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The Impact of Extensive Reading Using er-central.com to Promote Reading Habit Among EFL High School Students in East Java: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the impact of extensive reading program using the website er-central.com to promote reading habit among high school students in East Java. The study employs a qualitative case study where the program has been done in a high school of 17 Agustus 1945 Senior High School which runs the extensive reading using a digital website. The data is given in two ways, the report of students' reading progress on the administrator page and the response to an open-ended questionnaire that asks students' perception of how the program impacts their reading habits. The 5 examples of students reading progress reports show that students' reading is still in progress where students have the autonomy to choose the texts and do the quiz. The answers to the open-ended questionnaire show that students argued the program impacts their reading habits. It is shown that 60.78% of the respondents agreed that extensive reading encourages them to read and be autonomous. It can be concluded that the extensive reading program encourages the students' reading habits.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Er-Central.Com, Reading Habit.

INTRODUCTION

In supporting the application of the emancipated curriculum in Indonesia, the minister of education has published decree No. 23 of 2015 to improve student literacy, schools could expand various literacy programs such as 15 minutes of reading before the first lesson starts, intensive reading, or extensive reading. Many studies have proven the impact of extensive reading in promoting learner autonomy, enhancing reading habits, bolstering students' knowledge, etc.

Meanwhile, (Davis, 1995) defined the term extensive reading as an additional class library plan that is linked to an English course. It provides students with the time, resources, and support they need to read as many books as possible for pleasure, at their reading level, and without pressure from exams or grades. As a result, students are only competing against themselves. Teachers must offer the inspiration and oversight necessary to guarantee that

students read the most books in the allotted time. The emphasis is on quantity and diversity above quality; therefore, books are chosen more for their aesthetic appeal and practical application to the students' lives than for their literary value.

Moreover, extensive reading is an effective way to enrich students' encouragement to read. According to (Yamashita, 2013), extensive reading could increase the interest and intelligence among students to support their learning. Extensive reading also impacts students' attitudes when they review books or texts in their leisure time so they won't spare it to negative acts. Extensive reading also has a positive attitude among students when students write book reviews may improve students' autonomy (Canh, 2021).

However, all schools in Indonesia do not do the program of extensive reading. This matter made the minister of Indonesia publish the 23rd episode of the emancipated curriculum to raise literacy as one of the efforts to support the vision of creating literate generations. This condition is caused by the results of the literacy test conducted by PISA showing that Indonesia is in a literacy emergency. The minister hoped the extensive reading program could raise literacy among students by doing the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah). Schools are given the freedom to manage the literacy program. Schools could apply the 15 minutes before the first lesson or do extensive reading.

Hence, the extensive reading program where students read for their pleasure seems to be done in several schools in East Java by giving 15 minutes of reading before the first lesson starts. This program is expected to impact students' reading habits. The previous study conducted by (Nursiwi & Floriasti, 2020) proved that extensive reading done in junior high school could increase students' vocabulary in English. Furthermore, the study of extensive reading has been done on university students and showed the positive impacts on their learning. (Delfi & Yamat, 2017) reviewed several case studies on university students majoring in English has positive impacts on their behavior in reading. Students become autonomous in reading which results in English mastery. Extensive reading also impacts students' reading speed, reading comprehension, and writing skills (Mason & Krashen, 1997). This shows that extensive reading could bring more benefits in encouraging students to bolster their reading habits (R. R. Day et al., 1998).

Besides, another study conducted by (Arista, 2022) revealed that the graded readers textbook could improve college students' reading comprehension. Students who take the extensive reading program show significant progress in understanding the text. The literacy program can also be done using a digital platform or website that provides free access to users. The use of digital literacy websites has significantly helped students increase their English proficiency. The previous study conducted by (Janah et al., 2022) has reviewed the use of digital extensive reading in Indonesia using Let's Read! Application, blogging, webtoon, Wattpad, Story Weaver, XReading, etc. show meaningful effects on students' reading comprehension. Using the Internet for extensive reading is a promising pedagogical approach that bolsters students' learning (Silva, 2009).

