Nurturing Reading Logs to Foster Students' Reading Habits

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Abstract

Reading habit influences language proficiency. Teachers have used Extensive Reading (ER) as a strategy to enhance students' reading habits. The present study investigated how reading logs influenced the reading habits of 28 EFL learners in Reading courses using a qualitative research approach. Data were collected using observations, classroom discussions, and students' reading logs. Study participants were students enrolled in an *Extensive Reading* class who had undertaken an *Intensive Reading* class in the preceding semester as a prerequisite subject. Reading logs improved rates of reading. Nurturing reading logs helped students enhance their reading habits based on word count, number of books/articles read, and their reflections on their reading attitudes. Lecturers should promote a reading atmosphere in which students are encouraged to read for pleasure. All EFL learners should have access to more reader books and an ongoing schedule of extensive reading to foster good reading habits.

Keywords: reading logs, reading habits, extensive reading, graded readers

1. Introduction

University learners should read about 9000 - 10000 words weekly for standardized levels of language proficiency and literacy (Aizawa et al., 2023; Meniado, 2021). Extensive Reading (ER) advances language expertise. (Ateek, 2021; Renandya et al., 2019). ER requires readers to rapidly go through and understand the sense of a text. ER enables learners to voluntarily immerse themselves in numerous foreign language learning resources (Le et al., 2019; Meganathan et al., 2019; Mo, 2021; Park, 2016). Reading several foreign language resources is commonly a prerequisite for ER classes (Hendriwanto & Kurniati, 2019; McLean & Rouault, 2017). ER conditions students to enjoy reading (Silinskas et al., 2020; Torppa et al., 2020). Teachers have ER to expose students to comprehensive language inputs (Nkomo, 2021; Tran et al., 2019; Wulyani et al., 2022). ER activities can help students master and enrich their vocabulary (Serrano, 2023). Awah and Dhanarattigannon (2021; 2022) pointed out that ER has a positive impact on students' reading habits. ER also motivates readers to improve their reading fluency (Nevo et al., 2020; Torppa et al., 2020).

Conversely, Intensive Reading (IR) is a reading activity for specific information that focuses on vocabulary mastery. In an initial ER class, students failed to read the same number of works they had read in their IR Reading class. They only read short functional texts and literature, myths, or tales of Indonesian descent and were unaware of the number of words they read each week. Furthermore, none of them had read through an entire book in the preceding semester. The literature they read was obtained from the World Wide Web. Based on the rendering, referring to Chang et al., Chen, Dabarera, et al., and Le et al. (2023; 2018; 2014; 2019) these students had poor reading habits.

Reading habits are influenced by internal factors related to students' passion for learning, and external factors such as their lecturers, curriculum, and company. Most students are unwilling to read voluntarily and require extrinsic motivation to read (Barber & Klauda, 2020). In a classroom setting, teachers majorly influence students' reading habits (Jacobs & Renandya, 2015). Therefore, teachers should foster students' reading motivation through appropriate extensive reading classes' instructional activities inside and outside the classroom (Baba & Rostam Affendi, 2020). Teachers can use alternative tools to improve students' reading rates. Such tools must have authentic indicators to monitor the development of students' reading habits (Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019).

Nurturing reading logs or reading journals sustain reading habit by requiring students to record or log reading-related activities during and after ER classes. Using reading logs stimulates students' to sharpen their critical thinking skills (Hendriwanto & Kurniati, 2019; Mo, 2021). Reading journals enhance students' reading ability, reading attitude, and knowledge (Dhanarattigannon, 2022). Research done by Majumdar et al. (2021) also found out the description of the students' online reading profiles can be monitored through the use of reading logs integrated with a learning application. Strategies have been used to foster reading motivation, such as inspirational stories, digital reading text, and expository text (Al Sultan, 2023; Laeli et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2023; Quinonez-Beltran et al., 2023). Encouraging students to nurture their reading logs will make them enjoy reading and develop their capacity for reading. Learners who are accustomed to reading frequently enjoy reading which enhances their command of English. The present research study used reading journals to enforce the reading activities of university students with low levels of reading proficiency inside and outside the classroom and investigated in what ways reading logs contributed to improving learners' reading volume.

