



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING AN E-BOOK IN ELT: WORLDWIDE CASES

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ABSTRACT

Using technology in English language teaching has been demands in Covid-19 pandemic situation. Students all over the world have studied from home, so have the teachers. Therefore, using technology is necessary as a medium in teaching English language. It is necessary to use a technology that has interactive functions to ensure the quality of teaching and learning, as well as to keep students' motivation high. This study is a library study which aimed to analyze the effectiveness of using E-book in ELT from previous related studies worldwide from 2015-2019. Further implications on the effectiveness of using e-book and suggestions to the future studies were discussed

Keywords : E-Book, ELT, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has triggered chaos all over the world. It affects not only the economical aspect but also the educational field where educators have to think wise and fast to ensure the teaching and learning process runs well while still controlling the burst of Covid-19. Students all over the world have been instructed to study from home, thus, technologies are a core to be thoroughly investigated when it deals with distance learning.

A lot of technologies have been utilized in English language teaching (ELT) as a teaching and learning media, from various websites available on the Internet to downloadable apps. Each of them facilitates both teachers and students a medium in transferring and receiving knowledge online. To some extent, moreover, learning process integrated with technology is way more beneficial. Computer technology gets the particular pedagogical tasks carried out well by the L2 teachers while it might be difficult to do so in other environments (Pederson, 1986). Raihan and Lock (2010) suggest that the accessibility of technology may foster students' creativity, collaboration, and autonomy compared to that with no access. Even though each of them has function in English language teaching, but is limited to its features' function built-in. Some of them are built to provide teaching and learning resources only, some act as a medium to have face-to-face online learning and sharing files, some aid as a medium of evaluation. Teachers and students are required to use all of them to completely conduct the teaching and learning process.

Teaching and learning from home are equal to distance learning in which crucial factors, not only technology, but also online teaching and learning resources, infrastructure and facility, curriculum, and socio-economic status of both students and teachers are required to be seriously considered to ensure teaching and learning process' quality. Owing to the factors, technology than can cover all the factors is considered important to be used. One such technology is using an e-book in English language teaching that can cover all the factors.

E-books are the electronic version of a printed book that can be read in digital form, consisting of the text, images, or both readable on the flat-panel display of computers or other electronic devices. Tuah et al., (2019) state that e-books are books or papers that are converted into digital form through a scanner in the form of image, texts, or videos and displayed through a computer. Additionally, Gibson & Gibb, (2011) explain that an e-book is an interesting book with features that are presented in electronic form in which there is textual content in digital documents. An e-book can be an effective tool that can gain student interest and motivate them to complete the task at hand. Reid et al., (2016) claim that an e-book has great benefits in helping students to understand the lesson because the e-book has an interesting feature so the students are more excited in the learning process in the classroom that is useful and helpful to literacy development. Yalman (2015) also adds that there are more advantages for using e-books for students such as the students can bring the e-books with them in wherever they go and e-book will help college students put off a big burden. Akpokodje and Ukwuoma (2016) argue that e-books are the versatility and affordability of some of the technologies and access to the internet has contributed to the use of cellular technology by young people, both at school and outside school. Furthermore, Ciampa (2012) conducted tests on students using an online e-book program. She found that students enjoyed the experience of reading e-books and often read in their spare time. Therefore, the e-book not only is useful to motivate students in learning but also it comes in handy.

The effectiveness of the use of e-books can be improved if the pedagogical design of e-books covers an information and educational environment that consists of four principal components in the process of teaching and learning namely, motivational-targeting, content, operational-activity, and evaluative-resulting (Nurgaliyeva et. al, 2019).

Owing to the important roles of the e-books teaching and learning process, it is viewed necessary to investigate the use of it in English language learning as English is used widely as a medium of communications across the world. One of the ways of investigating the use of e-books in English language learning is through studying the literature reviews investigating the use of e-books in English language teaching. Thus, five studies conducted worldwide focusing on the use of an e-book in English language teaching published in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 were analyzed to gauge the effectiveness of using it in English language teaching.