Nevertheless, the success of an extensive reading program does not only depend on the encouragement given by the teacher or lecturer in class. (Pilgreen, 2000) mentioned eight elements of the success of extensive reading which is similar to (R. Day & Bamford, 2002) who mentioned ten guidelines for teaching extensive reading. They emphasized the importance of favorability, admission, distributed time and environment, teachers' training, encouragement, variety of topics, follow-up activity, and non-accountability. When those elements are implemented in conducting the extensive reading program, a significant impact on students' reading habits will be seen.

A similar study about the impact of the er-central.com website has been done by (Rohim & Fitariana, 2022) who conducted a study to teach listening using the er-central.com website to college students. The result showed teaching listening using the website was effective (Saragih, 2022). Meanwhile, the research gap in this study covers the impact of the

extensive reading program to promote the EFL high school students’ reading habits which has not been done in any studies yet.

Thus, this study will investigate the impact of extensive reading programs to promote reading habits among EFL high school students using the er-central.com website. The extensive reading central (er-central) website provides free access to readers to read various texts based on their reading level. This website gives school administrators the freedom to form reading classes by bulking students into each class so that students' reading results can be recorded systematically. The website also provides a reading and listening menu. Students can choose more than 1000 texts based on the topic they like to choose. Students can also do the quiz after they read a text so this helps students comprehend the text they have chosen. The report will show the text students chose and the reading speed. It helps schools analyze the students’ speed of reading. This study investigates the impact of extensive reading using er-central.com to promote reading habits among EFL high school students in East Java.

METHOD

In conducting this study, the researcher used a qualitative case study design to investigate an in-depth and multifaceted study using a single phenomenon (Feagin et al., 2016). The study is conducted in SMA 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya where the program of extensive reading has just been being held in this school. The participants of the study are students in 10th grade consists of five classes 10-1, 10-2, 10-3, 10-4, and 10-5. The population was 154 students who got extensive reading using er-central.com.

The study used 2 data, the record of students reading using er-central.com and a questionnaire. The record will cover 5 students’ reading progress reports and the questionnaire will cover samples of the classes. The participants for the questionnaire were sampled from 2 classes of 5 classes of 10th-grade class that were 10-4 and 10-5 consisting of 51 students related to their responses on how the extensive reading program impacts their reading habits.

The instrument used in this study was an open-ended questionnaire. The questions in the questionnaire were adapted from (Ali, 2015; Camiciottoli, 2001; Pilgreen, 2000). Since the questionnaire was in Bahasa Indonesia, the researcher transcribed and coded the data related to the impact of extensive reading to promote reading habits. In analyzing the collected data, the author presents the data using descriptive qualitative methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students’ Progress in Reading

As stated in the previous section about the impact of extensive reading to promote learner autonomy, encourage students’ reading, and bolster students learning, extensive reading also promotes reading habits among students.

The administrators had bulked classes and students in each class. The username and password to access the website had also been spread among the students.

Class Name	Start Date	End Date	Class Code	Number Of Students
All Students				567
Guru-SMATAG-23	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	Gur-7-2023	52
X1-SMATAG-2023	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X1--7-2023	30
X2-SMATAG-2023	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X2--7-2023	30
X3-SMATAG-2023	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X3--7-2023	30
X4-SMATAG-2023	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X4--7-2023	30
X5-SMATAG-2023	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X5--7-2023	30
X11-SMATAG-23	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X11-7-2023	28
X12-SMATAG-23	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X12-7-2023	29
X13-SMATAG-23	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X13-7-2023	29
X14-SMATAG-23	20-Jul-23	20-Jul-24	X14-7-2023	35

Figure 1 shows that the administrator had bulked the classes from July 2023 to July 2024. There are 18 classes in the school for academic year 2023/2024.

From the figure above, the total number of participants joining the extensive reading program is 567 students and teachers. The teachers are also taking action in the program as they encourage students to read from the website. Teachers are reading together with students in class. Teacher’s encouragement is one of the guidelines for the success of extensive reading (Pilgreen, 2000).

From the report of students’ reading using the er-central.com website on the administrator page, students show significant progress in reading. From August 2023 until January 2024, the progress of their readings shows a good advancement. Here are some examples of students’ progress in reading.

