INFORMAL ARTICLES AND READING-WRITING-SPEAKING CYCLE IN EXTENSIVE READING (ER) PROGRAM: EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Informal article is one of authentic materials which may contain valuable informations and extensive input to develop the learners' language proficiency. Unfortunately, most literature shows that informal articles are not widely used in Extensive Reading (henceforth ER) program. For this reason, in this micro-scale exploratory research, the writer would like to introduce the steps procedure in using informal articles in ER program for Indonesian EFL college learners and to investigate their perception toward the implementation of the procedure. The procedure is developed on the basis of the writer's great interest in creating innovative way in teaching ER at Indonesian college level. The procudure is then called as Reading-Writing-Speaking (RWS) cycle which comprises structured-steps. Although it has some shortcomings, the participants bestow positive perception and respectable comments toward the procedure. The proposed procedure is expected to be an alternative pathway in teaching ER for English teachers particularly at a university level.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Informal Articles, Learners' Perception.

Abstrak

Artikel informal merupakan salah satu materi otentik yang mengandung informasi berharga dan input yang tak terhingga untuk bagi pengembangan kemampuan bahasa para siswa. Sayangnya, literatur menunjukkan bahwa artikel informal tidak banyak digunakan dalam program Extensive Reading (selanjutnya disingkat ER). Atas dasar ini paper ini dimaksudkan untuk memperkenalkan prosedur langkah-langkah penggunaan artikel informal artikel dalam program ER bagi mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia dan meneliti pandangan mereka atas implementasi prosedur ini. Prosedure ini dikembangkan berdasarkan keinginan kuat penulis untuk menciptakan cara yang inovatif dalam pengajaran ER di kampus Indonesia. prosedur ini selanjutnya disebut siklus Reading-Writing-Speaking (RWS) yang terdiri dari beberapa langkah. Meskipun memiliki beberapa kelemahan, subyek penelitian ini memberikan pandangan positif dan komentar yang baik terhadap prosedur ini. Langkah ini diharapkan bisa menjadi langkah alternatif dalam pengajaran ER khususnya di tingkat universitas.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Artikel Informal, Tanggapan Siswa.

Introduction

ER practice has grown in popularity in recent years. It is an important aspect of any English as a Foreign (EFL) or Second Language (ESL) reading program. A single definition of ER is likely hard to find. The summary of various research by Susser and Robb (1990, p. 165) came to a working definition that ER is reading of large quantities of material or long texts for global or general understanding with the intention of obtaining pleasure from the text. ER can also be defined as: 'Students reading a lot of easy, enjoyable books' (Helgesen, 2005). Richards & Schmidt (2002, pp. 193–194) define ER as "reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading". Some alternative terms for ER are *pleasure reading*, *sustained silent reading*, *free voluntary reading* or *book flood*.

ER has been proven to give impact on learning English in both ESL and EFL contexts or classroom settings. There have been a number of studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of ER and that have provided support for the use of ER. The investigations have tried to look at both language learning and the affective dimension of language learning, primarily attitude and motivation. The results of the studies on the benefits of ER are that, among others, ER increases the students' reading rate (Bell, 2001; Kusanagi, 2004; Taguchi et al., 2004; Iwahori, 2008), general language proficiency (Bell, 2001; Sheu, 2003; Iwahori, 2008), reading strategies & motivation (Nishono, 2007), and writing proficiency (Mason & Krashen, 1997).

Extensive Reading Principles

In relation to the benefits of ER, then the ways to implement it should be paid more attention. Although there are various ways of implementing ER in educational settings, the top ten principles by Day and Bamford (2002) are considered to be a good guideline for conceptualizing ER in a teaching/learning process. The ten fundamental priciples are that 1) the reading material is easy, 2) a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be

available, 3) learners choose what they want to read, 4) learners read as much as possible, 5) the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding, 6) reading is its own reward, 7) reading speed is usually faster rather than slower, 8) reading is individual and silent, 9) teachers orient and guide their students, and 10) the teacher is a role model of a reader.

Although these principles are a good guide for educators who teach or run an ER program, the adaptation to the principles is needed as necessary depending on the situation. In line with Fuisting's (2014) viewpoint, the ten principles can actually be broken down into five areas, i.e., reading material, material selection and target, the purpose, reading style, and teacher's role.

