



Sustained Second-Language Reading and Multimodal Literary Engagement Through Reflective Autoethnography

Nukhbah Sany

Design Furniture Program Study, Politeknik Industri Furnitur dan Pengolahan Kayu, Jl. Wanamarta Raya no. 20, Kendal Regency, Indonesia

Corresponding Author e-mail: nukhbah.sany@poltek-furnitur.ac.id

Received: April 2026; Revised: June 2026; Accepted: August 2026; Published: September 2026

Abstract

Sustained reading in a second language offers more than linguistic exposure; it can become a reflective practice through which readers negotiate meaning, develop interpretive awareness, and extend textual experience into other modes of expression. This study examines how long-term engagement with English-language texts shapes literary engagement and creative meaning-making in a second-language context. Using reflective autoethnography, the study analyzes self-generated data from reading logs, reflective notes, sketchbooks, artworks, visual documentation, and journals documenting engagement with approximately 50–100 English-language books annually across fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history. The data were examined through reflexive thematic analysis, supported by reader-response theory, transactional theory, extensive reading, second-language reading, and multimodality. The findings reveal four interconnected patterns. First, sustained reading functions as interpretive immersion, allowing meaning-making to develop cumulatively over time. Second, cross-genre reading encourages flexible interpretation by requiring shifts across imaginative, experiential, analytical, and reflective reading modes. Third, reading in English as a second language intensifies meaning-making by slowing the reading process and increasing attention to vocabulary, syntax, inference, and textual structure. Fourth, art-making operates as multimodal translation, transforming textual experience into visual expression. The study contributes to literary studies, second-language reading research, and multimodal literacy by showing how sustained L2 reading can become a self-directed intellectual and creative practice.

Keywords: Autoethnography; Extensive reading; Literary engagement; Reader-response theory; Second-language reading

How to Cite: Sany, N. (2026). Sustained Second-Language Reading and Multimodal Literary Engagement Through Reflective Autoethnography. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 6(3), 1201-1215. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v6i3.4837>



<https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v6i3.4837>

Copyright© 2026, Nukhbah Sany

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) License.



INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely conceptualized not as a passive act of decoding but as an active process of interpretation in which meaning emerges through the dynamic interaction between reader and text. Foundational perspectives in literary theory, particularly reader-response and transactional theories, argue that meaning is not inherent in the text but is co-constructed through the reader's engagement with textual structures, prior knowledge, and lived experience (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1994). Contemporary scholarship further substantiates this position by demonstrating that literary interpretation is shaped through interrelated cognitive, affective, and experiential processes, situating reading as an inherently interactive and meaning-generative activity (Abdullah, 2021; Alfiani et al., 2024; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Mucche et al., 2026; Zhai, 2025). In this regard, reading involves complex acts of inference-making, emotional

engagement, and interpretive judgment, extending beyond comprehension toward integrated cognitive–affective meaning-making (Arahman et al., 2024; Duke et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2023; Talwar et al., 2023; Wang & Hu, 2025). This understanding is important for the present study because it allows reading to be examined not only as comprehension, but also as a lived and reflective process through which readers construct literary meaning over time.

Building on this foundation, literary engagement may be understood as a sustained and multidimensional intellectual practice characterized by continuous cognitive, affective, and interpretive interaction with texts. Rather than occurring as discrete events, reading operates as a longitudinal process through which interpretive capacities are progressively refined. Empirical research indicates that sustained engagement fosters deeper comprehension, interpretive sophistication, and enduring intellectual curiosity (Wang & Hu, 2025). This perspective aligns with distinctions between deep and surface reading, where deep reading entails slow, immersive, and reflective interaction that enables the development of nuanced interpretive frameworks and critical awareness (Baron, 2021; Mangen & Kuiken, 2014), while recent work on reading engagement also emphasizes the role of strategic and metacognitive involvement in sustaining interpretive depth (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). However, sustained reading also deserves attention as a developmental practice that may shape imagination, intellectual identity, and creative response, particularly when reading becomes part of a long-term self-directed habit rather than a short-term academic task.

Interpretive capacity is further expanded through engagement with diverse genres in a second-language context, where readers encounter varied narrative forms, epistemological orientations, and linguistic structures. Different genres afford distinct modes of understanding: fiction promotes imaginative and empathetic engagement, biography provides access to lived experience, and historical texts cultivate contextual reasoning. In L2 contexts, reading additionally involves linguistic negotiation and heightened cognitive effort, often resulting in more deliberate and reflective processing. The concept of extensive reading underscores the role of sustained exposure to meaningful input in developing fluency and interpretive competence (Jeon & Richard Day, 2016; Krashen, 2004), while recent studies suggest that L2 readers demonstrate deeper processing due to increased attentional demands (Yamashita, 2022). L2 reading is not treated in this study merely as language practice, but as an interpretive condition in which linguistic difficulty, slower reading, rereading, and contextual inference may intensify meaning-making.

