Investigating Swedish EFL teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices in Upper Secondary Education

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Abstract

The extensive reading approach and its inclusion in foreign language classroom curricula has gained growing interest in the recent years. Such growing interest is seen as “a result of insights from second language acquisition studies into the role and nature of input in the learning process” (Hedge, 2000, p. 200). Second language acquisition studies have shown many potential advantages of extensive reading on the process of learning a foreign language (Macalister, 2010). At the same time, there are some concerns regarding extensive reading practices which may result in teachers' reluctance to applying such practices in their classroom curricula (Day & Bamford, 1998). So far, relatively few studies have focused on investigating foreign language teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices in order to find out how they perceive such practices and why. This study investigates extensive reading approaches from the perspective of EFL teachers who apply or have previously applied any kind of extensive reading practices in their classroom curricula. The qualitative research method used in the study was an open-ended questionnaire which was seen as a form of “written interview”, in which the participants had an opportunity to give more thorough and detailed answers. The questionnaire was answered by 23 participants, all EFL teachers from various upper secondary schools from across Sweden. The findings of this study show that there are many challenges regarding the implementation and execution of extensive reading practices in a classroom environment. The research also shows that, regardless of these challenges, the vast majority of EFL teachers have a positive attitude towards applying extensive reading practices in a classroom curricula and perceive them as beneficial for foreign language learning.

Keywords

Attitudes, extensive reading practices, reading comprehension, language learning approach, language acquisition, EFL, EFL classroom curricula, Swedish upper secondary school.
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1. Introduction

The importance of extensive reading practices in foreign language acquisition (FLA) has been either overlooked or simply ignored for a long period of time (Yoshida, 2012). However, such practices have now, at last, started to gain well-deserved acknowledgement and appreciation due to their many advantages (Macalister 2010). In the process of learning a new language through reading in the classroom environment, the main goal is usually to acquire new vocabulary (Yoshida, 2012). However, an extensive reading approach is much more than just a way of learning vocabulary. Krashen (1993, p. 12) demonstrates that "extensive reading not only enhances reading comprehension and increases vocabulary, but also improves grammatical performance and output". Thus, learning a new vocabulary through extensive reading may be more of "a positive side effect" or simply one of many goals of this method, as opposed to a main goal on its own. Nevertheless, are the growing recognition and the numerous advantages of extensive reading reflected in teachers’ attitudes towards this approach?

Despite the growing recognition of the effectiveness of extensive reading practices in foreign language (FL) classrooms (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981; Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Rodrigo et al., 2004, Shih & Reynolds, 2018, to name a few), relatively few studies have investigated the relationship between teachers’ attitudes and the teaching of reading in a foreign language, particularly in relation to extensive reading practices. Most of the studies investigate solely student attitudes towards any kind of reading in a foreign language and thus omit entirely the teacher’s perspective on this matter. Therefore, the aim of this qualitative research is to investigate EFL teachers’ attitudes towards incorporating extensive reading practices into EFL classrooms in order to find out whether EFL teachers are eager to implement reading practices of this kind, what type of practices exactly and why. It is also interesting to investigate whether extensive reading practices are perceived by EFL teachers as beneficial for foreign language learning and what the challenges of implementing such practices are. In order to investigate EFL teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices, a qualitative questionnaire has been created and distributed to upper secondary school teachers from across Sweden.

According to Macalister (2010), while beliefs related to the language learning benefits of extensive reading are generally positive, these beliefs do not necessarily result in the inclusion of extensive reading practices in a classroom curricula. However, this paper aims to gain new insights into teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices in cases when such practices were applied. In other words, the questionnaire was open both to participants who currently apply extensive reading practices and to ones who have applied them previously.

Moreover, as teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading in FL classrooms might actually be a factor contributing to students’ (positive or negative) attitudes towards reading in a foreign language, it is an important topic worth thorough investigation in its own right. By showing how teachers themselves approach extensive reading practices in such classrooms it is hoped that this study will contribute with new insights regarding this issue.
1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this research is to investigate EFL teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices in Upper Secondary Education in Sweden. This research is expected to produce an accurate and deep understanding of how EFL teachers who apply or have applied extensive reading practices perceive such practices, as well as an understanding of the challenges that the implementation of extensive reading practices might entail. Furthermore, it is equally interesting to find out whether the inclusion of extensive reading practices in the classroom curricula might help pupils to achieve their language goals, i.e. contribute to an effective and successful foreign language learning. Hopefully, the findings of this research will show whether more foreign language teachers should consider inclusion of such practices in their classrooms. As it is teachers’ attitudes that are of main interest in this research, this issue will be studied solely from the teacher perspective.

Thus, the focus of research questions lies on EFL teachers’ general attitudes towards extensive reading practices, the importance of such practices in regards to foreign language acquisition, as well as on the benefits of such practices and various challenges that teachers have to encounter while applying extensive reading in the classroom curricula. The collected data regarding problems and challenges that EFL teachers encounter might serve as an explanation to why other teachers perhaps choose not to adopt extensive reading practices.

The questions are as follows:

1. What are the teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices in EFL classrooms?

2. How do teachers perceive the role of extensive reading practices in foreign language acquisition?

3. What are the challenges that EFL teachers face when applying extensive reading practices in EFL classrooms?

In order to get as deep and accurate picture as possible, it is only EFL teachers who apply or applied extensive reading practices themselves who participate in this research. Given the participants’ familiarity with such practices, it is hoped that each participant will be able to answer all the questions included in the research questionnaire. Thus, the answers should be based on the participants’ personal experiences and therefore more in-depth. In order to get an insight into a wide range of different experiences regarding extensive reading, the research participants are chosen from various upper secondary schools from all across Sweden. In other words, it is necessary that all participants share their personal experiences, albeit from various perspectives.
2. Background and literature review

This section is divided into five subsections and provides a detailed background information as well as a previous research review regarding reading comprehension and reading strategies in general and extensive reading practices in particular.

2.1 The Swedish school system and its policies

The Education Act (2010, p. 800) states that the main goal of education in the Swedish school system is to enable pupils to acquire and develop long-lasting knowledge and a will to learn. However, it is not exactly stated how this long-lasting development should occur. The current situation in Swedish upper secondary schools and their idea of teaching and learning can be viewed in the Swedish curriculum Lgy11 (Skolverket 2013, p.4), which states that "school should be open to different ideas" and "teaching should encompass a range of different approaches". This suggests that teachers should have enough room for improvements and for trying new teaching methods and approaches, which could be seen as a strength.

In the syllabus for the subject of English in Upper Secondary schools it is stated that "teaching English should aim at helping students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes". To reach this goal pupils should be given an opportunity to develop "understanding of spoken and written English, and also the ability to interpret content”. The English syllabus for Swedish upper secondary education emphasizes also that pupils need to be be able to read and understand different types of texts such as: "literature and other fiction" (English 5 and 6), "contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres such as drama" (English 7), as well as "texts of different kinds and for different purposes" (English 5, 6 and 7).

