

Using Free Online Technology to Improve English Ability: Extensive Reading through MReader to Encourage Autonomous Learning

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Main academic goal of high school students in Japan is to enter the university of their choice

An important part of the English component of university examinations is the reading comprehension section

Yakudoku, which can be translated as grammar-translation, is the commonly used teaching method for reading comprehension

What is *yakudoku* ?

Yakudoku is translating English texts word-for-word, and then reordering them to make appropriate translations to match the Japanese language word structure and order (Hino, 1988).

How does *yakudoku* affect the students?

Fluency in reading has been overlooked in Japanese secondary education (Yamashita, 2008).

The emphasis placed on years of accurate translation techniques and exercises is a major cause of the Japanese students' weak fluency (Hino, 1998).

Many students have built a resistance to and a dislike of reading as they find it to be boring, dull, and tiring (Takase, 2008).

What is Extensive Reading (ER)?

- Silently reading a large volume of easy materials.
- Students read with continuity not relying on dictionaries or teachers
- Should be enjoyable
- Students choose materials that are appealing
- No pressure of assessment or tests.


How much reading is extensive reading?

- thirty pages per hour (Hill & Thomas, 1988)
- between one and three pages a day (Matsumura, 1987)
- a minimum of two books per week (Carroll, 1972)
- reading as much as one can (Day, Prentice et al., 2016)


Why use Extensive Reading?


- Increase in confidence and autonomous learning (Bell, 1998).
- Improve their vocabulary (Richards and Platt & Platt, 1992).
- Improve their fluency, grammar, and writing ability (Yamashita, 2008).
- Motivation improves (Powell, 2005).
- Self-confidence increases (Safaeia & Bulca, 2013).
- Improvement in reading speed and comprehension (Bell, 2001; Horst, 2005; Mason, 2005; Yang, 2001).
- Reading leads to success in academic learning (Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Scott & Saaiman, 2016).
- Constant readers may be able to acquire knowledge equivalent to several years of education (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

MReader



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 Hosted by the Extensive Reading Foundation



Extensive Reading

The fun way to learn English!

MReader is a quiz site for Extensive Reading books
If you require online books, please visit [Xreading.com](#)

Login:

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[Old user but new class? Click here!](#)

Top readers Congratulations!!

Past 30 days *Students must have read at least 75% of their books at the stated level.*

Level 0	Nao Okada	Kobe Shoin Women's University	13,711
Level 1	«name hidden»	Notre Dame Seishin University	55,692
Level 2	Tsuyoshi Shigeta	Kyoto Sangyo University E2	58,882
Level 3	Edis ViDINLI	Nişancı School	61,957
Level 4	Bonolo Munyai	University of the Free State	82,901
Level 5	Edna Fleur Manuella Adiou	International University of Grand Bassam	95,468
Level 6	N'dah Jean Yves Manouan	International University of Grand Bassam	171,800
Level 7	Fatima Ortega	Medicine Hat College - Brooks Campus	86,846
Level 8	Komian Jerome Kounizian	International University of Grand Bassam	51,171
Level 9	Rasmata Sawadogo	International University of Grand Bassam	68,369
Past 3 months (All levels)			
	Rio Nardi untan	UPT Bahasa Universitas Tanjungpura,	660,137

What is MReader?

A student reads an ER book of their choice and then takes a short quiz online

When the student passes the quiz, they are awarded the word count of that book

Words accumulate like points

Four types of quiz questions

True or false

Multiple choice

Who said

Ordering

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Work carefully. You can't go back!

4 multiple choice

Page:1(10)

1 

Who took the blame for ripping Mr. Dobbin's book?

Marks: 2

Choose one
answer.

- ☐ a. Huckleberry Finn
- ☐ b. Tom Sawyer
- ☐ c. Becky Thatcher
- ☐ d. Joe Harper



The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

4 

Who said this?
"This is Alissa. She reads all day."


Marks: 2

Choose one
answer.

- ☐ a. Alissa
- ☐ b. Alissa's father
- ☐ c. the tall, pretty woman

2 "Who said"

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

6  Tom and Huckleberry find a large sum of money buried in the cave.


Marks: 1

3 True/False

Answer: ☐ True

☐ False

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

10 

1 Event ordering drag & drop

Marks: 4 Drag and drop the items into the correct order.

- a. Tom meets Becky Thatcher.
- b. Tom, Huckleberry and Joe leave to become pirates.
- c. Tom and Huckleberry over hear Injun Joe talking about burying treasure at the haunted house.
- d. Tom and his friends return in time to stop their funeral.
- e. Tom is painting a fence and trades the work for an apple.
- f. Tom returns home to give his Aunt Polly a piece of bark but changes his mind.
- g. Injun Joe kills Dr. Robinson and tells Muff Potter that he had done it.