Beyond textual interpretation, literary engagement extends into multimodal meaning-making, wherein reading generates mental imagery and symbolic representations that can be rearticulated across semiotic modes. From a multimodal perspective, meaning is not confined to language but is constructed through the orchestration of multiple representational resources (Kress, 2009). Within this framework, artistic practices such as drawing and painting can be understood as extensions of literary engagement, functioning as visual interpretations through which readers externalize and transform textual experience. Such practices constitute a form of creative translation, enabling the reconfiguration of meaning from textual to visual domains. Creative practice is therefore significant because it shows how literary response may continue beyond verbal interpretation, allowing textual experience to be reshaped through image, color, composition, and visual form.

Despite the breadth of research on literary engagement and second-language reading, limited attention has been paid to how sustained, high-intensity reading practices intersect with creative expression as part of a continuous interpretive process. Existing studies predominantly foreground comprehension outcomes and language

acquisition, often overlooking the cumulative effects of long-term, cross-genre engagement and its integration with creative practice (Delgado et al., 2018; Jeon & Richard Day, 2016; Yamashita, 2022). This gap is particularly important because it limits understanding of how sustained L2 reading may gradually shape not only reading competence, but also interpretive confidence, imagination, intellectual formation, and creative expression.

Addressing this gap, the present study examines how extensive L2 literary engagement and self-directed artistic practice function as an integrated process of meaning-making, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of literary engagement as a continuous, multimodal, and reflective intellectual practice. The novelty of this study lies in connecting long-term, high-volume L2 reading with creative visual practice through a reflective autoethnographic lens. Rather than positioning reading volume as an achievement in itself, this study examines how sustained reading across genres becomes a reflective pathway through which textual experiences are accumulated, interpreted, and transformed into multimodal expression. Through this focus, the study contributes to literary studies, second-language reading research, and multimodal literacy by offering a context-specific account of sustained L2 reading as an intellectual and creative practice.

The study is guided by the following research questions: *How does sustained L2 reading shape literary engagement as an interpretive practice? How does cross-genre reading influence the development of flexible interpretive strategies? How does reading in English as a second language intensify meaning-making? How does artistic practice transform textual experience into multimodal expression?*

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a reflective autoethnographic approach to examine literary engagement as a lived, interpretive, and meaning-making process in a second-language context. Autoethnography is employed as an analytical method that connects individual experience with theoretical interpretation, enabling the examination of meaning-making processes that are difficult to capture through conventional approaches (Adams et al., 2022; Chang, 2016). It is also increasingly recognized as a rigorous qualitative methodology for examining situated, experiential, and culturally embedded phenomena (Sparkes, 2024; Tarisayi, 2023; Tian et al., 2025). In this study, sustained engagement with texts is treated as a site of interpretive practice, aligned with reader-response and transactional theories, which conceptualize reading as an active interaction between reader and text. Reflective autoethnography is therefore appropriate because the study does not seek to measure reading outcomes externally, but to analyze how sustained L2 reading, cross-genre engagement, linguistic negotiation, and creative practice are experienced and documented over time.

Data Sources

The researcher is positioned as both the subject and interpreter of the study. The autobiographical context involves an Indonesian reader engaging with English-language texts as a second-language reader. The reading practice consists of sustained, high-intensity engagement with approximately 50–100 English-language books annually across genres such as fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history. This practice is conceptualized as extensive literary engagement, where a long-term interpretive process is supported by the theory of extensive reading. Extensive reading emphasizes sustained exposure to meaningful input for developing fluency and interpretive competence (Jeon & Richard Day, 2016; Krashen, 2004) with recent studies further highlighting its role in

enhancing reading engagement, comprehension, and language development in L2 contexts (Nugrahini & Rakhmawati, 2022; Yamashita, 2022). In this study, however, extensive reading is not examined only as a language-development activity, but as a reflective practice through which meaning is accumulated, interpreted, and transformed.

The reading engagement is complemented by self-taught artistic practice developed over approximately three years across multiple media, including gouache, watercolor, drawing, and other visual documentation. The artistic practice was informed by informal digital learning environments, observational learning, and independent experimentation. From a multimodal perspective, artistic practice functions as a visual extension of reading, enabling the translation of textual experience into visual representation (Kress, 2009). The researcher's positionality is therefore central to the study because the data derive from the researcher's own sustained reading and creative practice. This dual role provides close access to internal processes of interpretation, but it also requires reflexive awareness in order to avoid unsupported generalization.

Instruments and Data Collection

The researcher served as the primary research instrument, as is common in reflective autoethnographic inquiry. To support systematic documentation and analysis, several supporting instruments were used: a reading log template, reflective journal prompts, artwork documentation notes, a preliminary coding framework, and thematic analysis memos. The reading log template helped organize information about reading volume, genre, language context, reading frequency, and continuity of engagement. Reflective journal prompts focused on questions such as what meanings emerged from the text, what linguistic difficulties were encountered, how ideas connected across different books, and whether the reading experience produced affective, imaginative, or creative responses. Artwork documentation notes recorded the relationship between reading input, mental imagery, emotional tone, artistic medium, and visual output. The coding framework and thematic memos were used to connect emerging patterns with the four research questions.