Haider and Akhter (2012, p. 126) claim that "among the four macro skills of English, reading is often challenging for the learners to develop" and they perceive teaching reading "a complex task as it requires a combination of skills and sub skills that pervade enormously while processing information from a text”. Such a challenging task may be easier to tackle if reading practices get enough space in classroom curricula. However, despite the fact that understanding written English is one of the requirements in upper secondary education, the school syllabus does not give the the topic much attention. For instance, it is not mentioned in what way teachers can include various reading approaches and strategies in their classroom curricula in order to improve pupils’ reading skills and sustain their desire to read. In other words, the way in which the regulations and requirements are formulated does not provide enough support for developing various reading strategies. Thus, although the curriculum and the syllabus emphasize the importance of reading comprehension for further knowledge development, the vague formulations regarding the importance of pupils’ understanding of written English do not necessarily match that reality. On the other hand, it does not however limit teachers’ opportunities to explore and apply such approaches on their own.
2.2 Reading comprehension and approaches to reading

The issues regarding pupils’ reading comprehension and how that can affect further development has been an ongoing discussion. The discussion often revolves around test scores and results in reading comprehension carried by organizations like OECD and PISA. The results presented in years 2009-2016 show that Swedish pupils often score lower in comparison to pupils from other countries, e.g. Singapore (OECD, 2016, p. 379). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of various strategies and approaches so that their pupils have the possibility to enhance their reading skills and develop foreign language knowledge in the best possible way.

Although teaching English as a foreign language may involve many different approaches to reading, there are two main reading styles which stand out: intensive reading (IR) and extensive reading (ER). The focus of this research is on the latter. The implementation of extensive reading practices in EFL classrooms started in the 1990s but was at first used for "out of class reading utilizing library reading programs in class across the United States" (Bowman 2017, p. 54). It is common that IR and ER are either confused with one another or seen as exchangeable, but are in fact two quite distinct approaches (Yoshida, 2012). While the IR focuses on accuracy, detailed study of language, extracting information and grammatical rules in shorter passages of a text, ER does not and was for this reason often overlooked or simply ignored for a long period of time (Yoshida, 2012). Haider and Akhter (2012, p. 126) claim that "the second language curricula of most developing countries put stress mainly on intensive reading leaving the idea of extensive reading ignored". Similarly, Urquhart and Weir (1998, p. 224) present a number of international studies from various countries which show that there was no place for extensive reading in the classroom curricula and that "continued reading is rare and the reading activities tended to occur only in short bursts of about 15 minutes and were connected with other forms of classroom communication, eg. writing". Thus, intensive reading was commonly used at the expense of extensive reading in foreign language classrooms but, as the view on language acquisition and methods of teaching reading has evolved even further, extensive reading practices started to become an important element of foreign language acquisition as well (Yoshida, 2012).

2.3 The meaning and purpose of extensive reading in foreign language acquisition

Macalister (2015) points out that ER has no strict definition and could be realized in many different ways depending on the main goal of such reading, e.g. the amount of text or the amount of time that pupils spend on reading. Nevertheless, according to Ellis and Shintani (2014, p. 184) "extensive reading is claimed not just to develop reading skills but also linguistic competence". Day and Bamford (1998, p. 6) describe extensive reading as supplementary where the main goal is to "develop the point of enjoyment of the ability to read the foreign language" and claim that "a reader’s attention should be on the meaning, not the language, of the text". Thus, instead of excessive focus on vocabulary and grammar ER focuses on pleasure of reading itself. As mentioned above, extensive reading practices are quite opposite to intensive reading practices. Cambridge
Dictionary (2008) defines the word extensive as "covering a large area; having or being a large amount" which is opposite to IR’s detailed focus on a shorter text. Nakanishi (2014, p. 9) points out that there are great differences between IS and ER in terms of "the quantity of reading, the difficulty level of the reading, the freedom students have to choose books, the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the students, and the motivation to continue reading". As attention in extensive reading should be meaning-oriented, it is not solely looking for specific information or words in a hastened manner, which means that pupils learn how to read for meaning, which in turn contributes to improved reading comprehension in general (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). Furthermore, Nakanishi (2014, p. 10) claims that "learners who enjoy reading read faster, read more, and eventually comprehend better", which is also in accordance with Day & Bamford (1998), who argue that extensive reading has been proven to be effective when reading is interesting and effortless for foreign language students. Moreover, there are ten established rules of an effective extensive reading approach (Day & Bamford, 2004, pp. 2-3):

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
6. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
7. Reading is individual and silent.
8. Reading is its own reward.
9. The teacher orients and guides the students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

Thus, as extensive reading should bring enjoyment and engage students in the process, it is suggested that pupils not only are able to choose what they want to read for themselves but also should be "encouraged to stop reading if material is not interesting or if it is too difficult" (Bamford & Day, 2004, p. 1). By letting pupils decide what they wish to read and explore their interests it is evident that ER focuses on pupils’ long-lasting engagement in reading, and by doing so also on sustaining their desire to read.

2.4 The benefits of extensive reading

There is a significant amount of research which supports the inclusion of extensive reading practices in FL classroom curricula. By discussing and demonstrating various benefits of extensive reading, the researchers highlight its important role in foreign language acquisition. Davis (1995, p. 335) claims that "any EFL classroom will be the poorer for the lack of an extensive reading program of some kind, and will be unable to promote pupils’ language development in all aspects as effectively as if such a program were present". Indeed, in a study comparing IR and ER groups, Mart (2015) found that pupils in the extensive reading program made more progress than pupils in the intensive reading program.
According to Nakanishi (2014), the main focus of research regarding extensive reading has been on lexical knowledge and its development, and she agrees that extensive reading which enables meeting the same lexis frequently can be very helpful in foreign language learning. The importance of meeting the same vocabulary in reading is also pointed out by Nation (2009, p. 51) who stresses that “such opportunities should be repeated and should not be delayed for too long”. Moreover, Day and Bamford (1998) claim that their research showed no evidence of extensive (easy) reading being inferior to authentic texts. Overall, research studies show that by applying extensive reading in the classroom curricula, pupils “become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabularies get richer” (Day & Bamford, 2004, p. 1). The research studies, besides advocating extensive reading practices in EFL classrooms, demonstrate various benefits that ER might have not only on pupils’ reading skills but on all macro skills of English altogether. Haddiz and Tudor (1990), who studied the effectiveness of extensive reading on English skills among students from Pakistan and the UK, discovered that both groups of students improved their writing skills while reading extensively. Similarly, Mason and Krashen (1997) showed that extensive reading not only significantly improved writing ability among Japanese students studying English, but also boosted motivation and confidence as well as promoted positive attitudes towards reading. Such positive attitudes towards reading were also observed in studies conducted by Leung (2002) and Asraf and Ahmad (2003). Moreover, applying extensive reading in EFL classrooms might contribute to improved listening ability (Ellen & Mangubhai, 1983), better vocabulary acquisition (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006, Mu & Carrington, 2007), as well as to better world understanding and general knowledge of various topics (Iwahori, 2008). Furthermore, extensive reading develops pupils’ language proficiency in general (Maley, 2005) and reading proficiency, fluency and better reading habits in particular, (Camiciottoli, 2002, Shih & Reynolds, 2018). Other studies showed that ER helps readers become good spellers (Krashen, 1993) and contributes to better reading speed and comprehension (Bell, 2001).

