should remain flexible by allowing students to consult glosses or use a dictionary depending on the learner’s preferences. Fumi and Mako generally employed similar reading strategies, but their ways of dealing with unknown words differed. Likewise, in a reading class, students are likely to have somewhat different learning styles. This does not mean that they cannot be taught similar reading strategies, but individual preferences should be respected and supported.

As for dictionary use in particular, consulting the dictionary while reading in a foreign language might be preferable and advantageous for certain types of students. Thus, Knight (1994) found that FL students who used dictionaries not only learned more words but also achieved higher reading comprehension scores than those who guessed from context. He also found that participants with low verbal ability learned more words and got higher reading scores when using dictionaries. It therefore appears that the practice of advising *all* students to guess word meaning from context needs to be re-examined and should be employed flexibly according to students’ proficiency level and learning style.

On relevance to L2 reading motivation, it should be noted that Fumi and Mako said that they enjoyed reading interesting books from the beginning. In her third and final interviews, Fumi stated, “I enjoyed reading English not because reading English was fun but because the stories were fun. One of the factors that made a book boring was its inappropriate vocabulary level.” Fumi’s comments echo those of Leung (2002) and suggest that provision of interesting materials

at an appropriate level of difficulty is one of the key factors that contribute to a learner's motivation to read in the L2 (cf. Leung, 2002).

For the teachers who choose books for young female L2 readers, it might be useful to know that the two participants in this study liked mysteries (e.g., *Goodbye, Mr. Hollywood*), fantasies (e.g., *Stravaganza*) and adventure stories (e.g., *Harry Potter*) and that they had less interest in some simplified stories of long novels (e.g., *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *David Copperfield*). As for the level of difficulty, vocabulary levels of graded readers Mako and Fumi read were lower than the girls' levels which were occasionally measured by the word level tests. Thus, they seemed to have little problem with vocabulary when reading graded readers. Also, it should be noted that they preferred original works and more independent reading as they became fluent readers.

It might be also important to note that, at any stage of extensive reading, the teacher's support is indispensable. For instance, I provided L1 marginal glosses for the first two graded readers the participants read. Beginning L2 readers are unlikely to be skillful at contextual guessing, and they might want specific help that facilitates their reading comprehension while reading the first books (e.g., L1 marginal glosses). As headwords are recursively used in graded readers at the same stages, learners will not encounter many new words in a second book if the book is chosen from the same stage. Teachers can provide glosses or give students a list of the new words before they start reading a second book. In order to do so, it might be necessary for teachers to select the first two books.

Furthermore, if learners want the challenge of reading authentic texts, it is recommended that teachers provide glosses for the relatively low frequency words, for example, at the 3,000–5,000 word level, in order to make up for the gap between their vocabulary levels and the increased number of vocabulary words in the books. Because the 5,000-word-level vocabulary allows L2 readers' contextual guessing in authentic texts (see Hirsh & Nation, 1992), the learners may be able to read them with reasonable ease if provided with the glosses.

In addition to glosses, teachers can and should provide a range of support for their students such as finding a wide variety of interesting reading materials, talking about the stories with the students, and responding to their questions. By doing so, teachers can make reading materials more accessible for their students by making reading materials more interesting and less difficult. Thus, teachers' support can be a crucial factor in enhancing students' L2 reading motivation because teachers in extensive reading programs act as mediators between the learner and the text.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined the various reading strategies used by two secondary school FL learners and described the dynamic changes in their L2 reading motivation over a period of 2.5 years. This is a small case study. There were only two participants, and their extensive reading experience took place in a very particular setting with a large amount of tutor support. Also, the participants were comparatively motivated students who had some knowledge of grammar and vocabulary when they started to read extensively. Therefore, the findings of this study might not

be generalizable. However, the findings have pedagogical implications for designing effective reading programs and can partly fill in gaps in existing research.

First, the present study has described beginning readers' use of reading strategies when they read extensively in a foreign language. Their reading strategies have much in common with those reported in the previous research. Furthermore, this study illuminates significant individual differences in the participants' use of strategy when they came across unknown words.

Second, the present study has suggested that L2 reading motivation is not static and that a variety of factors, as well as reading materials, influence L2 learners' motivational changes. The main factors contributing to motivation in this study are (a) the realization of achievement, (b) the pleasure and flow of reading, (c) confidence in L2 reading, (d) a tendency towards more independent reading, (e) less interest in graded readers, (f) a preference for authentic texts, and (g) entrance exams.