Reading Material (principle 1 and 2)

In relation to reading material, principle 1 and 2 suggest that easy and varied materials on a wide range of topics must be available. ER program needs easy texts or reading materials to improve the reading speed and fluency. Besides, Helgesen (2005) suggested that the material should be enjoyable or interesting for the readers. But, who knows that the texts are easy to understand and enjoyable? Easy and enjoyale, to the best of writer's knowledge, are two relative terms and, of course, can only be determined by the readers. However, as Day and Bamford (2002) acknowlegded, the use of easy material is controversial. To accustom students to real-world reading, real-world texts or authentic materials should be used for extensive reading. This is to confuse the means with the end since to encourage students to be motivated to read more and study more, and to facilitate them to improve their foreign language reading, they must be provided with reading texts they find easy and enjoyable at every step of the way.

In addition, the availability of varied reading material will not only encourage the students to read but also lead them to read for different reasons (e.g., entertainment; information; passing the time) and, consequently, in different ways (e.g., skimming; scanning; more careful reading).

Material Selection and Target (principle 3 and 4)

Since the readers need to have easy and enjoyable materials, then the learners have to determine what they want to read (principle 3). As the consequence of this freedom of choice, the students are not to read the same written texts because it seems impossible to get a single text that all members of the class find it interesting. Each student has their own preferences. One may prefer love story, one prefers reading about health, and others may read tips or etc. The differences of the preference should be respected. The learners are also free to stop reading anything they find to be too difficult or that is out of their interest.

In relation to the reading target, principle 4 suggests that learners read as much as possible. In this case, the students ideally spend most of their time for reading as the core activity in this program and the amount of time spent actually for reading is the most critical element in learning to read. There is no upper limit to the amount of reading that can be done, the students read a lot or read as much as possible. The question then is what is the criteria of *a lot* here. In this case, Bamford and Day (2004) suggest that "a book a week or 50 pages a week" is realistic. Anderson (1999) suggests that 200 words per minute is a useful and realistic goal for second language readers.

The Purpose (principle 5 and 6)

In an ER program, reading is just as like reading in everyday life. The goal is not one hundred percent comprehension. For this reason, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions. The focus shifts away from comprehension towards the reader's personal experience. The learner's goal is sufficient understanding to fulfill a particular reading purpose, for example, the obtaining of information, the enjoyment of a story, or the passing of time (Day and Bamford, 2002). However, in my viewpoint, college learners as adult learners should be accustomed to real-world reading, real-world texts or authentic materials. In other words, they need to read information which is beneficial for their real life situation beside reading for pleasure.

Dealing with the sixth principle, 'reading is its own reward', Prowse (2002) suggested that the use of quizzes and other form of tests is strongly discouraged. Instead, the use of reviews and discussions can be utilized to measure if the students have engaged with the book (Bamford& Day, 2003). However, many institutions insist on formal assessment of the reading since, for example, ER is a compulsory subject in a college program and the lecturers have to give the score. As an alternative solution, the teachers might grade the students by the number of pages or words they have read. Teachers might also have them to write or present oral reports and summaries or make posters and presentations that summarize the content of the reading text.

Reading Style (principle 7 and 8)

In ER, the students usually read faster and silent. That is why, to be able to read fluently, the learners should read material that is well within their linguistic ability. Day and Bamford, (2002) added that, in the service of promoting reading fluency, the students are not suggested to use the dictionary when they find words they don't understand. ER is a chance for the students to keep reading and to practice such strategies as guessing at or ignoring unknown words. This is somewhat controversial for not using the dictionary, moreover if EFL readers do not find the appropriate graded readers. During reading, the learners build a personal interaction with the text. They read at their own pace, in their own time when and where they choose. It is also possible to be done inside the classroom when part or all of a classroom period is set aside for silent.

Teacher's Role (principle 9 and 10)

In ER program, the teachers should guide their students as well as become a role model of reader. Since ER is very different from usual classroom practice, students thus need careful introduction. Teachers can introduce the methodology of extensive reading, beginning with, for example; material selection, the (absence of) assessment, the reading purpose, the reading style, etc. The teachers have to help the students with vocabulary and grammar problems, and even culture found in some parts of the reading materials.

In relation to their role as a role model, teachers do not sit idle or do things other than reading, no matter how important these "other things" are. The teachers should be reading something just like the rest of group in the classroom. As the role model in the classroom, they have to show that they like reading and that they are good, efficient and effective readers.