However, according to Nakanishi (2014, p. 7), in spite of a great amount of research on the topic of extensive reading, the results need to be approached with caution since most of them “have been conducted independently of one another, and generally they have been relatively short-term studies”. Thus, it might be challenging to establish “the appropriate level” of extensive reading effectiveness and therefore, more long-term studies that are connected with one another would be necessary. Nevertheless, the results of extensive reading studies conducted so far clearly indicate that it is advantageous to engage in such practices.

2.5 Concerns regarding extensive reading

Despite the significant number of benefits related to extensive reading demonstrated in various studies, some studies point out various concerns as well. For instance, Krashen (1993) and Davis (1995) think that applying extensive reading practices for a short period of time will not give the desired results and will not be beneficial for foreign language learners. On the other hand, Krashen (1993) as well as Day and Bamford (1998), suggest that this issue could be easily solved by applying long-term programs. Soliman
(2012, p. 29) points out some concerns "in relation to practicalities of implementation and the teachers complaints of lack of time, costs and issues regarding monitoring students’ reading” and also suggests that these issues could by overcome by organizing and prioritizing time and required resources.

Nevertheless, according to Bowman (2017, p. 57), "ER is not sufficient on its own to provide the entire L2 lexicon", which is in line with a study conducted by Mart (2015, p. 89) who found that "a perfect mastery of the target language cannot be achieved without detailed comprehension” and thus recommends that extensive and intensive reading should be complementary as ER "aims at fluency” and IR at "accuracy”. However, Renandya and Jacobs (2012) discovered that teachers pay considerably more attention to grammar and vocabulary (IR), rather than reading fluency (ER) which, it is believed, will emerge naturally from intensive reading only. Day and Bamford (1998, p. 46) list various reasons for why extensive reading is applied less frequently than IR. These reasons are as follows:

"cost, the work required to set up a program, the difficulty of finding time for it in the already-crowded curriculum, the different role of the teacher, the "light” nature of the reading material, the dominance of the reading skills approach, especially in ESL academic preparation programs, the belief that reading should be delayed until students can speak and understand the second language, confusion between extensive reading and intensive reading.”

"The different role of the teacher” is especially interesting matter as it indicates that some teachers are reluctant towards ER only because they fear losing control and not being able to make decision in a classroom context. Renandya and Jacobs (2002) claim that most teachers prefer to be leaders in their own classrooms and are therefore resistant to the independence and freedom that extensive reading provides the pupils. On the other hand, Bowman (2017, p. 57) claims that "some students prefer to be taught and that "ER may not be a match to many students’ individual preferred learning style or learning strategy". Interestingly, Watkins (2018) analyzed extensive reading from a learner’s perspective and concluded that there is a chance that foreign language learners do not necessarily perceive reading as a pleasurable and enjoyable activity at all. Bowman (2017, p. 57) points out that "ER may not be a match for the new culture of non-readers”. In such case, applying a substantial amount of extensive reading activities could be a real challenge for foreign language teachers.

3. Theoretical perspectives

This section presents foreign/second language acquisition theory in relevance to extensive reading as well as a short discussion regarding attitudes.
3.1 Krashen’s Input Hypothesis

According to Brown (2000, p. 274) a language theory is “an interrelated set of hypotheses and/or claims about how people become proficient in a second language”. One such hypothesis that is relevant to the matter of extensive reading is the input hypothesis presented by Krashen (1985), which manifests itself in that extensive reading focuses on input rather than output. Krashen (1985) claims that the language acquisition happens when a learner receives an input that is comprehensible and which is somewhat above a learner’s present level of competence (i+1), where i is the present level of knowledge and +1 is the level that occurs immediately afterwards, when moving in a natural order. Thus, learners should be reading texts that are comprehensible at their own i+1 level and should be initially focusing on acquisition (input), rather than production (output), according to Krashen (1985). Moreover, Krashen (1985) claims that all new knowledge is acquired by means of contextual information and that the learner should be able to use such contextual information as well as general world knowledge to fill in the gaps and understand the whole context. This suggests that the amount of input and the level of its comprehensibility are key factors that have an influence on language acquisition. Thus, in order to acquire new linguistic knowledge, the input needs to be comprehensible and, which is of great importance, both the level and quantity of such input need to be chosen in accordance with learners’ present knowledge. Furthermore, this hypothesis suggests that language acquisition will only take place if a text is not too advanced but also not too easy for the learner. Krashen (1985) also points out that the learner needs to be engaged in the message at such a level that she or he forgets about reading and/or hearing a foreign language and the focus on form should be reduced to minimum. According to Krashen (1985, p. 4), if these requirements are fulfilled, the language acquisition is “inevitable,” “unavoidable” and “cannot be prevented”.

However, Krashen’s input theory has been criticized by other researchers for being vague and ambiguous (Liu, 2015). The criticism refers mainly to the notion of “comprehensible input” and lack of clear definition and/or explicit information regarding its meaning (Liu, 2015). For this reason, the meaning of the Input Hypothesis was subject to open interpretations undertaken by many researchers, including Swain (2000, p. 98) who interprets it as meaning that “the cause of second language acquisition is input that is understood by the learner”. Moreover, it has been questioned by other researchers whether that it is solely comprehensible input that contributes to language acquisition (Liu, 2015). Nevertheless, Liu (2015, p. 145) stresses that Krashen’s Input Hypothesis “offers some inspiring insights that both researchers and teachers can draw on” and is one of the models concerning second language acquisition (SLA) that brings its “contribution to SLA research in general”. The hypothesis is also the most relevant one to extensive reading and clarifies the ways in which comprehensible input is attained by learners in order to build up and develop their further knowledge.

3.2 Attitudes

This subsection presents a short discussion regarding attitudes and how the teacher’s attitudes may influence the students’ attitudes towards language learning. According to Bizer et al. (2003, p. 247), ”attitudes are conceptualized as relatively stable constructs
comprising cognitive, affective and behavioral components”. In short, these cognitive, affective and behavioral components determine whether something is perceived as negative or positive.