The current study recruited students of Extensive Reading classes who had undertaken Intensive Reading (IR) classes as a prerequisite for the ER class.

2. Methods

The present qualitative research investigated how nurturing reading logs promoted the reading habits of the learners in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. The study took place in the English Education Department (EED), where the college-learners undergo trainings to become future English teachers. Several courses are offered to prepare learners to be English teachers including Extensive Reading (ER). Reading logs are used throughout the semester during the extensive reading course. It took researchers close to one month to obtain approval from the head of the research authority, the dean of the faculty, and the head of the department to access the Extensive Reading class. Researchers informed the learners about the research program they planned to carry out and sought learners' consent to participate. *2.1 Participants*

This current study included 28 students who had undergone Intensive Reading (IR) as a prerequisite for taking part in the Extensive Reading (ER) course. In the IR class, learners exclusively read small portions of English texts to complete tasks. Despite having studied English since elementary school and having completed nearly two years of university, they had a low reading volume. Therefore, learners were notified of research requirements including extensive reading throughout their semester of study in advance of research participation.

Learners were informed of the difference between IR and ER and that their reading habits would be evaluated. After the students confirmed their willingness to participate, they were asked to keep/nurture the logs of ER activities.

2.2 Research Instrument

Data were obtained through observation, classroom discussion, and student reading logs (Table 1). Researchers recorded ER class learners' conduct during the set-up of reading logs. A classroom conversation was held to solicit students' opinions on how reading logs could improve their reading habits. The conversation included issues such as how many words they were reading right at the time of the study, the number of literary works they had read, whether they had benefited from reading, how much they liked to keep and nurture the logs of reading activities, and so on. The final instrument used was reading journals (reading logs). The students completed three compulsory materials and two optional sections of their reading logs. They also completed two of the three vocabulary strategies (vocabulary methods). Reflective peer assessments were included in the logs to give learners a chance to share and document constructive criticism about the logs that they had constructed.

Table 1. Reading logs

Comprehension Section	Vocabulary Method
(Complete 5 sections)	(Complete 2 methods' tasks)
Compulsory: 1, 4, 7	
Optional: 2 items	Vocabularies:
1. Presume the topic of the book,	
2. Make remarks on a section or phrase in the text,	Definitions: ....
3. Create an image depicting one of the story's designations.	Sentences: ....
4. Show the inquiries and responses.	
5. Compose an essay	
6. Provide your ending	
7. Express your thoughts on what you read	

Reflection in Pairs	
Identity :	
Time :	
What did you enjoy the most about your companion's reading logs notes?	
What one thing did you like about your friend's reading journal (reading logs)?	
Make a list of everything your friend wishes to collaborate on.	

The Extensive Reading (ER) class' timetable for the whole semester is shown below.

Table 2. Schedule of Extensive Reading (ER) class

Week 1	• Explain the purposes of ER to learners.
	• Familiarize learners with ranked readers and the er-central website
	•Discuss how to select and evaluate at books.
	• Learners start to choose stories
Week 2	• Learners start to read.
	• Ensure that learners choose the 'appropriate' books for pleasure reading.
	• Learners who haven't identified an 'appropriate' book must select a reader-appropriate book level.
	• Decide on the details that learners will document in their reading logs.
Week 3	• Learners must read rated readers
Week 4	• Reading essays and classed readers
	• Growing records
Week 5	• Consortium Circle (The learners reflect on the books or reading text they chose, a number of sections read, a certain degree of terms, and scenario development).
	• Learners begin to work on their reading journals.
Week 6	• Reading stories (graded readers)
	• Nurturing reading logs
Week 7	• Reading stories (graded readers)
	• Nurturing reading logs
Week 8	Learners are required to have a storytelling club based on a randomly assigned number; eleven options were offered.
Week 9	(Considered as a Mid-test)
Week 10	• Reading graded readers
	• Nurturing logs
Week 11	• Reading graded readers
	• Nurturing logs
Week 12	• Reading graded readers
	• Nurturing logs
Week 13	• Classroom discussion (learners discuss reading and writing recounts)
Week 14	• Learners must hand in their last reading logs.