METHOD

This research is a library research, which aims to investigate the positive impacts of using e-book in English language teaching. Five previous studies on the effectiveness of e-book in English language teaching were discussed. The studies were selected as the representative studies conducted in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 which was the limitation of the study. The articles were collected online by using the keywords “the effectiveness of using an e-book in English language teaching.” By considering the similarity between downloaded articles and the current research on the topic which was the use of e-book in ELT and the year published, then five articles were selected to be analyzed in terms of the aims of the research, methodology, and findings that show the effectiveness of using e-book.

Several initial steps were done to select reliable and relevant literature. The steps are:

- a. Identifying a reliable database online
ERIC is the database chosen in this study because it provides peer-reviewed and open-access articles.
- b. Identifying relevant keywords search
The keywords used to search for the relevant literature are “The effectiveness of using an e-book in English language teaching.”

c. Years of Publication

The papers selected for this study are papers which are published during the 2015 – 2019 year span.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of Using an E-Book in ELT

A lot of research has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of implementing an e-book in ELT. One of them is a study conducted by Nurgaliyeva et. al (2019) on pedagogical technology of using e-books in Kazakhstan. The researcher used four components in the educational process in designing the e-book and implemented what is called an automated learning process that consists of a module, a hypertext, interactive tasks, and evaluation of educational achievements. The researchers developed some e-books, one of them is the e-book for English language teaching. The e-book was administered in eight weeks to 123 eleventh-grade students of the schools in the East Kazakhstan region. The researchers use observation, questionnaire, interview, and test to collect the data from the participants. Before the teachers involved in the experiment, they first participated in training courses to gain knowledge on the pedagogical technology of using e-books. The e-books were used as an informal educational environment that supported all the components of the educational process that are motivational-targeting that includes setting goals using the e-book module; content that includes getting acquainted with new teaching material using multimedia explanations in e-books; operational-activity that includes consolidation of the learned skills and expertise with the use of interactive task in e-books; and evaluative-resulting that includes the control of learners' academic achievement with the use of e-book test. A comparative analysis of the students' learning performance before and after the use of the e-book was used to find the efficiency of the use of e-books. Participants from the teachers and the students were interviewed and responded to a questionnaire regarding their satisfaction and attitudes after using the e-book. In the findings, the researchers found that the use of e-book in ELT can increase secondary school students' performance. The students also agreed that using e-book can trigger their interest in learning, using it also help them understand the content better as well as acquire practical skills. In this study, the use of e-books is correlated to the positive changes in student performance. The teachers and parents of this study also confirmed that students' interests in learning increase when they use the e-books.

Yee and Zainuddin (2018) researched the use of e-book to improve reading comprehension among year 4 pupils in a primary school, Malaysia. The Kemmis McTaggart's action research model that consists of four stages (plan, act, observe, reflect) was used by the researchers. The participants were pupils of the year four, primary schools in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. The researcher designed an e-book by using Story Jumper by considering its online free access, and reading materials in the e-book were developed based on students' proficiency level. The e-book was implemented for three weeks to teach reading comprehension. The pre-test and post-test were conducted before and after the use of the e-book. It is reported that in the first-week students did not show any excitements in the learning process due to the absence of a vocabulary list and visual features. In the second week, after vocabulary list, pictures, and graphics were added to the e-book, the students became more motivated to learn. In the third week, the students are instructed to do a reading on their own and answered questions related to the topics. The progress of the students' performance was collected through a worksheet. The students' behaviour and actions were observed and recorded in a reflective journal. The findings of the study showed that the use of e-book and its features such as graphics, pictures, and vocabulary list positively affect the pupils' level of understanding in reading and their motivation improved. The researchers recommend that the e-book is used for primary level students in the reading activity.