The role of these factors in shaping motivation can be partly explained in terms of intrinsic motivation. As Ryan and Deci (2000) stated, activities that have the appeal of novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value can intrinsically motivate people. From the beginning, Fumi and Mako seemed to be motivated to read graded readers that were new and challenging to them. As they kept on reading, the extensive reading became a self-determined, autonomous, and enjoyable activity, which seems to have enhanced their intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, through their flow experience, Fumi and Mako's pleasure of reading and cognitive traits such as focused attention might have worked in combination, leading them to be highly immersed in the story. Consequently, the two girls' intrinsic motivation became considerably high. But unfortunately, as they could not find appropriate reading materials, their intrinsic motivation started to decrease at this stage.

It is also important to note that the factors outlined above are associated with the four major variables (i.e., *materials*, *reading ability*, *attitudes*, and *sociocultural environment*) in the L2 reading motivation model proposed by Day and Bamford (1998). The pleasure and flow experience of reading and less interest in graded readers can be connected to the *materials*. Confidence in L2 reading and tendency towards more independent reading might correspond to *reading ability* and *attitudes* respectively. Also, entrance exams might relate to the *sociocultural environment*. It appears that Day and Bamford's model can provide a relatively appropriate explanation for observations regarding L2 reading motivation from the current study.

Furthermore, it must be noted here that there seemed to be other factors that influenced the participants' motivational change, such as English lessons at school, previous reading topics in L1, publication of the L1 version of *Harry Potter*, and support from the tutor. It appears that *sociocultural environment*, which Day and Bamford (1998) did not assume as important as other two factors (i.e., *materials* and *attitudes*), also play important roles when learners continued extensive reading. In addition, multiple factors might have interplayed, altering the participants' motivational constructs moment by moment and making them decide to continue reading or not. For instance, when they stopped reading extensively, Fumi and Mako were interested in reading *Harry Potter V* but at the same time felt the pressure of entrance exams. It may be that the participants' motivational constructs might have been more complex and unstable than those

described in Day and Bamford's model.

In addition, more research needs to be done on individuals, so as to construct a bottom-up approach to theory building of L2 reading motivation. A similar suggestion could be made for research on L2 reading strategies. My hope is that this case study serves as a stepping stone for more descriptively rich qualitative research, as well as for more large-scale studies on reading motivation and reading strategies.

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Notes

1. Fumi and Mako are pseudonyms.
2. Fumi is my daughter, and Mako is my niece.
3. The STEP (Society for Testing English Proficiency) test is Japan's most widely administered language assessment. If examinees pass the third grade, they are assessed as having reached a level of English proficiency that students are expected to reach upon graduation from junior high school (Sugiura, 1999). However, although they had passed The Third Grade STEP Test, Fumi and Mako had read only a small amount of English text when this study began. The total number of running words of their junior high school textbooks were about 1,000 (1st year) and 1,600 (2nd year), and activities employed in their English classes were mainly based on these textbooks. Because of their exposure to this very modest amount of English text, I regarded Fumi and Mako as beginning readers of English.
4. The vocabulary levels of Fumi and Mako were measured occasionally using the 1,000-word level matching Japanese-translation test (Nation, 2001), the revised 2,000-word level test (Beglar & Hunt, 1999), and the 3,000-word level test (Schmitt, 2000). Their vocabulary levels were approximately 1,000 words when they started reading graded readers at Stage 1 (400 headwords). Their vocabulary sizes grew to 2,000 words around the time when they were reading Stage 3 (1,000) or Stage 4 (1,700). Before reading *Harry Potter*, their vocabulary levels were still 2,000-words; but before reading *Stravaganza*, they knew approximately 60% of the words in the 3,000-word level test.
5. At the end of each reading session when they read graded readers, I asked Fumi and Mako questions about the stories in L1 and kept record of their reading comprehension in the fieldnotes. The total number of questions asked for one book was 20–30, and they constantly answered correctly for more than 70 % of the questions.

6. The first row shows the participants' use of the glossaries in Oxford graded readers. As they did not read Oxford readers after December 2002, the fourth column is not filled in.