2.3 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from observation, classroom discussions, and reading logs were analyzed by viewing and interpreting the presented topics and markers/indicators of reading habit's improvement in the following aspects: word count read, number of books/articles read by learners, and self-reflection on their own reading behavior. The three aspects were regularly monitored through observation, classroom discussion, and reading logs.

3. Results

3.1 Word Count (Number of Words Read by Learners)

A learner's word count denotes whether his or her reading habits are beneficial or detrimental. A learner's reading frequency may improve once his or her word count increases. The number of words read by students increased following a mid-semester discussion in the classroom and following the use of reading logs at the end of the semester.
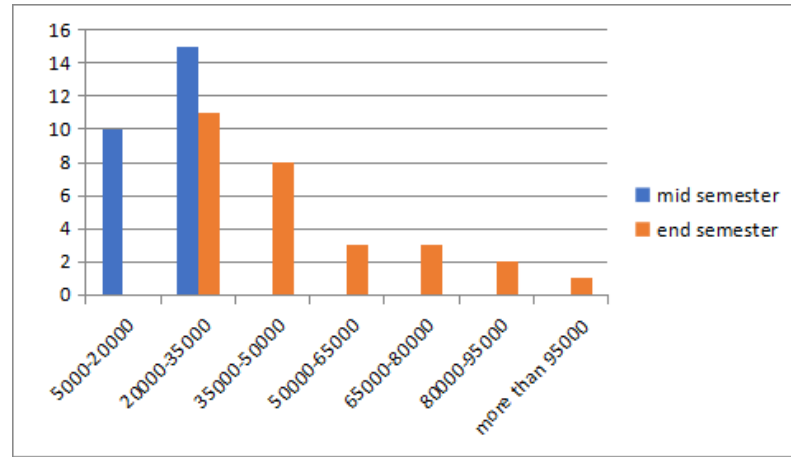
Figure 1. The number of words reads in the middle and at the end of the semester

The graph above depicts the total words read by students in the middle of the semester: three learners were absent from the classroom discussion. Most learners (15) read between 20,000 and 35,000 words while the rest (10) read 5000 and 20,000 words. At the end of the semester, 11, 8, and 9 students read 20,000-35,000 words, 35,000-50,000 and >50,0000 words, respectively. Only one student read 135,000 words. A large number of learners (11) who read 20,000 to 30,000 words in the middle of the semester maintained the same word count to the end of the semester; but none of the learners who ready 5000-20,000 words maintained the same word count indicating their reading practices were improving.

Previously, the learners only read to meet the prerequisite of the prior subject (IR) which included short texts of local folklore or myth and repeated the narrative to their instructor when they had finished reading. Speaking was the most commonly used skill. The aggregate number of words read at the beginning of the IR class was suboptimal for college learners based on the reading materials they used. The learners were then required to read assessed graded readers in the ER class that were specifically designed for EFL students.

3.2 The number of Books/Articles Read by Learners

Learners were required to ready only three storybooks to prepare logs.   Logs were limited to three books and three articles to prevent weighing down the learners with too many logs after the mid-semester classroom discussion. In the middle of the semester, participants read an average of two books and a few articles. Whereas after the course, the average number of books read was three; most learners read the same book at the end of the semester (see Figure 2). The number of books read by each learner beyond those required for the ER class was not documented.
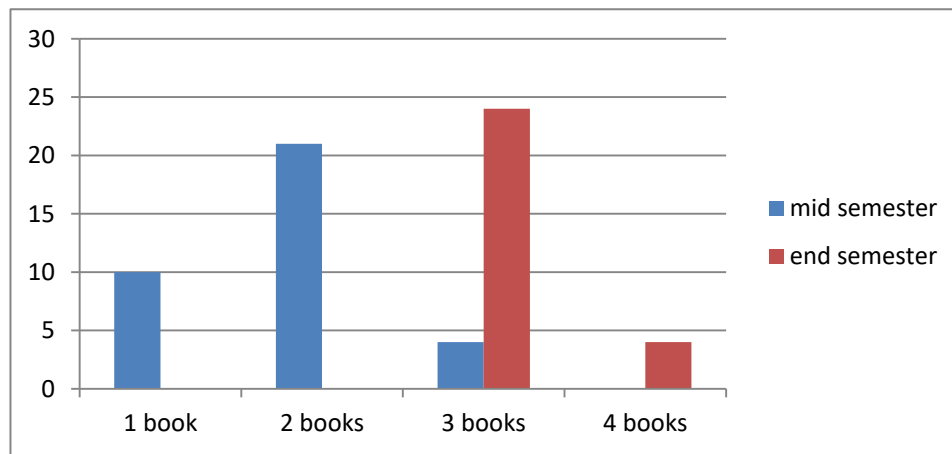