A similar study on the use of an e-book to improve kindergarten kids' reading comprehension and motivation was conducted by Al Musawii et. al (2017). An experimental

method was conducted to find the effects of an e-book to the 28 kids' comprehension and motivation in reading. The study was conducted at Al-Aisary's Reading Development Center, Oman. There were an experimental group which taught by using e-book and control group thought by using a printed book. Each group consisted of 14 students. Reading comprehension test was administered to the students before and after the treatment, and a questionnaire regarding students' learning motivation was also administered. In the design process, the e-book's reading materials or the stories were selected based on students' reading level and developmental stage so that it is appropriate for the students. The e-book was designed by considering some aspects namely, using the same stories for both groups, using the same pictures (black and white pictures, using size and clarity similar to the paper book, using font size and type similar to a paper book, using some features that are colouring feature, narration, and highlighting. The treatment by using the e-book and the paper book was done in four weeks in which one story was taught to the students every two weeks. Based on the findings of the study, there was no significant difference between the students' comprehension of those who were taught by using the e-book and those who were taught by using the printed book. The same case appeared in terms of students' motivation. Students' learning motivation remained the same whether they were taught by using the e-book or the printed book. Gender intervention was also analysed and it was found that gender did not affect students reading comprehension either they use the e-book or the printed book in the reading activity. Interestingly, a significant difference in students' reading comprehension exists when the age variable was added. It was found that the 6 years old students' reading comprehension is getting better after using the e-book in their reading activity compared to the five years old students' reading comprehension.

Akpokodje and Ukwuoma (2016) carried out a study on the impact of an e-book on university students' reading motivation in Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was used in this study to find the awareness and extent of the use of an e-book by students in higher education, to gauge the purpose and impact of using an e-book on students' reading motivation and reading habit, and to find the challenging issues faced by the students in using the e-books. One hundred and fifty-four participants from Nigerian universities received and took part in answering the questionnaire entitled evaluating the impact of an e-book on reading motivation of students of higher learning in Nigerian universities. The findings showed that more than half of participants accessed the e-book through library services, and they spent more time reading by using the e-book. They also claimed that they could understand reading texts better when reading is done by the e-book since it is easy and quick-accessed. The students used the e-book for both research and study purposes. Those facts lead the students to develop a good reading habit. Thus, it is suggested that an e-book is used by students to motivate them in reading and develop good reading habits.

Furthermore, a study investigating about the effects of an e-book on reading rate, reading comprehension, and attitudes was conducted to 40 female students studying in the English Department, Kuwait (Akbar, Taqi, Dashti, Sadeq, 2015). For the first four weeks, the students were at first were instructed to select one of some levels of stories based on their perspective on their reading ability and read the book regularly. The stories were listed in the coursebook. The following. Then a questionnaire was administered to the students to find their respond after using the printed book. In the following four weeks, the students were required to read from a reading app. The app was used to let the students mimic the speed-reading technique in which the students was guided through the movement of highlights to expand the students' number of words, quickly comprehend groups of words, and efficiently move through the text without backtracking. Before using one of the apps (Speed Reading Trainer, Quick Reader or Read Race), they joined training on how to use the apps in the class. The researcher used journal dairy to record students' comments and attitudes after using the apps or e-book and after using the printed book. The findings of this study indicate that the use of e-book slowed the students' reading rate. This happened due to the students' assumption on the correlation between reading speed and levels of comprehension. They believed that to better comprehend the text, they need to slow down their reading rate. Similarly, the level of

reading fluency of the students decreased during reading activity by using the apps. Their reflection in the journal diary provided the causes that lead to the finding. It was again their belief on the ability to comprehend is the ability to remember what they read. They were failed to remember what they read so that they assumed that they had a low level of reading comprehension. The other reason is they thought that the selection of the apps is limited compared than the selection of printed books. These findings majorly based on older students' journal diaries. Furthermore, it was also found that the students who are above thirty years old preferred using printed book than e-book in the reading activity. They mentioned that some features in e-book did not benefit them. It happened due to technical problem they encountered when using the apps.