Data collection followed the rhythm of the researcher's sustained reading and creative practice rather than a one-time procedure. Reading logs were updated during or after reading activities. Reflective notes and journals were written after significant reading experiences, moments of linguistic difficulty, cross-genre comparison, or interpretive reflection. Sketchbooks and artworks were documented during the creative process and after completion, particularly when the visual work was influenced directly or indirectly by reading experience. This longitudinal documentation made it possible to trace how meaning-making developed across texts, genres, L2 reading experiences, and visual responses. It also allowed the analysis to examine reading not as an isolated event, but as a cumulative and reflective practice.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis began with repeated familiarization with the reading logs, reflective notes, journals, sketchbooks, artworks, and visual documentation. During this stage, the researcher reviewed the corpus to identify recurring patterns related to literary engagement, genre-based interpretation, L2 reading experience, and multimodal transformation. Initial codes were then generated to capture meaningful units of data, including sustained reading habit, rereading, linguistic difficulty, inferencing, genre shifting, emotional immersion, intertextual connection, visual imagery, symbolic translation, and creative reinterpretation. These codes were then reviewed and organized into broader thematic categories.

The development of themes was guided by the four research questions. Data related to reading continuity, reading volume, reflective habit, and accumulated interpretation were analyzed to understand how sustained L2 reading shaped literary engagement. Data related to fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history were examined to understand how cross-genre reading influenced flexible interpretive strategies. Data related to vocabulary, syntax, rereading, slower processing, contextual guessing, and metacognitive awareness were analyzed to understand how reading in English as a second language intensified meaning-making. Finally, data from sketchbooks, artworks, process notes, and visual documentation were analyzed to examine how textual experience was transformed into multimodal expression. Through this process, four major themes were constructed: sustained reading as interpretive immersion, cross-genre reading as flexible interpretation, L2 reading as intensified meaning-making, and art-making as multimodal translation.

Methodological rigor was supported through reflexivity, triangulation of data sources, and transparent analytical procedures. Reflexivity was maintained through analytical memos that recorded the researcher's assumptions, interpretive decisions, and possible biases during the analysis. Triangulation was conducted by comparing patterns across different forms of self-generated data, including reading logs, reflective notes, journals, sketchbooks, artworks, and visual documentation. This process helped ensure that the themes were not based on isolated impressions, but were supported by recurring patterns across textual, reflective, and visual materials. An audit trail was also maintained through coding notes, theme-development memos, and selected examples from the data corpus.

Ethical considerations were addressed through the self-generated nature of the data. Since the study did not involve external participants, issues of participant consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were limited to the responsible representation of the researcher's own experience. Nevertheless, ethical care was taken to avoid overgeneralization and to present the findings as context-specific rather than universally applicable to all L2 readers. The study acknowledges that autoethnographic inquiry relies on subjective experience; therefore, the analysis emphasizes interpretive insight, reflexive transparency, and theoretical grounding rather than generalizable claims. Through this approach, the study positions reflective autoethnography as a suitable method for examining sustained L2 reading and creative practice as an integrated process of literary and multimodal meaning-making.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reflexive thematic analysis generated four interconnected themes that directly correspond to the research questions of the study. First, sustained L2 reading emerged as interpretive immersion, showing how continuous engagement with English-language texts allowed meaning-making to develop cumulatively over time. Second, cross-genre reading supported flexible interpretation, as movement across fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history encouraged shifts between imaginative, experiential, analytical, and reflective reading strategies. Third, reading in English as a second language intensified meaning-making by slowing the reading process and increasing attention to vocabulary, syntax, rereading, inference, and textual structure. Fourth, artistic practice functioned as multimodal translation, transforming textual experience into visual expression through sketchbooks, artworks, and visual documentation. Taken together, these findings illustrate how literary engagement in this autoethnographic account developed as a sustained, L2-mediated, cross-genre, and multimodal process of meaning-making.

Sustained Reading as Interpretive Immersion

Sustained engagement with literary texts reveals a pattern of reading as an ongoing interpretive immersion rather than a series of discrete activities. Reading logs across the data corpus with approximately 50–100 texts annually, indicating a high level of continuity across reading instances. This consistency suggests that reading operates as a cumulative process, where interpretive frameworks are not reset with each text but progressively developed over time.

Table 1. Overview of Sustained Reading Engagement

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Description	Empirical Evidence	Analytical Implication
Reading volume	Annual range	50-100 books/year	Reading logs	High-intensity engagement
Reading frequency	Weekly pattern	Daily reading (1-3 hours)	Journals	Habitual cognitive immersion
Duration	Longitudinal span	Multi-year sustained practice	Logs (multi-year)	Cumulative interpretive development
Language context	Medium	English (L2)	All records	Continuous linguistic negotiation
Genre diversity	Coverage	Fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, history	Book lists	Exposure to diverse epistemologies
Reading purpose	Orientation	Non-instrumental + reflective	Journals	Beyond academic utility
Engagement mode	Depth	Re-reading, slow reading, reflective pauses	Notes	Deep reading behavior
Cognitive focus	Processing	Interpretation over comprehension	Journals (late phase)	Interpretive sophistication
Affective engagement	Emotional involvement	Empathy, immersion, emotional resonance	Reflections	Affective-cognitive integration
Continuity	Inter-textual links	Themes recurring across texts	Notes	Accumulated meaning-making
Output link	Extension	Reading into reflection into art	Sketchbooks	Multimodal continuity

Reflective journals further support this pattern, indicating that reading experiences are interconnected rather than isolated. Entries frequently note the recurrence of similar themes across different texts, such as identity, temporality, and human experience, even when encountered in unrelated genres. For instance, one reflection states that “*ideas from previous books keep appearing in new ones, but in different forms,*” suggesting that interpretation evolves through comparison and recontextualization. This pattern indicates that meaning-making is shaped by an ongoing dialogue between past and present reading experiences, rather than confined to individual texts.