Figure 2. Number of mandatory books read at the middle and at end of the semester

All participants completed reading ten publications based on their class trimmings but generated fewer logs as shown in the figure below.
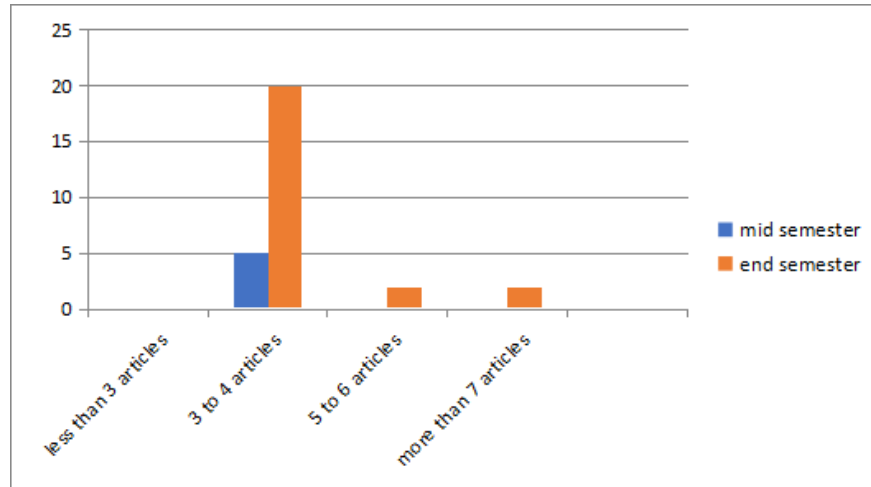
Figure 3. The total number of class trimmings in the middle and at the end of the semester

Learners read graded readers from the English department's library. Learners were permitted to choose any book as their preferred reading material. Their lecturer instructed them to reflect on three inquiries as they read a book, (i) could they quickly read through the text, (ii) could they comprehend the text without using a dictionary, and (iii) could they comprehend the text thoroughly.

A learner first read a few pages of a text to figure out if that reading level was suitable for him or her. If the learner could not understand the reading text was about, he or she was advised by his or her lecturer to attempt reading a lower level reader.

When a learner was certain of his or her decision, he or she could proceed to nurture the journals (logs). Due to a limited supply of reading resources of all stages, most students opted to read stage 1 readers and selected another more advanced stage as an alternative which they found difficult to comprehend.

The learners were then continuously involved in a reading club using reading logs. Each learner discussed and offered ideas during the reading club despite having read diverse reading texts.

3.3 Learners' Self-Reflection on Reading Behavior

Learners' reading habits changed drastically after they commenced reading books (graded readers). The learners enjoyed reading based on the mid-semester classical session. Nurturing reading logs, on the other hand, was lengthy, laborious, monotonous, and perplexing. A few learners stated that they did not comprehend the books they read.

4. Discussion

Nurturing reading logs not only foster reading habits, but also motivate learners to develop better reading habits. Teachers must provide useful reading resources (Anandari & Iswandari, 2019; Jacobs & Renandya, 2015).