Based on the analyses of the studies, there were four positive impacts of using an e-book in English language teaching as follows:

1. It accelerates students' learning motivation.
2. It increases students' performance in learning English.
3. It improves students' level of understanding in reading.
4. It develops a good reading habit of students.

Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

From the studies of using e-books discussed, several implications can be generated. Generally, e-books facilitate young learners to improve their reading comprehension and performance, and to develop positive learning attitude in which the e-books motivate them to read more (Nurgaliyeva et. al, 2019; Yee and Zainuddin, 2018; Akpokodje and Ukwuoma 2016). There are a lot of reasons why e-book can promote students' motivation in reading. One of the reasons is the interactive features available in e-books. The features, such as a dictionary, videos, animated pictures, and audios trigger students' interest in reading as found in the studies of Yee and Zainuddin's (2018), and Nurgaliyeva et. al (2019). Similarly, Hsieh (2015) claimed that an e-book helps students improve their learning achievement. In older students and tertiary level cases, e-books are claimed to successfully improve students reading motivation, reading achievement, reading fluency, reading attitude, and reading interest (Chen, Chen, & Way, 2013). The positive impacts of the use of e-book in these studies were also due to a deep analyses process in designing the e-books. The students' analysis, environmental analysis, e-book design analysis, and evaluation analysis are thoroughly investigated to maximize the functions of the e-book.

In contrast, the other two studies revealed that the e-book did not provide positive impacts on students' reading comprehension, reading speed, learning attitude (Al Musawii et. al 2017; and Akbar et. al, 2015). Further analyses on students' reading comprehension showed that the use of e-books does not make any significant difference on students' reading comprehension (Hsieh, 2015), and there was also no significant improvement in students' learning motivation of using e-books (Al Musawii et. al, 2017). The e-book used by older students, over thirty years old students, lead to technical issues faced during learning activity in the study done by Akbar et. al. They had difficulties in using features available in the e-book due to the lack of technology knowledge. Thus, they prefer a printed book than an e-book. Some misconceptions were also the reason why the e-book failed to positively affect students' reading comprehension and reading speed. The students' belief on the ability to memorizing what they read and the speed of reading was related to reading comprehension. Owing to the misconceptions, the use of journal diaries as the instrument in collecting the data in this study was not enough to record the students' responds in using the e-book. More instruments, such as questionnaire and tests, used to gauge the effectiveness of e-book are necessary. The e-book developed in Al Musawii et. al study was not motivated enough. The e-book was designed by considering some aspects which are similar to the printed book in terms of using the same pictures (black and white pictures, using size and clarity similar to the paper book, using font size and type similar to the paper book. It causes a very little difference in the attractiveness between the e-book and the printed book. Moreover, unlike the e-book developed by Yee and Zainuddin, the researcher used only colouring feature, narration, and

highlighting in the e-book which were not interactive enough for young learners. A thorough analysis when designing an e-book is required to ensure its interactivity and attractiveness so that the students can be more motivated.

Owing to the advantages of using e-book in English language teaching, it is implied that the e-book can be implemented in English language teaching in all levels of education to improve students' motivation in learning so that the level of understanding in learning English can be better, whilst some considerations such as needs analyses, media analyses, environmental analyses are also necessary to be conducted before the implementation.

CONCLUSION

The findings are varied in terms of e-books' effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension, motivation, performance, reading speed and learning attitude. These cases appeared due to several factors affecting the use of e-books for learners. Some analyses on students' learning ability level (students' needs analysis), environmental analysis, interactive features of the e-book, teaching and learning delivery system, and evaluation system are important to be carried out before designing and implementing the e-book in ELT. The results of the analysis can be used in developing instructional materials and designing the contents of the e-book by teachers so that the effectiveness of the e-book in ELT can be optimized.

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