7. Every time Fumi and Mako finished reading one graded reader, I asked them if the story was interesting. Fumi said that 23 out of 31 graded readers were interesting while Mako reported that 29 out of 36 graded readers were interesting. In the course of their 2.5 year extensive reading experience, Fumi and Mako finished reading all but four graded readers (see Appendices A & B).

8. Around the time when the third interview was conducted, the two participants' vocabulary level was somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 based on the vocabulary measurement. Hirsh and Nation (1992) stated that a learner would need to have around 5,000 word level vocabulary in order to read a short unsimplified novel with reasonable ease.

9. Two years later, Fumi explained to me why she had discontinued the extensive reading. She said, "I thought that extensive reading could not improve my skills in reading essays. I needed to learn how to solve grammar questions. So I read books that had sample test questions. Also, I wanted to study English efficiently in order to save time, so that I could use the time to prepare for the tests of other subjects." She also mentioned that extensive reading could enhance learners' reading motivation and that the learners could improve reading skills if they read stories they were interested in.

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Appendix A

Fumi's Extensive Reading

(Note: P = Penguin Readers; O = Oxford Bookworms; S = Sanyusha Rainbow Series. The numbers refer to the headwords; Numbering is provided for graded readers.)

2001

02/20–04/16	1	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i> (O 400)	
	2	<i>The Monkey's Paw</i> (O 400)	<u>1st Reading Rate (Feb.)</u>
	3	<i>Pocahontas</i> (O 400)	
	4	<i>Goodbye, Mr. Hollywood</i> (O 400)	
	5	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (O 400)	
	6	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> (O 700)	
05/30–06/03	7	<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> (O 700)	
06/16–06/28	8	<i>Five Children and It</i> (O 700)	<u>1st Interview (Jun.)</u>
07/26–07/24	9	<i>New Yorker</i> (O 700)	
07/26–08/02	10	<i>Jungle Book</i> (O 700)	
08/05–08/09	11	<i>Dracula</i> (O 700)	
08/14–08/21	12	<i>Love Story</i> (O 1,000)	
08/29–09/05	13	<i>The Death of Karen Silkwood</i> (O 700)	
09/07–09/12	14	<i>Return to the Earth</i> (O 700)	
09/15–09/18	15	<i>Kiko's Adventure</i> (S 1,000)	
10/26–11/02	16	<i>Tooth and Claw</i> (O 1,000)	
11/17–11/20	17	<i>One Way Ticket</i> (O 400)	<u>2nd Reading Rate (Nov.)</u>
11/23–12/16	18	<i>Who, Sir? Me, Sir?</i> (O 1,000)	
12/19–01/03	19	<i>The Secret Garden</i> (O 1,000)	

2002

01/04–01/18	20	<i>Ethan Frome</i> (O 1,000)	
01/20–01/27	21	<i>Skyjack!</i> (O 1,000)	
01/28–04/18		<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	<u>2nd Interview (Apr.)</u>
04/25	22	<i>Earrings from Frankfurt</i> (O 700)	<u>3rd Reading Rate (Apr.)</u>
04/27–05/05	21	<i>Skyjack!</i> (O 1,000)	
05/05–06/06	23	<i>The Little Women</i> (O 1,400)	
06/08–06/25	24	<i>Thirty-nine Steps</i> (O 1,400)	
07/14–07/24	25	<i>Matilda</i> (P 1,200)	
07/26–08/02	26	<i>Black Beauty</i> (O 1,400)	→ Fumi did not complete it.
08/04–08/19	27	<i>David Copperfield</i> (P 1,700)	

08/21–08/27	28	<i>Six Ghost Stories</i> (P 1,200)
08/29–09/14	29	<i>Forrest Gump</i> (P 1,200)
09/15–09/25	30	<i>Emil and the Detectives</i> (P 1,200)
09/29–11/13	31	<i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> (O 1,400)
11/15–11/29	32	<i>Client</i> (P 1,700)

2003

12/16–06/08		<i>Stravaganza: City of Masks</i>	<u>3rd Interview (Dec.)</u>
06/16–06/19	33	<i>Women in Business</i> (P 1,700)	<u>4th Reading Rate (Jun.)</u>
06/22–08/25		<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	→ Fumi read 525 pages in all.

2004

4th Interview (Jan.)

Appendix B

Mako's Extensive Reading

(Note: P = Penguin Readers; O = Oxford Bookworms; S = Sanyusha Rainbow Series. The numbers refer to the headwords; Numbering is provided for graded readers.)