Reading habits are indicated by the word count and the quantity of books/articles read by a learner and his or her self-reflection about his or her reading activities (Stoffelsma, 2019; Vu & Peters, 2022). Self-reflection is evaluated as part of a learner's reading habits because his or her reading goals may extend beyond the scope of a lecturers' aims in designing particular tasks (Akhmetova et al., 2022; Filderman et al., 2019). As a result, describing learners' reading habits as positive or negative reading habits is a form of contemplation. It takes time and effort to encourage learners' reading habits. Learners must be motivated to develop positive reading habits by according them with access to a diverse range of books (Ali et al., 2021; Awah, 2021; Barber & Klauda, 2020; Bråten et al., 2022; Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019; Jodeck-Osses et al., 2021; Kazemi et al., 2020; Locher & Pfost, 2020; Meniado, 2021; Neisi et al., 2019; Nevo et al., 2020; Ritonga et al., 2022; Sun, 2023; Torppa et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2019; Xin & Yunus, 2020).

The study evaluated the number of words or lexicon (word count) read by the students. The word count read by a learner has an impact on his or her reading rate. Reading journals help estimate the total number of words or lexicons resulting from ER (Ha, 2022; Nakanishi, 2015). The use of graded readers, as was used in the present study, is thought to be the most effective method of fostering extensive reading (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Vu & Peters, 2022). Teachers or lecturers should serve as exemplars to help students establish positive reading habits. (Baba & Rostam Affendi, 2020). Teachers must adapt the instructional environment using effective learning in the ER class (Ro, 2016).

As regards the number of books and articles/publications read by the students, Rodrigo et al. (2014) reported that ER learners who had access to books, an extensive list of reading materials they could choose from, and a dedicated time to read during instruction hours were more motivated to read, developed a reading habit, and experienced a positive change in their reading habits. At this point, preference is an important factor in fostering reading for pleasure. (Aizawa et al., 2023; Alotaibi et al., 2022; Asllani & Paçarizi, 2021; Diprossimo et al., 2023; Engineering, 2023; Hutton et al., 2020; Min & Lee, 2020; Sturgeon, 2021; Yousef et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021). Good reading

habits enhance a learners' reading proficiency (Akhmetova et al., 2022; Barber & Klauda, 2020; Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019; Topping et al., 2007; Vinterek et al., 2022; Williams & Vaughn, 2020).

Students were asked to reflect on their reading habits. Based on their reflections, students were dissatisfied with the limited number of books available in the Self-Access Room (a reading corner provided by English Education Department). Educational institutions should avail several reading resources which should be updated regularly. Rodrigo et al. (2014) posits that an accessible library equipped with adequate reading resources, and intrinsic motivation and willingness to read for pleasure, help develop students' reading habits (Alotaibi et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020; Shimbo & Tendo, 2022). After engaging ER activities with reading logs, students stated that they had enhanced their reading proficiency. Half of the class began to enjoy reading implying they were developing an internal motivation to read which is generated as a person expands his or her reading (Soemer & Schiefele, 2018). Students reported that occasionally certain textbooks were difficult to get. Students disliked or keeping records in their reading logs because they were required to document many things including the proper meaning of phrases/idioms, the need to re-read a book, clarifying words, finding substitutes in a different settings, and figuring out a text. Students preferred that the total number of log entries be reduced and additional reading resources such as comic books, news articles, articles, newspapers, and magazines be provided. Study observations and classroom discussions revealed that nurturing reading logs inadvertently supported learners to read. by increasing their reading volume and gradually improving their reading habits.

5. Conclusion

This current research explored in ways in which nurturing reading logs promoted students' reading habits. Nurturing reading logs promoted learner's reading behavior as indicated by the higher number of words, books and articles read by the students, as well as their own reflections about their reading habits. Maintaining logs is tedious for students who have poor reading habits but it mandates students to read hence promoting their reading habits. Maintaining logs may not boost learners' reading behaviors in the short-term; but over time, they progressively 'push' learners to continue reading. Subsequently, learners are intrinsically motivated to read. Educational institutions should have an adequately equipped library with more graded readers, accord learners access to other readers possibly via the Internet, and establish an ongoing scheme of extensive reading for all learners to promote good reading habits.

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