Many researchers have studied how teachers’ positive or negative attitudes towards teaching affect students’ academical success. The results of the research conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009, p. 89) suggest that teachers’ attitudes "shape students’ learning environment and influence student motivation and achievement”. Similarly, Blazar and Kraft (2017, p. 1) state that teachers’ attitudes not only influence students’ test scores but "are equally important to their long-term success”. Furthermore, Arenas (2009, p. 625) claims that the great amount of empirical evidence only confirms that the teachers’ attitudes regarding what students should learn and their approach to teaching "is closely related to the resulting quality of teaching”.

According to McCoss-Yergian and Krepps (2010), the teacher’s attitudes can have an impact on pupils’ reading comprehension, as well as their general engagement in literacy. McCoss-Yergian and Krepps (2010) examined how teachers’ reluctance towards literacy within their subject area affect pupils’ reading comprehension and she found out that teachers who do not devote enough time to literacy in the classroom curricula contribute to pupils’ low achievements in regards to reading proficiency. The results showed that in such classrooms only 29 percent of boys and 34 percent of girls in eight grade could read at a proficient level, or above. McCoss-Yergian and Krepps (2010) concluded that the teacher’s positive attitudes play a crucial role for the pupils’ literacy development, especially when it comes to middle school and upper secondary school. Regarding upper secondary EFL classrooms a study conducted by Sánchez and Gavilánez (2017) show that the teachers who apply extensive reading practices influence learners’ attitudes towards literacy and foreign language reading positively. Similarly, Endris (2018, p. 1) found out in his study that EFL students score significantly better in both reading comprehension and attitudes "when the time for reading was extended and motivating activities were included”.

In contrast, Macalister (2010, p. 59) showed in his study that positive attitudes need not imply that the teachers make enough room for developing pupils’ literacy, which is a current issue in a higher education context as well. The results of the study conducted by Macalister (2010) concerned the teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading and showed that "while teachers expressed positive beliefs about the language learning benefits of extensive reading, these beliefs did not generally result in the inclusion of extensive reading in the classroom program”. These findings indicate that teachers should not only have the right attitude towards reading - the equally important aspect is for teachers to become the students’ role models (Day and Bamford, 2004). According to Luddenberg et al. (2007), the ways in which teachers perform their teaching determines whether they become role models for their students. Thus, if teachers behave in the way that they would like their students to behave, then there is a great chance that the students will adopt such behavior as well. As the teachers’ positive attitudes influence students’ attitudes, teachers who promote literacy and motivate and engage students in extensive reading can develop pupils’ positive attitudes towards reading and show them how to become successful readers.
4. Methodology

This section presents method and materials of this study. The first subsection starts with presenting the selected method as well as its strengths and weaknesses. The second subsection presents the selection of the participants and the participants’ background. The next subsection describes how the research method was applied in practice, including a pilot study. In addition, the ethical aspects of the study are taken into consideration and discussed. Finally, the last subsection describes how the data collected in the study was processed.

4.1 Method selection and limitations

The method chosen for this research is a questionnaire designed in a written form. Codó (2008, p. 39) claims that the advantage of a written questionnaire is ”their relative anonymity” which contributes to the fact that ”informants may feel more free when they are not talking in front of an interviewer who they may want to please with socially desirable answers”. Some additional advantages regarding written questionnaires are highlighted by Bulmer (2004) and include the relatively fast pace of data collection, and the high level of objectivity. As questionnaires can be viewed as either a qualitative or a quantitative method, it is the nature of questions that determines the actual method, where close-ended questions are usually used for quantitative data collection and open-ended questions for qualitative data collection. The questionnaire in this study is a qualitative questionnaire with a majority of open-ended questions, which can provide deeper and more detailed answers. Mackey and Gass (2012, p. 215) claim that qualitative research “refers to descriptive data which, unlike quantitative research, does not always and/or regularly use statistical approach”. Furthermore, Bulmer (2004) argues that open-ended questions may contribute to more interesting, valuable and extensive research. Thus, a qualitative questionnaire appears to be an instrument that is well suited to the specific goal of this study, i.e. to gather more extensive and objective data in order to get a detailed description of the topic that is the focus of this research.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions, which were prepared specifically for the purpose of the study (see Appendix 2) and revolve around participants’ attitudes towards extensive reading. Codó (2008, p. 39) points out that questions regarding attitudes ”should not be asked only in a direct way (’what is your attitude towards . . . ’), since there is a fair chance that answers will not be reliable”. Furthermore, Codó (2008) stresses that the language needs to be comprehensible, straightforward and unambiguous for the participants. Therefore, a short pilot study was designed to ascertain that all linguistic inaccuracies were excluded prior the actual study. Bulmer (2004) claims that a potential limitation of this research method is the lack of possibility for participants to express some other thoughts regarding the topic because a questionnaire might be missing some relevant questions. For this reason, the last question in the questionnaire is designed in a way that gives the participants an opportunity to express additional and relevant comments. Another limitation, according to Bulmer (2004), could be the risk that the participants choose random answer choices. In order to reduce the risk of
misunderstanding, the number of close-ended questions is limited and the language is carefully verified, as already mentioned above.

4.2 Participant selection and background

The questionnaire was sent to 23 participants. In addition to the ordinary questions, there were some further questions that aimed to gather background information about the participants. Thus, all the participants are upper secondary EFL teachers who apply or have applied any kind of extensive reading practices in their classroom curricula. Naturally, such participant selection may lead to a potential selection bias, although, for the purpose of this study, it is a practical way to collect data. In other words, by deciding who is going to be studied, there is also a risk of skewing the study results in a certain direction.

Among the participants, twenty teachers stated that they apply extensive reading practices "of their own will", whereas three teachers stated that they were obliged to apply such practices as their classrooms were enrolled in extensive reading programs organized by the schools’ management. The communication with the participants suitable for the purpose of this research was established with the help of various Facebook groups designed for English teachers in Sweden. The participants came from different parts of the country and varied in terms of age, gender and length of professional experience. The participants taught English in upper secondary schools across Sweden, ranging from Boden in the north and Ystad in the south. In total, the participants came from fifteen different locations. Four participants came from Stockholm, two participants came from Göteborg and additional two participants came from Örebro. There were great differences in the number of participants working in public schools compared to participants working in independent schools. Interestingly, only five participants were working in independent schools, whereas eighteen participants were working in public schools. At the same time, regarding the school year 18/19, there were 1307 public Upper Secondary schools as opposed to 434 independent Upper Secondary schools in Sweden (Skolverket, 2019), which may explain such uneven representation of the participants from the given schools. The majority of participants were female (18 of 23) and the average age was 47, ranging from 28 to 69. Five participants were retired teachers, still working part time. Four participants (all of them female) lacked official teacher certification but had a solid teacher working experience and therefore were included in the study as well. It is hoped that such a wide range of participants will contribute to greater diversity regarding teachers’ purposes of including extensive reading practices in EFL classrooms.