2001

02/20–04/16	1	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i> (O 400)	
	2	<i>The Monkey's Paw</i> (O 400)	<u>1st Reading Rate (Feb.)</u>
	3	<i>The Witches of Pendle</i> (O 400)	
	4	<i>Goodbye, Mr. Hollywood</i> (O 400)	
	5	<i>Pocahontas</i> (O 400)	
05/19–06/09	6	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> (O 700)	
06/19–06/29	7	<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> (O 700)	
07/03–07/07	8	<i>Five Children and It</i> (O 700)	<u>1st Interview (Jul.)</u>
07/17–08/19	9	<i>New Yorker</i> (O 700)	
08/20–08/27	10	<i>Jungle Book</i> (O 700)	
08/31–09/15	11	<i>Ear-rings from Frankfurt</i> (O 700)	
09/16–09/18	12	<i>Love Story</i> (O 1,000)	→ Mako did not complete it.
09/24–10/01	13	<i>Kiko's Adventure</i> (S 1,000)	
10/02–10/10	14	<i>The Death of Karen Silkwood</i> (O 700)	
10/12–10/24	15	<i>Tooth and Claw</i> (O 1,000)	
10/26–11/08	16	<i>Christmas Carol</i> (O 1,000)	
11/10–11/15	17	<i>One Way Ticket</i> (O 400)	<u>2nd Reading Rate (Nov.)</u>
11/16–11/28	18	<i>Who, Sir? Me, Sir?</i> (O 1,000)	
11/30–12/22	19	<i>The Secret Garden</i> (O 1,000)	
12/24–01/02	20	<i>Love Story</i> (O 1,000)	

2002

01/03–01/15	21	<i>Ethan Frome</i> (O 1,000)
01/16–01/23	22	<i>Go, Lovely Rose</i> (O 1,000)
01/24–02/01	23	<i>Skyjack!</i> (O 1,000)

02/02–02/08	24	<i>Railway Children</i> (O 1,000)	
02/10–05/12		<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	<u>2nd Interview (Apr.)</u>
05/13–05/14	25	<i>Earrings from Frankfurt</i> (O 700)	<u>3rd Reading Rate (Apr.)</u>
05/15–05/23	26	<i>The Little Women</i> (O 1,400)	
05/25–06/ 20	27	<i>The Thirty-nine Steps</i> (O 1,400)	
06/24–07/06	28	<i>Black Beauty</i> (O 1,400)	
07/08–07/15	29	<i>Washington square</i> (O 1,400)	→ Mako did not complete it.
07/16–07/25	30	<i>Matilda</i> (P 1,200)	
07/26–08/21	31	<i>David Copperfield</i> (P 1,200)	
08/22–08/28	32	<i>Forrest Gump</i> (P 1,200)	
08/29–09/24	33	<i>Emil and the Detectives</i> (P 1,200)	
09/26–10/16	34	<i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> (O 1,400)	
10/19–11/01	35	<i>The Client</i> (P 1,700)	
11/02–11/14	36	<i>Three Great Plays of Shakespeare</i> (P 1,700)	→ Mako did not complete it.
11/15–11/24	37	<i>The Picture of Dorian</i> (P 1,700)	<u>3rd Interview(Dec.)</u>

2003

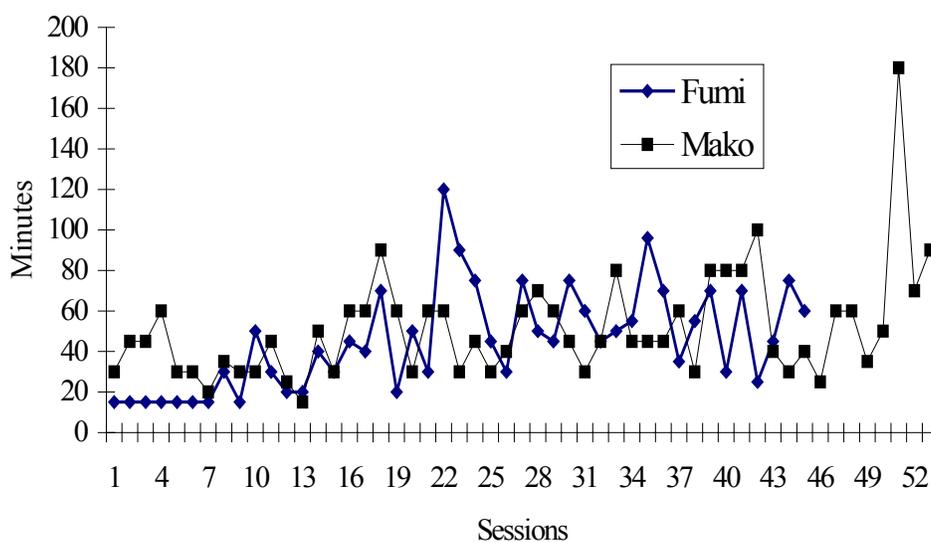
12/13–05/07		<i>Stravaganza: City of Masks</i>	
05/11~05/19	38	<i>Women in Business</i> (P 1,700)	<u>4th Reading Rate (Jun.)</u>
05/21–06/19	39	<i>Emma</i> (P 1,700)	
06/23–09/04		<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	→ Mako read 201 pages in all.