This paper deals with the reading materials in ER program. Some literature suggests the use of simplified books or graded readers indeed. But, what written texts to use for ER program in the institution in which the graded readers are difficult to find? That is why, the term book, to the best writer's knowledge, does not mean that the book is the only source of reading material in ER program. Any reading material can be used, including informal articles. Even, in this digital age, informal articles which contain some valuable informations and extensive input to develop the learners' language proficiency are easily found on internet or other reading sources. Unfortunately most literature shows that informal articles are not widely used in ER program. For this reason, the paper is intended to introduce the steps procedure in using informal articles in ER program for Indonesian EFL college learners and to investigate their perception toward the implementation of the procedure. The procedure is developed on the basis of the writer's great interest in creating innovative way in teaching ER at the institution where the writer teaches, one of the State Colleges of Islamic Studies in Indonesia.

Informal Article: What and Why?

An article is a piece of writing usually intended for publication in a newspaper, magazine or journal. It is written for a wide audience, so it is essential to attract and retain the readers' attention. When it comes to the style of writing, it will be of two types; formal and informal. In formal article, the use of colloquial expressions, contractions, cliches, abbreviated words, imperative voice are strongly avoided. The writer of formal article also avoids addressing readers using second person pronouns. Longer and more complex sentences are preferred. Meanwhile, in informal writing style, colloquial words,

contractions, cliches, abbreviated words, and imperative voice are oftentimes used. The writer may address the readers using second pronouns and short and simple sentences are usually utilized. In this digital age, informal article is easily found either on printed or online (internet) media. Despite informal article might not sound academic, its existence cannot be taken for granted.

In this paper, the researcher has some basic reasons why the use informal articles in ER program is suggested; it deals with, among other things, the content of the materials, the students' characteristics, as well as the unavailability of graded readers in my college library. Informal articles can be authentic source of input for the readers (or college learners) since it contains a lot of valuable and beneficial information needed in real life situation. As authentic material, this sort of text is actually written for native speakers, not for language learners, or not for language teaching purposes (Jordan, 1997). However, authentic texts are important for language learning, because they increase students' motivation for learning, and expose them to 'real' language (Guariento & Morley, 2001). Gilmore (2007) also points out that authentic materials had been used for language learning several decades ago and have regained their popularity due to the rise of the communicative approach. Informal articles contain real language produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. The content of this sort of materials, in my opinion, is really appropriate with characteristics of EFL college students as adult learners. As adult learners, they need to be exposed to real life information they need, not merely to artificial text. Their needs, their interest in topics, and language situations they find useful might be covered in it. Besides, reading this sort of material could make them learn more words, acquire more grammatical structures, empower them with extensive vocabulary and syntax (Guo, 2012), connect students with the real world, and keep them informed. It will expose them to English usage as well as it is used in real life, thus students may find them more interesting and relevant if they are at the right comprehension level. In short, informal article available in printed or online media is or can be a useful authentic material for ER program.

Other reason deals with the availability of books in college library and students' reading habit. Informal article is used since simplified printed books or graded readers are not easily found in my college library. As one of the alternatives, informal articles can be utilized to intrigue and stimulate students' reading habit since it seems that many of them become more passive and reluctant in regard to reading. They just do no more than what is required. As Floris (2008) points out that it is necessary for incorporating authentic materials in the course design because they are more motivating, engaging, and relevant to students' lives. The use of authentic material in this kind of situation had been pointed out by Yu (2007) in which she utilized articles from The New York Times to promote cadets' English. Yu discovered positive effects of authentic materials on group discussions as well as presentations. She also found improvement in vocabulary and verbal expressions, a better understanding of cultures, and higher motivation. Those are some reasons underlying the use of informal article as authentic material in my EFL college ER program.

It might be widely known that the use of authentic materials has been strongly debated because of its complexity in vocabulary and structures especially for lower-level learners. However, Baleghizadeh's study (2010) showed that the concerns could be overcome by adequate assistance. His study justified the incorporation of authentic reading materials as long as it was accompanied by the teachers' facilitation because the argument of linguistic complexity interfering with comprehension can be easily resolved by teachers' facilitation and students' interaction with teachers.

Research Method

This is a micro-scale exploratory research in which the writer would like to introduce the steps procedure in using informal articles in ER program for Indonesian EFL college learners and to investigate their perception toward the implementation of the procedure. The subjects of the study were 62 fifth semester students of one of Islamic college in Kediri, Indonesia. These students were in 3 parralel classes. They have passed Intensive Course as well as

Reading Comprehension 1, 2 , and 3 subjects, so it is assumed that they have been aware of the strategies of extensive and intensive reading theory.