4.3 Implementation and ethical aspects

The four ethical guidelines presented by the Swedish Research Council (2002) have been taken into consideration while conducting this research. These aspects include requirements for consent, information, confidentiality and the use of collected data. The participants were informed regarding these ethical aspects in a written form which was
attached to the front page of the questionnaire. Thus, the informants remained anonymous and informed about the purpose of this study. The participants were also informed that the collected data would not be used for any other purpose than this research project. The participants were also aware that they had the right to cancel their participation in the study at any time without being obliged to give the reason for this. A consent form (see Appendix B) was attached to the questionnaire and signed by all the participants.

As already mentioned, the preparations started with a small pilot study. Three EFL teachers, who later participated in the actual study, were asked to fill in the questionnaire one week before the actual questionnaires have been sent out. The aim of the pilot study was to monitor the level of questionnaire comprehensibility in order to rephrase or change some of the questions if necessary (Codó, 2008). The questions turned out to be comprehensible and thus only minor improvements were executed (such as spelling and minor rephrasing). Moreover, one additional question was used in the pilot study asking the participants about the time they spent on filling in the questionnaire. All of the participants estimated that it took approximately 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. Thus, completing the survey was calculated to take roughly 15 minutes, depending on how much information the participants were willing to share.

4.4 Data processing

The collected data have been analyzed and grouped into similar themes. The focus of the analysis was on the content that was most relevant to the research questions. Thus, irrelevant information that somewhat deviated from the issue of extensive reading was sorted out. During the data analysis, some recurring themes that were most relevant to the research questions and the aim of this study have been noted. This helped to structure the content as well as to group the questionnaire responses thematically. It was further considered that some statements will not be presented in their exact, i.e. longer version as some of the statements needed to be shortened and adjusted to the format of this research. Moreover, due to space limitations and the fact that there was a high number of informants participating in the study, only the most relevant and significant issues have been selected, sorted and further analyzed. The analysis and results of these issues are presented in the next section.

5. Results and analysis

This section presents the results and analysis of the questionnaires filled in by the participants. As mentioned above, the recurring themes that were noted during data analysis directly or indirectly refer to the research questions and the aim of this study and are divided into four separate subsections. Each section includes and discusses some questions asked in the questionnaire, which are most relevant to a given topic. These questions are usually highlighted with a number of selected quotes. Thus, the subsections of this chapter are arranged according to themes with regard to research questions and all
the participants are addressed under the same theme, but are usually discussed separately.

5.1 The attitudes towards applying extensive reading in EFL classrooms

This subsection covers questions 1, 2, 10 and 11 and mostly focuses on the participants’ attitudes towards the inclusion of extensive reading practices in the classroom curricula. In addition, question 10 concerns the participants’ perception of their students’ attitudes towards this approach. Interestingly, regarding the first question (Why did you decide to apply extensive reading practices in your classroom?), three participants stated that the decision about the inclusion of extensive reading was not their own and that they were obliged to follow the instructions given by the schools’ management (see examples 1 and 2 below).

(1) “I have received an e-mail from the school principal saying that English, Spanish and German teachers are going to be introduced to the extensive reading approach. We were participating in three seminars which were preparing us for using this approach in our FL classrooms over the next three months.”

(2) “My school enrolled in some sort of extensive reading program that involved using a great amount of various reading materials in our EFL classrooms. We (English teachers) received all the necessary reading materials as well as guidelines from the school’s management, which was very helpful.”

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the participants (20 of 23) decided to apply extensive reading practices “of their own will”. The reasons for applying extensive reading among those participants varied only to a small degree, and the majority of the participants (16 of 20) stated that they were interested in trying a new approach to foreign language acquisition, which might suggest that FL teachers keep themselves up to date regarding various approaches to second and/or foreign language acquisition.

(3) “A fellow teacher recommended ER as a great method for language learning.”

(4) “I wanted to try some new approach to language learning for the upcoming academic year.”

Moreover, two of those participants pointed out that they were interested in trying an approach that can boost, beside the students’ foreign language skills in general, the students’ reading skills in particular.
(5) "I was looking for some language learning method that will engage students in more reading."

(6) "My students struggled with reading comprehension so I decided to apply ER because it supposed to help improve students’ reading fluency and expand their vocabulary."

Furthermore, four participants replied that the main reason for applying extensive reading was the fact that they previously heard or read about "some positive aspects” of extensive reading.

(7) "Me and my colleagues was curious about extensive reading for a long time and we had read many positive things about this approach."

In summary, the participants answers indicate that the most important reason for applying extensive reading practices is the teachers’ interest in trying new approaches to foreign language learning, whether they discovered extensive reading on their own or heard about the approach from others. The answers indicate also that the teachers might feel concerned regarding the students’ reading proficiency in foreign languages, and thus wish to improve their skills by applying extensive reading practices.

Regarding the second question (What kind of extensive reading practice do you usually apply and why do you apply this particular extensive reading practice?), fourteen participants stated that they usually apply the approaches which are the most appreciated by their students.

(8) "My students appreciate ‘timed reading’ the most, which means that I choose some pages for them to read during a set amount of time which helps a lot with increasing their reading speed."

(9) "I usually arrange reading lessons or reading sessions in which students engage in nothing but reading the books they have chosen themselves to read. I think that my students really appreciate those moments where they can engage in reading for pleasure in the classroom, not only in obligatory reading homework.”

(10) "My students really enjoy working in groups. For instance, when each group choose a novel for other group to read."
Seven participants stated that they usually apply an approach which is the most beneficial for language acquisition. Worth noticing here is the fact that, in every case, the students are able to choose the reading materials on their own.

(11) "Students choose a short novel and perform a review writing, which improves both their reading and writing skills in English. I have noticed that it works much better when students can write about something they choose themselves to read".

Interestingly, two replies indicate that some approaches might be chosen due to the participants’ own convenience and preferences; although, in one of two cases, students are still allowed to choose their own reading materials.

(12) "I appreciate working with various articles. Usually one or two students prepare an article, which we read together and discuss in the classroom."

(13) "I usually choose a book that I think will be comprehensible (easy) enough for my students. The students read the same book, chapter by chapter, as a homework which they discuss, orally or in written form, in the classroom. This approach gives my students the opportunity to engage, besides reading, in speaking and writing as well."

Regarding question 10 (What is the students’ attitude towards the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classroom?), nine participants answered that the students’ attitudes were positive from the beginning, whereas fourteen participants answered that the attitudes had shifted from negative to positive as the students acquainted themselves with the approach better. Thus, according to the participants, it appears that some students were mostly negative to extensive reading only in the beginning when they were unfamiliar with the approach and did not know what to expect.

(14) "When I introduced extensive reading to my students they were dissatisfied with the fact that there will be more reading involved. However, they changed their attitudes pretty quickly when they realized that they can choose what they want to read, which means that the readings are both interesting and usually not extremely demanding."