The data also show a shift in reading orientation from comprehension toward interpretation. Early reflections tend to focus on understanding plot and content, whereas later entries emphasize inference, narrative structure, and underlying meaning. For example, reflective notes describe increased attention to *“how meaning is constructed, not just what is being said,”* indicating the development of interpretive awareness. This shift suggests that sustained engagement enhances the reader’s ability to identify implicit meanings and recognize textual strategies.

Taken together, these findings indicate that sustained literary engagement functions as a form of interpretive immersion, in which reading becomes a continuous and self-reinforcing process of meaning-making. The accumulation of reading experiences, as evidenced through logs and reflective records, contributes to the formation of an internal interpretive system that supports deeper and more coherent engagement with texts. Rather than being episodic, reading emerges as an enduring intellectual practice grounded in continuity, repetition, and progressive refinement of interpretation.

Cross-Genre Reading and Shifting Interpretive Strategies

Analysis of the dataset indicates that engagement with diverse literary genres is associated with systematic shifts in interpretive strategies. Reading records show that the corpus spans multiple genres, including fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history, demonstrating consistent cross-genre exposure rather than specialization in a single textual form. This distribution creates conditions in which interpretive approaches must be continuously adjusted, suggesting that cross-genre reading fosters interpretive flexibility.

Table 2. Genre-specific Interpretive Patterns and Cognitive Engagement

Genre	Textual Characteristics	Dominant Engagement Mode	Cognitive Processes	Affective Dimension	Reflective Evidence
Fiction	Narrative, symbolic	Immersive reading	Visualization, inference	Empathy, emotional absorption	<i>“Scenes feel vivid.”</i>
Nonfiction	Expository, conceptual	Analytical reading	Concept integration	Moderate engagement	<i>“Understanding ideas.”</i>
Biography	Life narratives	Experiential engagement	Perspective-taking	Identification with subject	<i>“Following life journey.”</i>
Memoir	Subjective narrative	Reflective reading	Self-referencing	Emotional resonance	<i>“Relating to experiences.”</i>
History	Contextual, temporal	Analytical reconstruction	Causal reasoning	Low-moderate	<i>“Reconstructing context.”</i>
Mixed reading	Cross-genre shifts	Adaptive engagement	Strategy switching	Variable	<i>“Comparative reflections.”</i>
Intertextual reading	Theme recurrence	Comparative reading	Pattern recognition	Conceptual linking	<i>“Ideas reappear.”</i>
Cognitive shift	Genre-based adjustment	Strategic modulation	Metacognition	Awareness of process	<i>“Different reading modes”</i>

Reflective notes provide further evidence of these shifts, indicating that different genres elicit distinct modes of engagement. Entries associated with fiction frequently describe imaginative immersion and emotional involvement, with reflections noting that *“scenes become vivid and easy to visualize,”* suggesting an interpretive orientation grounded in narrative and affective engagement. In contrast, reflections on biographical and memoir texts emphasize experiential understanding, often referring to *“following the life*

trajectory of real individuals,” indicating a shift toward interpretive frameworks centered on lived experience. Historical texts, meanwhile, are associated with more analytical and contextual processing, with notes describing the need to “*slow down and reconstruct the context behind events,*” reflecting increased attention to temporality and causality.

These genre-specific patterns are not isolated but recur across the dataset, indicating stable differences in how texts are approached and interpreted. Comparative reflections further reveal that readers consciously adjust their strategies depending on genre demands. For example, one entry contrasts reading fiction as “*flowing and immersive*” with reading history as “*fragmented but requiring deeper reconstruction,*” highlighting an awareness of differing interpretive processes. Such comparisons suggest that cross-genre engagement promotes metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, in line with research highlighting the role of metacognitive strategy use and learner differences in shaping L2 reading processes (Yapp et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022).

These repeated adjustments contribute to the development of a flexible interpretive system capable of accommodating diverse textual forms. The data indicate that movement across genres encourages readers to integrate affective, experiential, and analytical modes of interpretation, rather than relying on a single dominant approach. As a result, cross-genre reading functions as an integrative practice in which interpretive strategies are continuously recalibrated. It positions literary engagement as inherently dynamic, shaped by sustained interaction with heterogeneous texts that expand both the scope and adaptability of meaning-making processes.