Text Name	Text Level	Reading Date	Length	%completed	Words read	Time taken	Reading speed (words per minute)	Quiz score in %	Cheated ?
The Lamp	17.0	24-Jul-23	62	100 %	62	00:02:38	24	100.00 %	ok
The Fox and the Grapes	18.0	24-Jul-23	56	100 %	56	00:01:13	48	100.00 %	ok
The Lion and the Hare	15.0	24-Jul-23	97	100 %	97	00:01:41	58	75.00 %	ok
The North Wind and the Sun	9.0	25-Jul-23	165	100 %	165	00:02:38	65	100.00 %	ok
The Art of Stealing	9.0	24-Jul-23	178	100 %	178	00:02:28	74	100.00 %	ok
Freeing the Birds	8.0	24-Jul-23	162	100 %	162	00:02:01	81	33.33 %	ok
Handwriting	10.0	24-Jul-23	177	100 %	177	00:01:57	92	75.00 %	ok
Fashion show supported by Julian	9.0	24-Jul-23	4711	100 %	4711	00:36:22	101	0 %	ok
Finding Your Soulmate - A Guide to Discovering Your Perfect Life Partner	10.0	09-Jan-24	727	100 %	727	00:07:40	110		ok
Sky High	12.0	24-Jul-23	194	100 %	194	00:01:43	119	66.67 %	ok
Meru	1.0	09-Jan-24	1715	100 %	1715	00:05:33	123	0 %	ok

Figure 2 shows an example of the development of Student 1 reading progress report

One of the students’ reports of their reading shows that the student read several times. On the report, the student above has been reading 40 titles of texts from the website. Students have the freedom to choose the text level they want to read. the website provides text levels from 1.0 to 20.0. The report above shows that the student chose texts from the lowest level to high level. The length of the text she read also varied from 56 to 4711 words. The student above did the quiz after she had read the text and the report showed she did well on the quiz although not all quizzes she took. The indication of cheating or not had also been reported. The category of cheating is depended on the length of the text and how much time she spends to read. The report above shows that during the reading, the student did not cheat in reading.

Another report has shown the reading progress of a student as shown below. The report also indicated that the student’s reading speed is quite good and she did not cheat during the reading.

Text Name	Text Level	Reading Date	Length	%completed	Words read	Time taken	Reading speed (words per minute)	Quiz score in %	Cheated ?
Best Ways to Stretch your Money	7.0	25-Jul-23	864	100 %	864	00:09:29	58	75.00 %	ok
Wally the Whale	6.0	10-Jan-24	148	100 %	148	00:04:45	64	80.00 %	ok
Genetic Engineering	15.0	30-Jan-24	395	100 %	395	00:06:01	66	66.67 %	ok
The World's Most Expensive Ice-creams	18.0	24-Jan-24	447	100 %	447	00:06:01	77		ok
The Beatles	9.0	24-Jan-24	401	100 %	401	00:04:59	82	75.00 %	ok
The Enlightenment and the American Revolution	7.0	10-Jan-24	603	100 %	603	00:07:07	85	66.67 %	ok
A Brief History of Debt in the United States	16.0	31-Jan-24	1060	100 %	1060	00:10:09	109		ok
Asoka	8.0	06-Feb-24	546	100 %	546	00:04:57	112	80.00 %	ok
The English Language	8.0	24-Jan-24	543	100 %	543	00:04:47	115	33.33 %	ok
Daphne and Micah	8.0	22-Jan-24	675	100 %	675	00:05:51	116	100.00 %	ok

Figure 3. Student 2 Reading Progress Report

From the above figure, it can be analyzed that she read from level 6.0 to level 18.0 from July 2023 to February 2024. The sample of the reading progress above shows that Student 2 reads texts varied from 148 to 1060 words. With the progress of the quizzes that she had taken several times, Student 2 tried to comprehend the text although she could not answer the questions on the quiz correctly, she tried her best.