In this study, the steps-procedure of using informal article in Extensive Reading program in the form of Reading-Writing-Speaking cycle (henceforth RWS cycle) was implemented for five weeks. During five weeks, the students were asked to hunt for the informal articles as many as possible by themselves, read on their own time and place, and present one of the articles that they like best in front of the class. This activity is intended to develop students' good reading habits, their knowledge of vocabulary and structure, their liking for reading, their reading rate, and their writing and general language proficiency. (The developed procedure of the implementation can be noticed at result and analysis section).

To tackle the research purpose, after the implementation, the students' perception were then investigated by utilizing an open-ended questionnaire comprising 7 questions that must be filled in by the students. The seven points covered in the questionnaire are 1) the sources of articles used by the students, 2) students' difficulty in finding out the articles, 3) the benefit of informal articles as the reading source, 4) their difficulty in comprehending the articles content, 5) their perception on summarizing and/or writing a reflection, 6) their perception on oral presentation, and 7) their perception on the continuity of RWS cycle in Extensive Reading program. The students filled in the questionnaire in the researcher's presence. To obtain maximum honest responses, the students were not allowed to write their identity. The developed procedure and the students' perception are presented and analyzed in descriptive framework.

Result and Analysis

1. The Developed Procedure: RWS cycle

    In this section, the researcher who acted as the teacher as well would like to briefly report the steps procedure of using *informal articles* as authentic materials in ER practice in his college in which ER subject is offered at the fifth semester after

the students passed Reading Comprehension 1, 2, and 3 course. The cycle is initialled with opening phase followed by Reading, Writing, and Speaking phases. The succinct description of the procedure can be noticed in table 1.

Table 1.
The Phases Of RWS Cycle

Phase	Potential Activity(es)
Opening phase	- The class plan and prepare the program
Reading phase	- Students select their own materials - Students read on their own time and place
Writing phase	- Students reflect what they have read in the provided form
Speaking phase	- Students and or teacher shares the information each others - Students do individual classroom verbal presentation

This brief description is then elaborated as follows:

Opening Phase

Opening phase may look simple and trivial, but substantively this is essentially a vital step in ER program in which the program is carefully planned and prepared. Due to its complexity, the researcher has thorough planning and maximum preparation in his ER program. In this phase, five-meeting ER program is introduced and the students are told the goals of the program. It must be explained to the students what are going to do in the ER program during the semester. The researcher ensures that the students understand and are familiar with what the goal and the objectives are. Asking students about their attitudes and past experiences of reading might also be challenging.

In the researcher's ER class, it is explained that the students will have two main activities; out-of and in-classroom activities. Out-of-classroom activities cover 1) students select their own materials, 2) students read on their own time and place, and 3) students reflect what they have read in the provided form and/or a

poster. In-classroom activities may cover 1) students-students and teacher-student dynamic interaction and 2) individual classroom presentation. Meanwhile, the teacher will act as a role model and and as an evaluator (if needed).

Self-selection of Informal Articles as Reading Material

After the students understand the goal, the objectives, and the activities during the program, the next step is self-selection of informal articles by the students. This is certainly out-of classroom activity. Because informal articles are sort of authentic materials, they can be easily found either in printed or electronic media. They can be found in newspaper, magazine, or online media or internet. In this digital era, however, internet is the most suggested source to obtain informal articles. The students may find a lot of texts suitable with their topics of interest. When the students decide to utilize internet for searching the materials, they may use search engine, e.g., google search engine, and should be smart in typing the keywords. The ability to choose keywords effectively will be very helpful in finding the articles needed. They may seach the article as many as they need. The following figure shows the example of search result of informal article on '*the benefits of somthing'* by using google search engine.
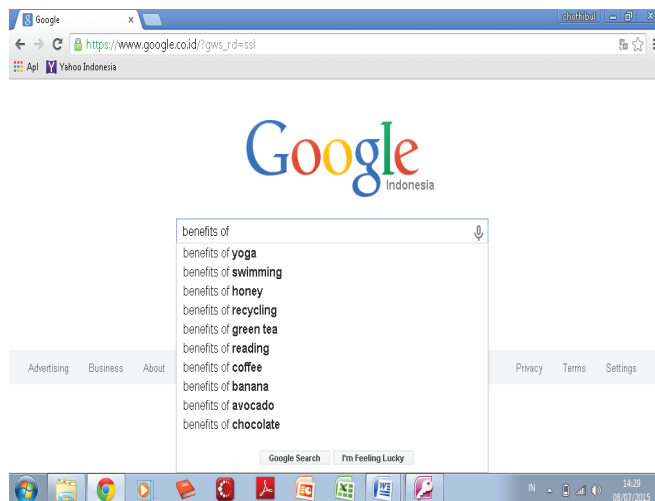