(15) "My students were kind of negative in the beginning but only because they did not know what extensive reading entails. They thought that they will be obliged to read ‘long, boring and demanding books’. When they noticed that the readings are fun and usually involve some interesting activities, they engaged in their readings and did not complain whatsoever."

Regarding question number 11 (Would you recommend the extensive reading practices that you applied to other EFL teachers and students? Why? Why not?), all of the 23 par-
participants answered yes. However, worth noticing here is the fact that some of the participants stated that they would recommend this approach only if certain requirements were first met. Thus, nine participants pointed out that it is crucial to receive support from the school’s management, usually in form of supplying classrooms with some necessary materials and resources, which can otherwise be too expensive to purchase on one’s own.

(16) "I would definitely recommend this approach now when I know that it really is helpful and appreciated by most of the students. However, I did not expect any support from the school’s management which was a mistake because extensive reading requires a lot of (costly) resources, such as books and other reading materials so make sure that you have all the support you can get before you can proceed with ER."

(17) "Unfortunately, our library is not properly equipped and extensive reading is not a cheap approach to language learning so if you do not have any financial support from the school’s management do not engage in it on your own”.

(18) "Yes, teachers and students should definitely experiment with extensive reading but, first of all, teachers need to be realistic and need to require help from the school, when it comes to purchasing books and other materials.”

Thus, when selecting an appropriate extensive reading practice, most of the participants choose to be either guided by the students’ interests or by the benefits that such practice might have on language acquisition. Rarely are the participants guided by their own preferences. Interestingly, the majority of the participants experienced some reluctance from students towards extensive reading in the beginning, which they all not only managed to prevent with time, but also were able to turn into something positive. Although all of the participants expressed their eagerness to recommend the approach to other teachers and students, a great number pointed out the importance of receiving necessary support from the school’s management, which is considered as both a requirement and a foundation for a well-organized and well-functioning extensive reading approach.

5.2 Routines and procedures for applying extensive reading practices

Questions 3 and 4 refer the participants’ routines and procedures for applying extensive reading practices. The questions are considered to have the indirect relevance to the participants’ attitudes towards extensive reading and were therefore included and further analyzed. Regarding responses to questions 3 and 4 (How often do you apply extensive
reading practices in your classrooms?) and (For how long have you applied such practices?), the answers did not differ significantly. Furthermore, two similar aspects could be distinguished during the analysis of the participants’ responses; namely that: 1) the majority of the participants (19 of 23) were applying extensive reading practices during every lesson and that 2) the majority of the participants (17 of 23) stated that they were applying or were planning to apply such practices for a longer period of time, which is "for one school term" (11 participants) and "for one school year" (6 participants). Such frequency and duration of applying extensive reading practices might suggest that the participants have generally positive attitudes towards extensive reading and perhaps perceive the approach as beneficial for foreign language learning. With regard to the participants who gave different answers to question 5, one of the participants stated that such practices were usually applied every other lesson "due to other activities or assignments that needed to be done”. Moreover, three participants stated that extensive reading was applied "at least once a week”. Of those three participants, one participant stated that extensive reading was applied "at least once a week but usually more often”. Also, regarding the time during which the inclusion of extensive reading continued (question 4), the participant who differed regarding their answers stated that they were applying extensive reading: "for one to two months" (one participant), "for three months" (two participants) and "for two months" (three participants). Interestingly, all three participants who stated that they were obliged to apply extensive reading in their FL classroom were among those who applied such practices less frequently and for a shorter period of time.

5.3 The challenges of applying extensive reading in EFL classrooms

This subsection analyzes questions 7, 8, 9 and 13 which focus on the various challenges that the participants need to face when applying extensive reading practices. Regarding question 7 (How did the extensive reading practices that you applied work in your classroom and what were the challenges of applying such practices?), four participants answered that applying extensive reading in their classrooms has never been a challenge, which means that those participants did not experience any difficulties regarding, for example, the pupils’ resistance towards reading or insufficient economical resources. On the other hand, nineteen participants reported various difficulties when working with extensive reading approaches in their classrooms. Interestingly, most of these difficulties only occurred in the beginning and referred mainly to the pupils’ initial reluctance to reading (10 participants) and the participants’ initial reluctance towards the pupils’ independence (3 participants). Thus, what matters is not only the pupils’ “fear of reading” but also the teachers’ fear of losing control over what their pupils choose to read that seem to be a challenge when it comes to applying extensive reading practices. Moreover, six participants stated that the insufficient resources were a challenge, which made it sometimes difficult to perform a well-organized extensive reading approach. Furthermore, questions 8 and 9 are related with each other and ask whether the participants made any improvements and/or adjustments regarding extensive reading practices which they applied in their classrooms and if so, what kind of changes. Only four participants replied that they did not make any such changes. They are the same participants who did not experience any difficulties while working with extensive reading in their classrooms (question 7). Among the participants who claimed that they made some
changes, 11 of 19 participants referred only to reading materials and adjusting them to the pupils’ needs, thus not improving the approach as such. Interestingly, six participants stated that by adjusting reading materials they could notice that the interest in reading has increased among pupils.

(19) “My students were much more interested in reading when they could choose what they wanted to read so I decided to give them a free hand and stopped impose my reading choices on them. After all, the most important thing it to read and not what to read. So my only requirement was that they read a book if we are going to work with books or that they read an article if we are going to work with articles, and so on”.

(20) “My students asked if they could choose their readings independently as most of them thought that it is boring to read something they did not choose to read. I am trying to be responsive to my students’ needs so they started to choose their readings themselves and became more engaged in reading in general.”

Thus, it appears that applying extensive reading could be challenging if the pupils’ interests are not taken into consideration. Moreover, five participants stated that they made some time adjustments claiming that the approach required more time than they previously assumed.

(21) “In the beginning I decided to apply extensive reading for two to three months but then I realized that this approach require engaging over longer period of time. I have applied extensive reading since the beginning of the school year and my plan is to continue with this approach throughout the whole school year”.

Three participants replied that they made some improvements regarding the approach itself, i.e. changing its structure but not the aim of the approach. Two participants referred to assigning students into reading groups and/or pairs and one participant referred to finding the right extensive reading activity.

(22) “My students expressed that they wanted to do their readings in groups or in pairs instead of individually so I made such change”.

(23) “I experienced some difficulty with finding the most engaging extensive reading activity so I tested a few activities before I tried ‘the timed reading’ which pleased my classroom the most.”

From the analysis of these three questions it appears that the majority of the participants faced some initial challenges regarding applying and carrying out a well-functioning
extensive reading approach which, in most cases, led to making some adjustments. It appears also that the participants view the adjustments as something positive, which improves the execution of extensive reading practices.