L2 Reading and Intensified Meaning-Making

Analysis of the dataset indicates that reading in a second language (L2) is associated with intensified meaning-making processes characterized by increased cognitive effort, heightened attention to language, and more deliberate interpretive engagement. Reading records show that all texts in the dataset are engaged in English as a second language within an Indonesian linguistic background, situating interpretation within a context of continuous linguistic negotiation. This condition introduces an additional layer of processing beyond content comprehension, requiring readers to actively construct meaning through close attention to vocabulary, syntax, and contextual cues.

Table 3. Cognitive and Interpretive Characteristics of L2 Literary Engagement

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Observation	Empirical Evidence	Analytical Interpretation
Linguistic processing	Vocabulary	Frequent unfamiliar terms	Journal	Increased lexical awareness
Syntax processing	Sentence complexity	Need for rereading	Notes	Slower parsing
Reading speed	Temporal	Slower reading pace	Logs	Deeps processing
Attention	Focus	Heightened attention to structure	Journals	Controlled processing
Comprehension strategy	Rereading	Multiple passes	Notes	Reinforced understanding
Inferencing	Contextual guessing	Meaning from context	Reflections	Active meaning construction
Cognitive load	Effort level	Higher mental effort	Journals	Intensive processing
Metacognition	Monitoring	Awareness of understanding	Notes	Self-regulated reading

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Observation	Empirical Evidence	Analytical Interpretation
Interpretation depth	Meaning focus	Attention to “how meaning works”	Reflections	Structural awareness
Emotional Response	Engagement	Sustained despite difficulty	Journals	Persistence
Adaptation	Difficulty reframing	Challenge becomes engagement	Notes	Productive constraint
Outcome	Meaning-making	Deeper interpretation	All sources	Intensified engagement

Reflective notes provide consistent evidence of this intensified engagement. Early entries frequently document moments of difficulty related to unfamiliar vocabulary and complex sentence structures, with reflections such as “*I need to reread certain passages to fully understand them,*” indicating a slower and more effortful reading process. However, these challenges are accompanied by deeper interaction with the text, as rereading and pausing for interpretation become integral to comprehension. Later reflections suggest a shift in perception, where linguistic difficulty is no longer seen as an obstacle but as a stimulus for closer reading, with entries noting that “*reading in English forces me to pay attention to how meaning is constructed.*”

This pattern is further reinforced by evidence of increased metacognitive awareness during reading. Reflective journals indicate that L2 reading encourages readers to monitor their understanding more actively, often prompting strategies such as inference-making, contextual guessing, and cross-referencing with prior knowledge. For example, one entry describes the process of “*connecting unfamiliar words with the overall context of the sentence,*” illustrating how meaning is constructed through interaction between linguistic input and interpretive reasoning. Such strategies suggest that L2 reading fosters a more conscious and reflective approach to interpretation compared to more automatic processing in a first language.

The continuation of practices contributes to the development of what can be understood as intensified meaning-making, where interpretation is shaped by both linguistic effort and sustained engagement with texts. The data indicate that L2 reading does not merely replicate first-language reading processes but transforms them by increasing attentional focus and interpretive deliberation. As a result, reading in a second language functions as a productive constraint that deepens engagement with textual meaning, positioning L2 literary engagement as a distinct and analytically significant mode of interpretation.

From Text to Image: Multimodal Translation

Analysis of the dataset indicates that literary engagement extends beyond textual interpretation into multimodal translation, where reading experiences are rearticulated into visual forms. Evidence from sketchbooks, finished artworks, and visual documentation shows that a substantial portion of artistic production is directly or indirectly inspired by previously read texts. This relationship suggests that reading generates not only conceptual understanding but also visual representations that can be externalized through artistic practice.

Table 4. Multimodal Transformation of Literary Experience into Visual Representation

Reading Input Type	Mental Process	Interpretive Transformation	Artistic Medium	Visual Output	Evidence
--------------------	----------------	-----------------------------	-----------------	---------------	----------

Reading Input Type	Mental Process	Interpretive Transformation	Artistic Medium	Visual Output	Evidence
Narrative scenes	Imaginary formation	Scene reconstruction	Watercolor	Landscapes	Sketchbook
Emotional tone	Affective abstraction	Mood translation	Gouache	Color compositions	Notes
Character experience	Perspective shift	Identity reinterpretation	Drawing	Figurative art	Journals
Symbolic themes	Conceptual mapping	Symbol creation	Mixed media	Abstract symbols	Artworks
Atmosphere	Sensory reconstruction	Environmental rendering	Plein air	Spatial composition	Photos
Memory traces	Recall + reinterpretation	Selective emphasis	Sketch	Fragmented visuals	Journals
Cognitive reflection	Reinterpretation	Revision of meaning	Layered painting	Evolving visuals	Process logs
Non-literal reading	Interpretation	Symbolic representation	Abstract art	Non-representational	Artworks
Reader response	Personal meaning	Subjective expression	All media	Unique styles	Journals

Reflective journals provide explicit links between textual engagement and visual output. Entries frequently describe how specific scenes, atmospheres, or abstract ideas encountered in reading are transformed into imagery, with notes such as *“I tried to paint the mood of the story rather than a specific scene,”* indicating a shift from literal depiction to interpretive visualization. In other cases, reflections refer to reconstructing imagined settings or characters, suggesting that reading stimulates mental imagery that becomes the basis for visual creation. These accounts demonstrate that meaning is not confined to linguistic processing but is extended into visual domains through imaginative reconstruction.