Figure 1.
The Example Of Keywords Insertion

Figure 1 shows us the sophistication of google search engine. It suggests us some choices even before we finish typing our keywords as if, as some people said, it can read '*God's thought*'.
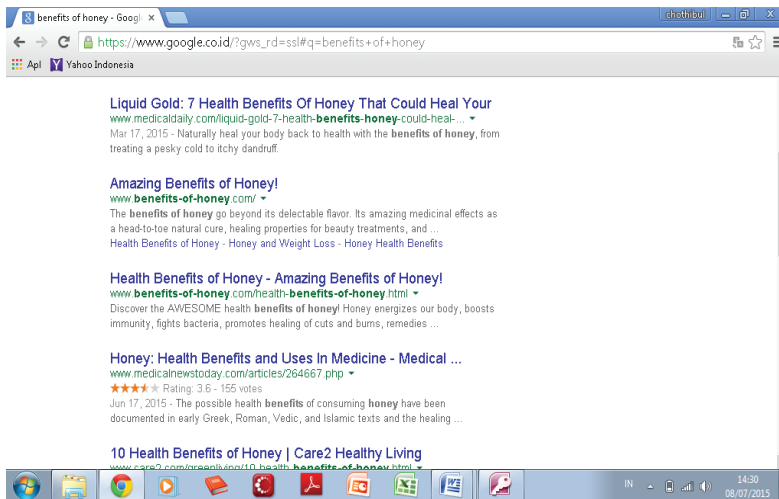

Figure 2.
Example of Google Search Result

Figure 2 shows the search result using key words *'benefits of honey'*. The students may choose the articles in which the language is easy or on their level.

Reading as much as possible individually

After selecting and obtaining the articles, reading the obtained and printed articles individually and silently is the next activity in which the students read on their own time and place. The students should read as much as possible, no limitation of page number. They are free to choose the place for reading (e.g., in bedroom, living room, canteen, classroom, etc). The time allocation is not limited as well. They may stop reading whenever they feel tired, get bored, no longer interested in the topic, or find too many unknown words. In other words, they are free to take other reading material whenever the topic is out of their interest or the language is too difficult. To avoid boredom, the materials students read should be within their level of comprehension, at their current proficiency level, not above

their linguistic level. If students find their appropriate level they can make progress in reading quite smoothly and thus develop their reading fluency. On the contrary, if the reading material is too difficult for readers and they have to look up too much unknown words in a dictionary, ER turns into intensive reading.

Summarizing and/or Reflecting on the articles in the provided form and/or in the poster form

After reading the articles, the students then come to a post reading activity. To control their activity, they are asked to write a short reading reflection of every article they have finished reading. They should write the reflection in the form that the researcher has provided and submit them in every meeting. The following is the form students in the researcher's college use in their ER classes. It covers the title, number of pages, author, reflection, as well as new words.

Table 2.
The Form to Write Reading Reflection

01	Title of Article
02	Number of Pages
03	Author
04	Date of Publication
05	Reflection
06	New Words

This form asks them to simply summarize what happened in the article and give their opinion. It can function to raise what Gardner (1993) calls as students' 'linguistic intelligence'. Asking for their opinions about the article is an attempt to encourage them to incorporate their feelings (intrapersonal intelligence) and process at a level of evaluation or appreciation. Besides, another interesting activity to control their reading activity is by summarizing the article in the form of poster. It is to disseminate the article message and can be done in group. The poster might be presented in campus events or by inviting the students from other classrooms. Displaying the

posters in the classroom can also create a pleasant atmosphere and gives students the possibility to share their experience.

Teacher as a Role Model

While the students are having their reading activity, which is mostly done at home, the teacher should be an extensive reader as well and give a good example of reading activity. The teacher has to show that he or she also likes reading and teacher is a good or effective reader by doing the same activity as the students. The teacher might tell what he/she have read, share the reading experience to the students in the classroom, and invite questions or comment from them. By so doing, the class will be very lively and natural language activities will occur.