[Tips](#)[View Available Quizzes](#)[School summary](#)[Report a problem](#)Logged in as [Sakata, Mizuki](#) / [Logo](#)

Books read in this course



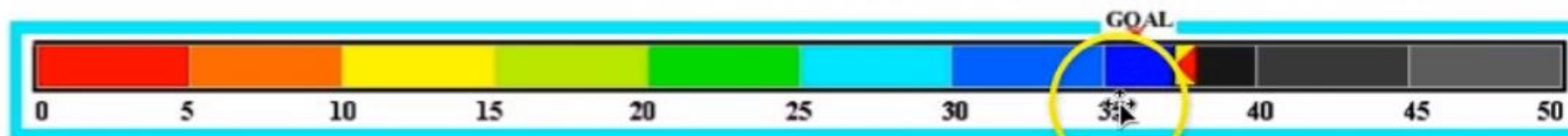
Reading Report For: Sakata, Mizuki

[KSU ER Info](#)☐ Don't show my name to other students☐ Don't show book covers ☒ Show this name to other students: ☐ Send progress notifications to my Facebook account

Date	Publisher	Book title	Level	Status	Words	Total words
20 Oct 2014	Oxford Bookworms	Too Old to Rock and Roll and Other Stories	Stage 2 [5]	Passed	5310	5310
22 Oct 2014	Oxford Bookworms	The Mystery of Allegra	Stage 2 [5]	Passed	6115	11425
14 Nov 2014	Oxford Bookworms	Red Dog	Stage 2 [5]	Passed	7662	19087
24 Nov 2014	Oxford Bookworms	Voodoo Island	Stage 2 [5]	Passed	5910	24997
13 Dec 2014	Oxford Bookworms	Romeo and Juliet	Stage 2 [5]	Passed	6306	31303
6 Jan 2015	Oxford Bookworms	Love Story	Stage 3 [6]	Passed	5945	37248

Total words read in this course: 37248

Total words read in all courses: 423558



Your current level: 5



MReader Q&A

Tips

Class report

View available books

School summary

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View records: Entire term From: 7-Sep-2015 To: 9-Dec-2015

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Username	Fullname Click to view screen	Start level	Current level		Taken quizzes	Passed quizzes	Failed quizzes	Total words this term	Total words all terms	Goal
<input type="checkbox"/>	hoasen-18888	hoasen-18888	4	4		2	2	0	42300	221124	50000
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<input type="checkbox"/>	hoasen-18888	hoasen-18888	4	4		12	11	1	83585	472783	50000
<input type="checkbox"/>	hoasen-18888	hoasen-18888	4	4		4	4	0	84905	175347	50000
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<input type="checkbox"/>	hoasen-18888	hoasen-18888, phuong	4	4		4	4	0	94544	170553	50000
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<input type="checkbox"/>	hoasen-18888	hoasen-18888, nam	4	4		6	5	1	51840	462100	50000
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The Research Project

Goal 1: What English skills improve through ER?

Goal 2: Can students become autonomous learners through ER?

Participants: 16 first-year English-major students

Data Collection: Closed nine-question questionnaire

Class Average Reading Test Speed

Beginning of Semester One: 99.5 words per minute

End of Semester Two: 126 words per minute

Table 2: MReader Questionnaire. Circle Yes or No for each statement

1.	Because of MReader, I can learn English by myself.	Yes No
2.	Because of MReader, I feel my vocabulary has improved.	Yes No
3.	Because of MReader, I feel my speaking has improved.	Yes No
4.	Because of MReader, I feel my writing skill has improved.	Yes No
5.	Because of MReader, I am more confident at English now.	Yes No
6.	Because of MReader, I want to continue reading.	Yes No
7.	Because of MReader, I feel my grammar has improved.	Yes No
8.	Because of MReader, I feel my listening has improved.	Yes No
9.	Because of MReader, I feel my English ability has improved.	Yes No

All responses are anonymous, voluntary, and private, and will not be used for anything other than statistical analysis for research purposes.