Visual artifacts further support this pattern by revealing recurring thematic and stylistic correspondences with reading experiences. For instance, artworks associated with narrative texts often emphasize atmosphere, composition, and emotional tone, while those linked to biographical or reflective reading tend to foreground symbolic elements and abstraction. Although not direct reproductions of textual content, these works function as reinterpretations that capture underlying meanings, suggesting a process of translation rather than replication. This is reinforced by reflective notes that describe artistic decisions as attempts to *“translate ideas into colors and shapes,”* indicating conscious engagement with multimodal representation.

Over time, this repeated interaction between reading and artistic production contributes to the formation of a multimodal interpretive system. The data indicate that visual practice becomes an extension of literary engagement, enabling readers to reconfigure textual meaning across semiotic modes. Rather than operating as separate activities, reading and artistic creation are interconnected processes through which meaning is continuously constructed, transformed, and expressed. It positions multimodal translation as a central dimension of literary engagement, demonstrating how interpretation can move beyond text into visual expression while maintaining its interpretive foundation.

Discussion

The findings of this study extend existing understandings of literary engagement by showing that sustained reading in a second-language context can operate as a continuous, reflective, and multimodal process of meaning-making. Drawing on reader-response and transactional perspectives, the study reinforces the view that meaning is not contained solely within texts, but emerges through the interaction between reader, language, experience, and interpretive response (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1994). However, autoethnographic account also extend this view by showing that such interaction is not limited to individual reading events. Literary response developed cumulatively across repeated encounters with texts, genres, linguistic difficulties, and creative practices. Reading therefore appeared not only as an act of interpretation, but also as a long-term intellectual practice through which interpretive awareness, imagination, and self-understanding were gradually shaped.

This interpretation is significant for literary studies because it broadens the understanding of literary engagement beyond text-centered analysis or short-term reader response. The theme on sustained reading as interpretive immersion suggests that literary meaning may be built through continuity, accumulation, and recontextualization. Earlier texts influenced later readings, and repeated encounters with similar themes across different works allowed meaning to develop across time. This supports the idea that literary engagement is developmental rather than episodic. For readers, this finding implies that the value of sustained reading does not lie only in the number of books completed, but in the gradual formation of interpretive habits. Reading becomes useful when readers return to ideas, compare texts, notice recurring concerns, and allow previous reading experiences to inform new interpretations.

The second theme further indicates that literary engagement becomes richer when readers move across different textual forms. Fiction, nonfiction, biography, memoir, and history each invited different modes of attention. Fiction encouraged imaginative immersion and emotional engagement; biography and memoir encouraged reflection on lived experience; nonfiction encouraged conceptual integration; and history encouraged contextual and temporal reasoning. These shifts suggest that cross-genre reading supports interpretive flexibility because readers learn to adjust their strategies according to the demands of different texts. For literary studies, this finding highlights the importance of examining reading not only within a single genre, but as a movement across multiple forms of knowledge and representation. For readers and educators, it suggests that genre diversity can be used intentionally to develop more adaptable and reflective reading practices.

In relation to second-language reading research, the data reframe linguistic difficulty as a productive interpretive condition. Reading in English as a second language involved unfamiliar vocabulary, complex syntax, slower reading pace, rereading, inferencing, and active monitoring of understanding. These experiences could easily be interpreted as obstacles. However, in this study, they also created conditions for closer attention to language and meaning. L2 reading intensified meaning-making because it slowed the reading process and required more deliberate engagement with textual structure. This extends extensive reading perspectives by suggesting that sustained L2 reading is not only valuable for fluency and comprehension, but also for developing interpretive patience, metacognitive awareness, and sensitivity to how meaning is constructed.

For L2 readers, this implication is important because difficulty is often experienced as a sign of inadequacy or lack of proficiency. The findings suggest a different interpretation: difficulty may become productive when readers approach it reflectively and sustain engagement over time. Rereading, pausing, guessing from

context, and noticing sentence structure are not merely compensatory strategies; they can become part of deeper literary engagement. For educators, this means that L2 reading instruction should not focus only on speed, vocabulary acquisition, or comprehension accuracy. It may also support learners by encouraging reflective reading logs, response journals, genre comparison, and discussion of how linguistic difficulty shapes interpretation. Such practices can help students recognize that meaning-making develops through effortful and reflective engagement, not only through immediate fluency.

The study's most distinctive contribution lies in its treatment of art-making as multimodal translation. From a multimodal perspective, meaning is constructed across different semiotic resources, not only through written language (Kress, 2009). The findings show that reading generated visual images, emotional tones, symbolic associations, and compositional ideas that were later rearticulated through sketchbooks, artworks, and visual documentation. This process did not simply reproduce textual content in visual form. Instead, it transformed reading experience into another mode of meaning-making. Atmosphere, emotion, memory, and symbolic interpretation were translated into color, form, composition, and visual style. In this sense, artistic practice functioned as a continuation of literary response.