Finally, regarding question 13 (What were the disadvantages regarding the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classrooms?), six participants replied that extensive reading is a time-consuming approach, five participants referred to extensive reading as an approach which requires costly resources and three participants named both resources and time as disadvantages of applying extensive reading practice in the classroom curricula. Interestingly, six participants viewed as a disadvantage the fact that their students have negative attitudes towards reading in general, which makes it difficult to convince pupils to read more, especially if they are not used to reading large amount of texts and/or have diagnosed dyslexia.

(24) "My students are very much interested in today’s digital world and not so much in reading. To convince them to read more than they usually read was a task that required a lot of energy and engagement on my part. Of course, it was worth it because now they do read more (and find it pleasant) and have developed their reading skills, but I experienced this reluctance as difficult, especially in the beginning. “

Three participants mentioned that not having control over what students choose to read or how much they actually read is a disadvantage of the extensive reading approach.

(25) "In the beginning it was difficult for me to just 'let go’ because it brings on this sense of not having control on what my students read and how much they will benefit from it. I later realized that reading for pleasure is as important for language development as other forms of reading.”

In total, eleven participants named practical issues as disadvantages of applying extensive reading practices. However, as many as six participants experienced the students’ initial negative attitudes as the major disadvantage, which felt energy-consuming and troublesome. Interestingly, some participants experienced the design of extensive reading, which involved students’ autonomy and independence, as disadvantageous. It appears that some teachers might consider "not being in charge” as difficult, which could be caused by a fear of losing power and the leadership position in the classroom context.

5.4 The role of extensive reading in foreign language learning

This subsection includes questions 5, 6 and 12, which concern the participants’ perception of the role of extensive reading practices in foreign language acquisition. Regarding question 5 (Do you perceive applying extensive reading practices as beneficial for fo-
reign language learning?), all participants answered yes, including the three participants who were obliged to apply such practices, and thus did not include extensive reading practices of their own will. Interestingly, the majority of the participants did not differ in their view regarding what aspect made extensive reading beneficial for foreign language learning, which was observed during the answer analysis of question 6 (If yes, why do you perceive such practices as beneficial?). Thus, the vast majority of the participants (19 of 23) perceive vocabulary acquisition and its development as one of the typically occurring benefits of extensive reading.

26) "I believe extensive reading helps a lot with vocabulary development. My students told me that they had learned new lexical phrases and various collocations which they did not know before."

27) "I think that my student improved vocabulary the most. I asked my students if extensive reading helps them with language learning and they confirmed that they can understand more words and phrases since we started working with this approach."

28) "It is beneficial because it helps to build students’ vocabulary which I noticed myself as many of my students started to use new linguistic forms in their writing assignments."

The other participants named such aspects as improvements in the students’ motivation regarding foreign language learning, better writing skills (2 participants), as well as better reading speed and fluency.

29) "It definitely contributes to better reading speed and fluency. My students did their readings, such as articles and short novels every lesson and after a while they were getting their readings done faster."

Furthermore, although question 12 (What were the advantages of the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classroom?), is not directly connected to the role of extensive reading for the language learning, the participants’ answers do imply such a connection. Thus, all of the 23 participants stated that the main advantage of the extensive reading approach is its contribution to foreign language development, which suggests that extensive reading plays an important role in language acquisition. Also, four participants reported some additional advantages, such as: "students’ improving their motivation to read", "students developing their autonomy and independence", "extensive reading developing students’ creativity" and "extensive reading being a source of ideas and information".
6. Discussion

The analysis presented in the previous section shows relatively unambiguous results with regard to the participants’ general attitudes towards extensive reading practices. In this section, the results will be discussed and connected to the theoretical background of this research. Moreover, the purpose of the study and the research questions will be revisited. The section concludes with a brief methodological discussion.

6.1 Discussion of the results

In principle, all the participants' statements indicate their positive attitude towards both extensive reading in general and towards the inclusion of extensive reading in the classroom curricula in particular, which is the most significant result of the study. The positive attitudes of the participants towards extensive reading are manifested in expressions such as "helpful", "beneficial", "contributing", "engaging" or "interesting", through which the participants articulated their appreciation for and the importance of extensive reading practices in FL classrooms. Thus, it is clear that the participants have not only positive attitudes in general but, by applying various ER practices, try to become the students’ role models who seek to create increasing motivation and interest in reading (Day and Bamford, 2004). Moreover, in accordance with McCoss-Yergian and Krepps (2010), Luneberg at al. (2007), and Sánchez and Gavilánez (2017), by promoting extensive reading in foreign language classrooms the teachers are able to evoke students’ positive attitudes to literacy and show them how to become successful foreign language readers, as it is considered that the teachers' attitudes influence students’ attitudes. Influencing students’ attitudes was clearly expressed in the participants’ answers analyzed in the previous section and a large number of the participants stated that, by applying extensive reading practices, they were able to affect student’s attitudes towards reading and make them enjoy this activity.

Nevertheless, such necessity of changing students’ attitudes towards reading from negative to positive seem to fall in line with Bowman (2017) and Watkins (2018) who claim that extensive reading might be an approach met with reluctance on the student’s part generated by the current culture of non-readers. Indeed, ten participants seem to be confirming the existence of a non-readers’ culture and stated that applying extensive reading required persistence and was both problematic and challenging in the beginning. At the same time, all of these participants reported that they were able to change the students’ perception of reading, which indicates that teachers’ persistence in the initial stages and their positive attitudes towards reading are the features which usually pay off. Interestingly, not only students but even some of the participants were initially reluctant towards extensive reading practices and three participants expressed some difficulties with adjusting to the important rule of the extensive reading approach, which concerns the students' independence. This suggest that some teachers might struggle with control issues, especially in terms of losing control over what students choose to read. This is also in line with Renandya and Jacobs (2012) who claim that most teachers prefer to be leaders and to have the power in their classrooms.
Furthermore, in spite of clearly positive attitudes towards extensive reading practices, as many as eighteen participants experienced some challenges of a more practical nature. These participants highlighted the importance of receiving economical support and necessary resources from the school’s management and pointed out that extensive reading is a time-consuming approach. Certainly, cost as well as the work and time required to set up the extensive reading approach in FL classrooms are some of the main concerns among teachers, according to Day and Bamford (1998). However, as pointed out by Soliman (2012), teachers can usually deal with such matters by organizing and prioritizing their time and resources. Thus, regardless of a wide spectrum of various challenges experienced by the participants, all of the participants declared that this is an approach worth applying and recommending to other EFL teachers and students, possibly due to its positive impact on language learning, which the participants reported as its main advantage. Indeed, a great number of researchers claim that extensive reading contributes to developing linguistic competence among students, including Pigada and Schmitt (2006), as well as Mu and Carrington (2007).