Text Name	Text Level	Reading Date	Length	%completed	Words read	Time taken	Reading speed (words per minute)	Quiz score in %	Cheated ?
The Sisters Who Made Vietnam Free	1.0	09-Jan-24	212	100 %	212	00:04:14	52	100.00 %	ok
Sir Edmund Hillary	8.0	09-Jan-24	389	100 %	389	00:05:44	70	60.00 %	ok
The Duck and the Moon	14.0	03-Aug-23	95	100 %	95	00:01:25	70	100.00 %	ok
Child Be Good	5.0	09-Jan-24	520	100 %	520	00:06:47	77	66.67 %	ok
A Tale of a Little Girl and her Mother	6.0	09-Jan-24	317	100 %	317	00:03:50	83	100.00 %	ok
Let's Speak English	8.0	09-Jan-24	299	100 %	299	00:03:16	92	100.00 %	ok
Dog years	8.0	09-Jan-24	888	100 %	888	00:09:57	93	100.00 %	ok
UFO's	16.0	08-Jan-24	623	100 %	623	00:06:44	95	40.00 %	ok
The Thief and His Mother	7.0	09-Jan-24	208	100 %	208	00:02:10	97	50.00 %	ok
Best Ways to Stretch your Money	7.0	09-Jan-24	864	100 %	864	00:08:22	99		ok
How the Turtle Won the Race	9.0	09-Jan-24	519	100 %	519	00:04:51	107	66.67 %	ok
Horse Rider	5.0	09-Jan-24	122	100 %	122	00:01:10	112	100.00 %	ok

Figure 4. Student 3 Reading Progress Report

Figure 3 shows that Student 3 had read texts from 95 to 868 words. He has been reading from August 2023 to January 2024. The progress shows that Student 3 completes the texts he reads. It can be seen from the progress of the reading that it is 100% complete. The reading speed shows an average speed from 52 words per minute to 112 words per minute. Compared to Student 1 and Student 2 above, Student 3 seems slower in reading. This is a good result that Student 3 tried his best in reading and trying to comprehend the text. It is shown by the quiz Student 3 had taken that was done 100% correct. The report also shows that Student 3 was fair in reading. Compared to the Student 4 report below, the website seems in error since it does not show the reading speed properly.

Text Name	Text Level	Reading Date	Length	%completed	Words read	Time taken	Reading speed (words per minute)	Quiz score in %	Cheated ?
Effective Ways to Get a Date	6.0	02-Jun-24	480	100 %	480	00:00:00	0	33.33 %	ok
My Heart	9.0	25-May-24	5259	100 %	5259	00:00:00	0	80.00 %	ok
Rabindranath Tagore	7.0	25-May-24	542	100 %	542	00:00:00	0	100.00 %	ok
Go Away Writer's Block!	5.0	19-May-24	518	133.33 %	690	00:00:00	0	100.00 %	ok
Changing life	9.0	19-May-24	5696	100 %	5696	00:00:00	0	80.00 %	ok
Money Doesn't Grow on Trees	6.0	19-May-24	531	100 %	531	00:00:00	0	100.00 %	ok
Reality TV Shows: Why People Love Watching Them	7.0	19-Feb-24	723	100 %	723	00:00:00	0	33.33 %	ok
Stage Mothers are People Too	5.0	19-Feb-24	547	100 %	547	00:00:00	0	33.33 %	ok
Dog years	8.0	19-Feb-24	888	100 %	888	00:00:00	0	33.33 %	ok
The Antarctic	10.0	19-Feb-24	392	100 %	392	00:00:00	0	40.00 %	ok
Finding the One	6.0	19-Feb-24	501	100 %	501	00:00:00	0	100.00 %	ok
Body Language	6.0	10-Aug-23	306	100 %	306	00:00:00	0		ok

Figure 5. Student 4 Reading Progress Report

Figure 5 shows that Student 4 has been reading well since the length of her text varied from 306 to 5696 words. Student 4 completely reads the texts well. Student 4 also read the text without cheating. The report shows that Student 4 tried to comprehend the texts she read

by doing the quiz although the report shows that Student 4 had not done the quiz well. However, the report above shows an oddity as the reading speed shows 0 words per minute for all texts Student 4 had read. This could happen when the website is in error. This website has a drawback; when accessed by many users, this website shows slowness when accessed simultaneously.