This has implications for creative literacy and arts-based responses to literature. If reading can move from text into image, then literary engagement should not be understood only through verbal explanation, essay writing, or comprehension tasks. Visual response may offer readers another way to process and express what they understand, feel, and imagine from texts. For educators, this suggests the value of integrating optional creative responses into literature and L2 reading classrooms, especially when learners may struggle to express complex responses only through academic language. Drawing, painting, visual journaling, mood boards, or symbolic composition can become legitimate ways of extending literary interpretation, provided that they are accompanied by reflection and explanation. Such practices may help learners connect reading with personal meaning, imagination, and creative confidence.

The findings also point to the role of self-directed learning in sustaining literary engagement. The reading and artistic practices examined in this study were not structured by formal curriculum or institutional assessment. They developed through personal curiosity, repeated practice, informal learning resources, and reflective documentation. This suggests that sustained L2 reading may become meaningful when readers are given space to pursue texts across genres, document their responses, and connect reading with other intellectual or creative interests. For readers, the study offers a model of reading as a long-term self-directed practice rather than a task completed for immediate academic outcomes. For educators, it suggests that formal instruction can support self-directed reading by helping learners build routines, maintain logs, reflect on difficulty, and connect reading with creative or personal forms of response.

At the same time, these results should be interpreted within the boundaries of the study. As a reflective autoethnographic inquiry, the study does not claim that all L2 readers will experience the same development or that sustained reading will automatically lead to creative expression. The findings are context-specific and based on self-generated longitudinal data. Their value lies not in statistical generalization, but in offering an interpretive account of how sustained L2 reading, cross-genre engagement, linguistic negotiation, and creative practice may interact over time. This limitation is also a contribution because it shows how autoethnography can capture dimensions of reading experience that are difficult to observe through outcome-based methods alone, such as intellectual identity formation, affective response, imaginative development, and multimodal transformation.

Taken together, these four themes position literary engagement as a sustained, L2-mediated, cross-genre, and multimodal practice of meaning-making. It contributes to literary studies by extending reader-response and transactional perspectives into a longitudinal and multimodal frame. It contributes to L2 reading research by showing how linguistic difficulty may intensify interpretation when supported by sustained and reflective practice. It contributes to multimodal literacy by demonstrating how textual experience can be transformed into visual expression. Finally, it offers practical insight for readers and educators by suggesting that sustained reading becomes more meaningful when it is accompanied by reflection, genre diversity, and opportunities for creative response.

CONCLUSION

This study examined sustained second-language reading as a reflective form of literary engagement and multimodal meaning-making. In response to the first research question, the study shows that sustained L2 reading shaped literary engagement as an interpretive practice through continuity, repetition, and accumulated reflection. Reading did not function as a series of isolated acts, but as a cumulative process in which earlier texts informed later interpretations and gradually strengthened interpretive awareness.

Cross-genre reading also contributed to the development of flexible interpretive strategies. Fiction encouraged imaginative and affective immersion, biography and memoir supported experiential reflection, nonfiction enabled conceptual integration, and history encouraged contextual reasoning. Movement across these genres allowed reading strategies to shift according to different textual forms, thereby broadening the reader's literary engagement. Reading in English as a second language intensified meaning-making by slowing the reading process and increasing attention to vocabulary, syntax, rereading, inference, and textual structure. Linguistic difficulty was not only experienced as an obstacle, but also as a productive condition that encouraged closer and more deliberate engagement with meaning.

Artistic practice further extended literary engagement into multimodal expression. Sketchbooks, artworks, and visual documentation showed how reading experiences were rearticulated through image, color, composition, atmosphere, and symbolic form. This indicates that literary response can move beyond verbal interpretation and continue through creative visual practice. Overall, the study positions sustained L2 reading as a self-directed intellectual and creative practice that connects language, interpretation, imagination, and multimodal expression. Its main limitation lies in its reflective autoethnographic design. The study is based on self-generated data from a single reader and therefore does not claim generalizability to all L2 readers.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research may extend this study by involving multiple L2 readers with sustained reading practices in order to examine how literary engagement develops across different linguistic, cultural, educational, and creative contexts. Comparative or collaborative autoethnographic studies may also help strengthen understanding of how readers experience difficulty, interpretation, and creative response over time. Pedagogical applications of sustained L2 reading and multimodal response also deserve closer attention in literature and language classrooms. Educators may consider integrating reading logs, reflective journals, cross-genre reading, and optional creative responses such as drawing, visual journaling, or symbolic composition. These practices may help learners experience reading not only as a comprehension task, but also as a reflective and personally meaningful process of interpretation.

Longitudinal and mixed-method research is also recommended to examine how sustained L2 reading influences interpretive development, reading confidence, creative

expression, and self-directed learning. Such studies could combine qualitative reflections with measurable indicators of reading engagement, language development, and multimodal literacy. Future research should also consider practical barriers such as access to reading materials, time constraints, learner motivation, and institutional support for creative responses to literature.