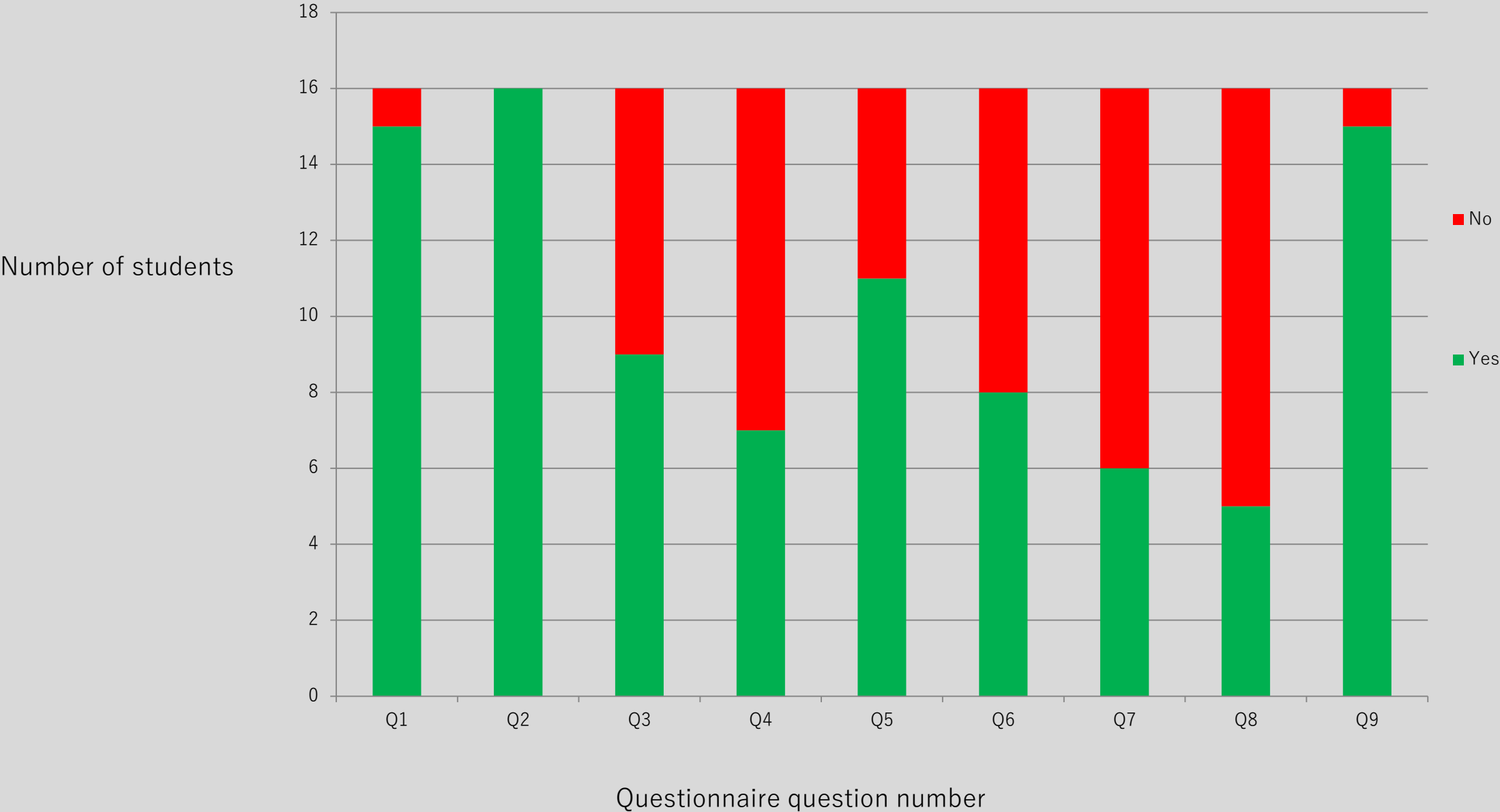


Table 2: MReader Questionnaire. Circle Yes or No for each statement		
		Results
1.	Because of MReader, I can learn English by myself.	Yes 15 No 1
2.	Because of MReader, I feel my vocabulary has improved.	Yes 16 No 0
3.	Because of MReader, I feel my speaking has improved.	Yes 9 No 7
4.	Because of MReader, I feel my writing skill has improved.	Yes 7 No 9
5.	Because of MReader, I am more confident at English now.	Yes 11 No 5
6.	Because of MReader, I want to continue reading.	Yes 8 No 8
7.	Because of MReader, I feel my grammar has improved.	Yes 6 No 10
8.	Because of MReader, I feel my listening has improved.	Yes 5 No 11
9.	Because of MReader, I feel my English ability has improved.	Yes 15 No 1
All responses are anonymous, voluntary, and private, and will not be used for anything other than statistical analysis for research purposes.		

Summary of Findings

➤ Improvement in overall English ability 15/16

Vocabulary 16/16

Speaking 9/16

Confidence 11/16

➤ Felt they could learn by themselves 15/16

Reading in class is not boring!

Suggestions for optional activities for Mreader and ER

- Open group discussion
- Character evaluation
- What will happen next?
- Writing
- Summarizing
- Book review
- Note taking
- Active listening
- Comparisons
- Things in common
- Critical thinking

Limitations of this research project

- Small sample size of 16 students
- No follow-up research
- Not enough reading speed tests

Beginning of semester one: Reading speed test

End of semester two: Reading speed test



Beginning and end of semester one: Reading speed test

Beginning and end of semester two: Reading speed test

References

Hino, N. (1988). Yakudoku: Japan's dominant tradition in foreign language learning. *JALT Journal*, 10, 45-53.

Takase, A. (2008). Yaruki wo okosaseru jyugyonai tadoku [SSR for motivating reluctant learners to read]. *Kinki University English Journal*, 2, 19-36.

Yamashita, J. (2008). Extensive reading and development of different aspects of L2 proficiency. *ScienceDirect*, 36, 661-672.