Text Name	Text Level	Reading Date	Length	%completed	Words read	Time taken	Reading speed (words per minute)	Quiz score in %	Cheated ?
Child Be Good	5.0	05-Sep-23	520	100 %	520	00:06:40	78		ok
Diponegoro	7.0	25-Jul-23	539	100 %	539	00:04:56	113	66.67 %	ok
The Enlightenment and the American Revolution	7.0	03-Oct-23	603	100 %	603	00:04:36	132	66.67 %	ok
The Two Garcons Part 9	11.0	13-Jan-24	241	100 %	241	00:01:49	138	100.00 %	ok
The Two Garcons Part 10	9.0	13-Jan-24	477	100 %	477	00:03:07	153	60.00 %	ok
The Two Garcons Part 5	9.0	10-Jan-24	444	100 %	444	00:02:51	157	66.67 %	ok
The Two Garcons Part 8	9.0	10-Jan-24	691	100 %	691	00:04:16	164	40.00 %	ok
The Two Garcons Part 4	10.0	10-Jan-24	385	100 %	385	00:02:22	165	100.00 %	ok
A Tale of a Little Girl and her Mother	6.0	09-Jan-24	317	100 %	317	00:01:55	167	100.00 %	ok

Figure 6. Student 5 Reading Progress Report

Figure 6 shows that Student 5 has been reading from the website from July 2023 to January 2024. The examples of the texts Student 5 read above show the variety of the text level he chose from level 5 to level 11. Student 5 also finished all the texts he read with the length of the text from 241 to 691 words. Student 5 reading speed report shows that Student 5 has a high speed in reading shown by the speed average he reads per minute is 140 words per minute. Although the Student 5 quiz was reported as not 100%, he had tried well to comprehend the text by doing the quiz.

Promoting Reading Habits

Extensive reading can be one way to increase students' interest in reading, where students can read as many texts as they want without the burden of doing assignments or getting academic grades. The open-ended questionnaire was distributed to students of classes 10-4 and 10-5 consisting of 51 students. The questionnaire was given to students to get students perceptions of joining the extensive reading program from July 2023 to May 2024 if the program impacts their reading habits. One of the questions asked about how the website er-central.com affects students' reading habits.

Table 1. Students' Perception of Extensive Reading Impacts Reading Habits

Students Perception	Number of Students	Percentage
Impacts	31	60.78%
No impact	12	23.53%
Neutral	3	5.88%
Little impact	3	5.88%
No answer	2	3.92%

Table 1 shows that the extensive reading program held by the school impacts students' reading habits. Most of the respondents (60.78%) argued that the extensive reading program affects their reading habits. Here are some examples of students' responses to how the program impacts their reading habits.

“I started reading more often.” (Student 9)

“I become more diligent to read than before.” (Student 12)

“It makes me encourage to read.” (Student 18)

“I am accustomed to opening the website.” (Student 31)

“It affects me. I like reading now.” (Student 32)

“It is very effective. It makes me like reading.” (Student 40)

“I read fast now.” (Student 47)

Those examples imply that students are encouraged to read from the website. They argued that the extensive reading program held by the school helps them read fast. It is in line with the previous examples of students' reading speed per minute.

Table 1 also shows that 12 students (23.53%) argued the program has not impacted on their reading habits. Some students in this percentage answered the questionnaire with strictly no while the others answered that they are fonder of hanging out with friends than reading.

“No. I like printed books” (Student 6)

“Not really because I like to hang out with friends and find new experiences.” (Student 15)

“No. I like hanging out with friends outside.” (Student 26)

Furthermore, 3 students answered that they liked reading before so the program has no greater impact on them. They argued that they are neutral about how the extensive reading program affects their reading habits.

“I feel just so-so” (Student 1)

“Just so-so” (Student 4)

“Not really because I liked reading before and now it still goes on.” (Student 34)

Table 1 shows that only 2 students did not answer the question. This happens with the possibility that those students have never signed in to the website so they have no opinions on whether the program impacts their reading habits.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the extensive reading program using the er-central.com website impacts reading habits among EFL high school students. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire argued that the extensive reading program held by the school encourages them to like reading. The program could give more insights to students and gain new knowledge. The school needs to go on the program to trigger students who have never signed in to the website so they will start reading. Schools must also pay attention to the 8 guidelines suggested by Pilgreen (2000) to make an extensive reading program successful, including easy access, interesting reading provided, a conducive reading environment, staff training, encouragement from teachers who are involved in reading together with students, non-accountability where students are not required to complete assignments or are targeted for the amount of reading they are required to read, there are follow-up activities where students can discuss with teachers or friends about the content of the texts they read, and give more time to students to read. Schools can also provide stimulation so that students enjoy reading by providing an appreciation for students' reading progress. This can also support government programs to improve the quality of students' literacy skills in Indonesia.

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