

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusions**

Chapter Six deals with three parts. First, findings of the present study will be summarized. Second, pedagogical implications for implementing reading activity will be provided. Third, limitations of the present study will be stated and suggestions for future researches given at the end of this chapter.

#### **6.1 Summary of the Findings**

This study investigates the effects of traditional, intensive, and extensive reading instruction on low achievers' performance in cloze test. After the 3-month study, the results of the cloze test for control and experimental groups were obtained from four aspects: participants' performance in the grammar section, the vocabulary & phrases section, the transitions section, and the overall scores. Major findings of the study were presented as follows:

Firstly, as indicated by the results obtained through One-Way ANOVA used to compare the post-test scores for control and experimental groups, the difference of mean scores between control and experimental groups reached the significant level, except for the section of transitions. Possible explanations for the results might be that participants in the control group feel less interested in the reading material, causing their poor performance in the post-test. Besides, the insufficient test items in the section of transitions may not be able to thoroughly represent participants' improvement in the

experimental groups.

Secondly, the difference of means scores between extensive and intensive reading groups failed to be significant in the post-test. Such outcome could be accounted for the retention problem of the participants, the insufficient test items in cloze test, and the time constraint for the study.

Thirdly, most participants in the experimental groups showed positive attitudes toward reading activities, and expressed willingness to have more reading activities in the future. One reason for their positive attitude might be that they regarded reading as a way to obtain knowledge and improve their English ability. Besides, they read their own materials based on their preferences, and they felt a sense of achievement when each book was done. Moreover, in a stress-free reading environment, they could exchange what they felt about the book with their classmates, which helped to build up the relationship in a way.

## **6.2 Pedagogical Implications**

### **6.2.1 Implementation of Reading Activity to Improve Low Achievers' Cloze Test Performance**

Cloze test was considered an important but difficult test in the English Examination of Technological and Vocational Joint College Entrance Examination. Unlike the section of vocabulary & phrases, which examined only words and expressions that need a lot of memorization, cloze test examined students' integrative language ability. So, how to improve students' cloze test performance is a primary issue for many vocational high school teachers. Here reading would be regarded as an appropriate way to better students'

performance in cloze test, as suggested in previous studies (Kuo & Yang, 2002; Lu, 2002).

Many researches focused on the effects of the reading activity on students of intermediate level, with few paying attention to the effects of reading instruction on low achievers. The results of the study show that low achievers were capable of carrying on reading activities to improve their cloze test performance, though whether extensive reading or intensive reading had better effects remained unanswered, due to the limited time of the study. No matter which reading activity they were involved in, if low achievers got good grades and had confidence, they might regain their interest in English in the end.

### **6.2.2 Implementation of Reading Activity to Improve Low Achievers' Attitude toward English Reading**

English reading is not merely for improving cloze test scores; it should serve as a key to the treasure-house of knowledge--knowledge in language and culture. To help low achievers be eager for the "key," proper arrangement and design of the reading activity should be considered. Group discussion was one of the ways to engage participants in the reading activity. Through discussion, participants exchanged what they felt about the book with each other; they had the same topic to talk about. This would reduce their stress and create a sense of belonging to the group, and thus, intensify their motivation for reading. Besides, they could build up their relationship with others through the discussion. They could know more about each other and acquaint themselves with many classmates while carrying on the discussion, which would also reinforce their motives for reading.

Allowing participants much freedom in the reading activity was also important. It meant that participants cooperated with the teacher to decide their own reading materials and reading process. The participants read their own materials under the teacher's approval, and they kept track with their own reading process. Autonomy in their reading activity would gradually be developed and participants learned to be responsible for their reading process according to their language proficiency. This way, participants would grow the fondness for the reading activity, as shown in the results of the present study.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Researches**

This study investigated the effects of traditional, intensive and extensive reading instruction on low achievers' performance in cloze test. There were some limitations of the present study that needed to be illustrated here.

To begin with, only 95 vocational high school students participated in the study. If more participants underwent the reading activity, a broader picture about the feasibility of traditional, extensive, and intensive reading for low achievers could be understood. Second, due to the school schedule and the time constraint, this study only lasted for about 3 months. If much more time permitted, the different effects of extensive and intensive reading might be revealed. Third, if the cloze test could contain more than 55 items, the different effects of extensive and intensive reading might also be more explicit.

For those who are interested in the effects of traditional, intensive, and extensive reading on low achievers, here are some suggestions for the future research.

First, though the reading activity was beneficial to low achievers, the effects achieved by the order of implementing extensive or intensive reading still remains

unknown. Would the group undergoing intensive reading first and then extensive reading outperform the group with extensive reading first and then intensive reading? Which order of the reading activity helped better improve low achievers performance deserved further investigation.

Second, the cloze test in the study was mainly divided into three sections: grammar, vocabulary & phrases, and transitions. To probe further into the different effects of extensive and intensive reading, analysis of the test items themselves could be done. For example, which group performed better in the causal transition, like “so” or “because,” or which group performed better in the test items of past tense. Large number of test items might be required to carry out such an analysis.

It is hoped that through the present study and the studies hereafter, classroom teachers could understand more about the effects of reading practice on low achievers, and as a result, offer them a promising environment to learn English happily.