Interestingly, there were no great differences between those participants who were obliged to apply ER and those who applied ER of their own will, which means that they were equally positive towards the approach. The only noticeable difference was the fact that the participants who were obliged to work with extensive reading stated that they applied the approach less frequently and for a shorter period of time, as they presumably followed a "pre-settled schedule", which did not, however, impact their positive attitudes. However, it appears that the inclusion of ER is considered as beneficial by the majority of the participants solely when such practices are applied often and regularly, which is in line with one of the rules of an effective extensive reading approach established by Day and Bamford (2004), namely that learners need to read as much as possible. The participants’ responses are also in accordance with two studies conducted by Krashen (1993) and Davis (1995), who found out that extensive reading is beneficial only when applied for a longer period of time, which the vast majority of the participants seem to be aware of. Another aspect worth noticing is the fact that the vast majority of the participants (21 of 23) pointed out that their students could choose freely what they wanted to read, depending on their interests and the level of their knowledge, which was very much appreciated by the students and, at the same time, in accordance with Krashen’s Input hypothesis which assumes that the language acquisition occurs only when the input is comprehensible and engaging enough for the pupils. At the same time, it is also in line with some of the rules of an effective extensive reading approach, established by Day and Bamford (2004), who recommend that "the reading material is easy", "learners choose what they want to read" and "the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure”, and indicate that the majority of the participants are familiar with those rules.

### 6.2 Discussion of the research method

The main disadvantage of a qualitative questionnaire is that this method, unlike a quantitative questionnaire, is more time-consuming and thus, the number of the participants has to be limited. Moreover, as all the informants participating in this survey already
apply or have applied extensive reading practices, the results may appear somewhat biased. On the other hand, having a personal experience regarding applying extensive reading does not imply that one appreciates its functioning in the classroom or views extensive reading as beneficial for foreign language learning. Again, it is worth pointing out that the questionnaire was open both to participants who currently apply extensive reading practices and those who have applied them previously.

However, the results of this research unambiguously reveal the participants’ positive attitudes towards extensive reading practices. On the other hand, these results should not be generalized as they need not apply to other EFL teachers around the country. In other words, one should not draw the conclusion that all EFL teachers have the same positive attitude towards applying extensive reading practices or perceive them as beneficial for foreign language learning. What one must kept in mind when conducting a survey with a limited number of participants is that the same survey with another group of participants could possibly yield different results.

Nevertheless, this qualitative questionnaire has shed light on EFL teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices, which was the very purpose of the study. It is concluded that the teachers’ perspectives could not have been captured in the same deep manner by using quantitative methods, which makes the method used in this research well adapted to its purpose.

7. Conclusion

This study has provided some valuable and interesting insights into EFL teachers' attitudes towards applying extensive reading practices in the classroom curricula. The qualitative questionnaire filled in by the participants provides some in-depth knowledge about the inclusion of extensive reading in foreign language classrooms and, which is equally important, clearly shows how the participants view such an approach for the purposes of foreign language teaching and learning. In addition, the questionnaire has offered an opportunity to view the perspective of the teachers who all have experience with extensive reading approaches and therefore could hopefully contribute with more detailed and thorough answers.

The nearly unequivocal results obtained from the survey show that the teachers are very positive towards applying extensive reading practices in the FL classroom and perceive such practices as beneficial for foreign language learning. Moreover, the majority of the contemporary second language researchers seem to be convinced of the beneficial effects of extensive reading practices on language acquisition, thus the results of this study are in accordance with the current research, which advocates for the inclusion of extensive reading in second and foreign language teaching.
As the focus of second language research is directed towards pupils, there are not enough studies focusing on teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading in upper secondary education. This study could therefore contribute to new insights into the matter of extensive reading, showing it from the teachers’ perspective. Moreover, the results of the study indicate that it is still advantageous for EFL teachers to include extensive reading in FL classroom, regardless of its practical, organizational and financial challenges, which could sometimes hinder performing a well-organized extensive reading approach.

Thus, the current research is hoped to help develop teachers' awareness of numerous benefits of extensive reading practices, as well as their challenges, and to encourage those who do not implement such practices to reconsider their decision. It is hoped that the recognition of extensive reading will result not only in teachers beginning to implement such practices in their classrooms more frequently, but also in teachers encouraging extensive reading outside the classroom in order to help their students to achieve more effective and successful language learning and to become life-long readers. Finally, although the scope of the study and the low number of participants do not allow much generalization and do not yield an overall view of EFL teachers’ attitudes towards extensive reading practices, it might, however, serve as a very good starting point for further studies within this subject.
References


Appendix A

Background information:

Age:
Sex:
The name and the location of your school:
Do you work in a public or an independent school?:
Are you a certified teacher?:
Are you qualified to teach English at the upper secondary level?:
How many years of teaching experience do you have?:
How many years of experience do you have regarding teaching English at the upper secondary level?:

Questionnaire:

1. Why did you decide to apply extensive reading practices in your classroom?
2. What kind of extensive reading practice do you usually apply and why do you apply this particular extensive reading practice?
3. How often do you apply extensive reading practices in your classroom?
4. For how long have you applied such practices?
5. Do you perceive applying extensive reading practices as beneficial for foreign language learning?
6. If yes, why do you perceive such practices as beneficial?
7. How did the extensive reading practices that you applied work in your classroom and what were the challenges of applying such practices?
8. Did you make any adjustments and/or improvements to the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classroom?
9. If yes, what kind of adjustments and/or improvements and why?
10. What is the students’ attitude towards the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classroom?
11. Would you recommend the extensive reading practices that you applied to other EFL teachers and students? Why? Why not?
12. What were the advantages of the extensive reading practices that you applied in your classroom?
13. What were the disadvantages of the extensive practices that you applied in your classroom?
14. Would you like to add something else regarding this topic?
Appendix B

I am a teacher student who study at the Teacher Education Program at Stockholm University. Currently, I am writing my degree project in the subject English and I am looking for a number of participants, who teach English at the upper secondary level and who have experience of applying extensive reading practices in a classroom curriculum. The participants will be asked to fill in an open-ended questionnaire consisting of 14 questions. The aim of this survey is to gain insights into EFL teachers’ general attitudes towards extensive reading practices. For the purpose of this degree project, the answers will be further analyzed and discussed. The participants have the right to cancel the actual participation at any time and have the right to refrain from explaining such decision. Filling in the questionnaire is estimated to take between 10 to 15 minutes. The results and analysis of the participants’ answers will be used in my degree project. However, the answers will be processed with regard to anonymity and confidentiality, which means that under no circumstances will the outsiders have access to any data of this survey. Those who will have access to the analysis and the results of this survey are exclusively my supervisor, examiner and opponents of this project. As a participant, you have the right to request access to the results of this survey as well. This degree project will be conducted under the supervision of Hanna Salmi, University Lecturer at the Department of English at Stockholm University.

Date an place..................................................

Name.........................................................

Signature......................................................

Contact information........................................