DECLARATION OF USING AI TOOLS

The author used ChatGPT to support manuscript revision, including language editing, paraphrasing, structural refinement, and response alignment with reviewer comments. The AI tool was not used to generate research data or replace the author's interpretation and analysis. All AI-supported outputs were reviewed, verified, and revised by the author, who remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and scholarly integrity of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, T. (2021). Meaning-Making in Literature: Unlocking Stances and Perspectives of ESL Readers. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 21(4), 271–293. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2104-14>
- Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2022). *Handbook of Autoethnography* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Alfiani, E., Anggia, H., Harpain, H., Dharmawan, Y. Y., Sidabalok, D. M., & Lakatos, K. (2024). Affective and Cognitive Correlates of Reading Comprehension: A Structural Analysis. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 9(2), 144–153. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v9i2.1900>
- Arahman, F. R., Kamil, A. B., & Sumatra, S. (2024). Students' Emotional Engagement in Reading Comprehension Through Read, Cover, Remember and Retell (RCRR) Strategy. *EDULIA: English Education, Linguistic and Art Journal*, 4(2), 91–97. <https://doi.org/10.31539/edulia.v4i2.8683>
- Baron, N. S. (2021). *How We Read Now: Strategic Choices for Print, Screen, and Audio*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190084097.001.0001>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Chang, H. (2016). *Autoethnography as Method* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Delgado, P., Vargas, C., Ackerman, R., & Salmerón, L. (2018). Don't throw away your printed books: A meta-analysis on the effects of reading media on reading comprehension. In *Educational Research Review* (Vol. 25, pp. 23–38). Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.09.003>
- Duke, N. K., & Cartwright, K. B. (2021). The Science of Reading Progresses: Communicating Advances Beyond the Simple View of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(S1), S25–S44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.411>
- Duke, N. K., Ward, A. E., & Pearson, P. D. (2021). The Science of Reading Comprehension Instruction. *Reading Teacher*, 74(6), 663–672. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1993>
- Iser, W. (1978). *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jeon, E.-Y., & Richard Day, K. R. (2016). The Effectiveness of ER on Reading Proficiency: A Meta-Analysis. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 28(2), 246–265. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/66901>
- Kim, J. S., Burkhauser, M. A., Relyea, J. E., Gilbert, J. B., Scherer, E., Fitzgerald, J., Mosher, D., & McIntyre, J. (2023). A Longitudinal Randomized Trial of a Sustained

- Content Literacy Intervention From First to Second Grade: Transfer Effects on Students' Reading Comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(1), 73–98. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000751>
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research* (2nd ed.). Heinemann.
- Kress, G. R. (2009). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Routledge.
- Mangen, A., & Kuiken, D. (2014). Lost in an iPad. *Scientific Study of Literature*, 4(2), 150–177. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ssol.4.2.02man>
- Muche, Y. A., Abebe, A. S., & Negasi, R. D. (2026). The mediating role of reading engagement in the relation between epistemic beliefs and reading comprehension among Ethiopian pre-service EFL teachers. *Cogent Education*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2026.2633477>
- Nugrahini, Y., & Rakhmawati, I. (2022). The Effects of Extensive Reading on EFL Learners' Writing Performance. *Jurnal Eduscience (JES)*, 9(2), 515–529.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2024). Autoethnography as an ethically contested terrain: some thinking points for consideration. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 21(1), 107–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2023.2293073>
- Talwar, A., Magliano, J. P., Higgs, K., Santuzzi, A., Tonks, S., O'Reilly, T., & Sabatini, J. (2023). Early Academic Success in College: Examining the Contributions of Reading Literacy Skills, Metacognitive Reading Strategies, and Reading Motivation. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 53(1), 58–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2022.2137069>
- Tarisayi, K. S. (2023). Autoethnography as a Qualitative Methodology: Conceptual Foundations, Techniques, Benefits and Limitations. *Encyclopaedia*, 27(67), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-8670/17815>
- Tian, X., Zhang, Z., & Xu, L. (2025). Autoethnography as a Research Method in Cross-Cultural Education Studies. *Cross-Cultural Education Studies*, 1(2), 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.63385/cces.v1i2.380>
- Wang, Y., & Hu, J. (2025). Relationships Between Reading Engagement Features and Students' Digital Reading Performance: An International Large-Scale Study. *Learning and Instruction*, 99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2025.102157>
- Yamashita, J. (2022). L2 Reading Comprehension: Theory and Research. In *Bilingual Processing and Acquisition* (Vol. 13, pp. 5–28). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/bpa.13.02yam>
- Yapp, D. J., de Graaff, R., & van den Bergh, H. (2021). Improving second language reading comprehension through reading strategies A meta-analysis of L2 reading strategy interventions. *Journal of Second Language Studies*, 4(1), 154–192. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jsls.19013.yap>
- Zhai, K. (2025). Exploring the Relationships Between Academic Buoyancy, Engagement, and Achievement in English Reading Among EFL Learners. *SAGE Open*, 15(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251357156>
- Zhang, W., Zhao, M., & Zhu, Y. (2022). Understanding Individual Differences in Metacognitive Strategy Use, Task Demand, and Performance in Integrated L2 Speaking Assessment Tasks. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.876208>