2004

4th Interview (Jan.)

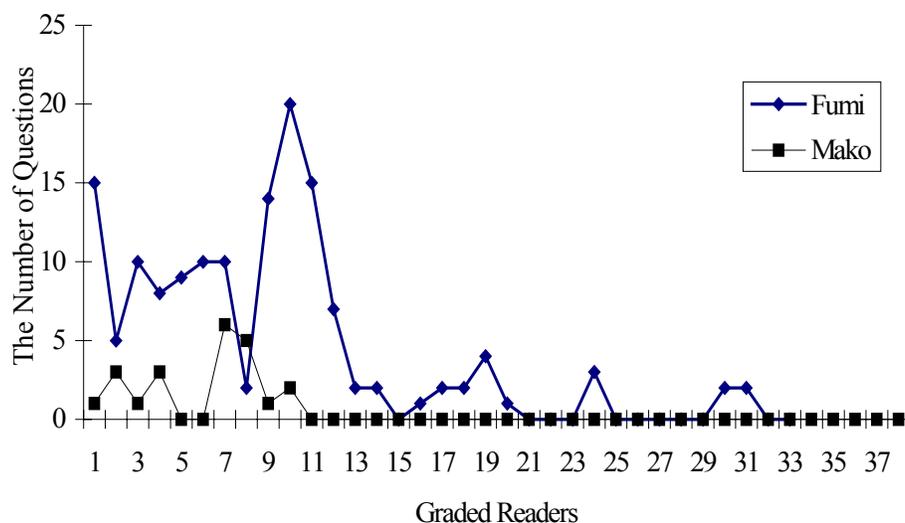
Appendix C

Length of the Reading Sessions
(When Fumi and Mako read *Harry Potter IV*)



Appendix D

The Number of Questions Fumi and Mako Asked About Unknown Words While Reading Graded Readers



Appendix E

Questions Asked in the Interviews

(Translated from the questions asked in Japanese)

I. Questions asked in all the interviews:

1. How do you enjoy extensive reading?
2. Do you think that you have become able to read English faster than before? When/How did you recognize this?
3. Do you think that you have learned new words during extensive reading?
4. Can you guess word meanings from context? How?
5. Do you use glosses and glossaries? How?
6. Do you read English without translation?
7. Do you want to continue extensive reading? If yes, how?
8. What books were easy/difficult to read? Why?
9. What books were interesting/uninteresting to read? Why?
10. What book(s) do you recommend to your friend? Why?

II. Questions asked only in the first interview:

1. Does the experience of extensive reading help your English study at school?
2. Do you want to have extensive reading classes at school?

III. Questions asked in the second, third, and fourth interviews:

1. Do you voluntarily read in English at home? If yes, what/where/when do you read?

IV. Questions asked only in the fourth interview:

1. What do you think is important for learning English?
2. What do you think is important for passing the English test in the entrance exam?
3. Do you have any plans for studying English in the future?

Appendix F

Books Fumi and Mako Read

Graded readers of Oxford Bookworms Library. NY: Oxford University Press.

Graded readers of Penguin Readers. NY: Longman.

Graded reader of Sanyusha Rainbow Series. Tokyo: Sanyusha.

Rowling, J. K. (2000). *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Rowling, J. K. (2003). *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Hoffman M. (2002). *Stravaganza: City of Masks*. New York: Bloomsbury.

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