Students-students and/or teacher-student Dynamic Interaction

After selecting, reading, and summarizing the articles which are mostly done out of the classroom, then the students come to an in-classroom activity; sharing information in the form of 'students-students and/or teacher-student dynamic interaction'.

In this session, of course, the students have a lot of thing to talk about, i.e.: things related to artivles they have read, and that are ready to share with me and other students. The students may have face-to-face talks, share information, and ask questions each other. Although the students are not told to do, real questions, high level questions, opinions, and feelings are asked naturally. They may change their conversation partner whenever they have finished one topic. The researcher also engage himself in this dynamic interaction through sharing his reading result to the students. It is very beneficial to show that the teacher is also a good reader and/ or role model of reading. Besides, the researcher uses this session to monitor the students' reading as well. One-to-one interview may be used to check whether they are reading.

Classroom presentation

Classroom presentation is another in-classroom activity in the researcher's ER program. Among the articles they have read, the

students have to choose one of them that they like best to share individually in front of the class. They have to present the article in, for example, power point slide and have to be ready whenever their friends ask some questions. In this activity, of course, the researcher divided the class into several groups that are in charge of presenting the article for each meeting. Besides, the teacher should be able to arrange the time allocation effectively. The following table might be the model of one-meeting activity in which the time allotment is 100 minutes and there are 5 students to present their articles.

Table 3.
The Sample Model Of One-Meeting ER Activity

Activity	Time Allocation (100 minutes)
Pre activities	
Opening and/or greeting	3 minutes
Submitting the reading summaries by the students	2 minutes
Checking the students' attendance	5 minutes
Main activities	
Students-students and/or teacher-student dynamic interaction	15 minutes
Students' presentation	
Student 1	10 minutes
Student 2	10 minutes
Student 3	10 minutes
Student 4	10 minutes
Student 5	10 minutes
Questions-answer session	20 minutes
Closing	5 minutes

Evaluation

In the researcher's college, ER is a compulsory subject and, consequently, the teacher has to give the score at the end of the semester. It might contradict with the sixth principle of ER by day and Bamford (2002) stated that reading is its own reward. So, the researcher usually determines the students' score on the basis of the number of articles they read or the summary they submitted, their poster, their oral presentation, and face-to-face interview.

2. Learners' Perception

    After RWS cycle was put into action for five times, the students' perception were then investigated which results are presented in this section. The perceptions being investigated covers 1) the sources of informal articles, 2) students' difficulty in finding the articles, 3) the benefit of reading informal articles, 4) difficulty in comprehending the articles content, 5) perception on summarizing and/or writing a reflection, 6) perception on oral presentation, and 7) perception on the continuity of RWS cycle in Extensive Reading program.

Sources of Informal Articles

Based on the data obtained from questionnaire, sources of informal articles utilized by the students are internet, printed magazine, printed newspaper, and other sources. The frequency of these sources usage can be seen in table 4.

Table 4.
Sources Used By The Learners In Obtaining Informal Articles (N=62)

	Frequency of usage (%)		
	Always/Very often	Sometimes	Never
Internet	92	8	0
Printed Magazine	0	60	40
Printed Newspaper	0	50	50
Other Sources	3	29	68

Table 4 shows that, among the four sources, internet seems to be the main source used by most students (92%). Meanwhile, magazine, newspaper, and other sources are rarely used. It indicates that they rely much on the internet in getting the reading materials. This phenomenon is in line with Mynard's (2011) statement that internet offers a large number of resources for language learners and has great potential for language learning and immersion opportunities outside of scheduled class time. Further, Pino-Silva (2006) asserted that internet-based ER, is a new perspective that challenges conventional ER wisdom. It appears to be a very promising pedagogical approach that may strengthen students' learning in that they (a) capitalize on the opportunity to gain access and read from the vast amount of information available on the web, (b) ensure access to updated and varied information, (c) develop discipline in the use of their own time, and take the necessary risks to explore, evaluate and make their own decisions on what to read now and what to postpone for later.

Difficulty in Finding out Informal Articles

Learners' opinion on the difficulty in finding out the informal articles can be noticed in table 5.

Table 5.
Learners' Opinion On The Difficulty In Finding Out The Informal Articles

	Whether finding out informal articles is difficult (%)
Yes	26
No	74

Table 5 shows that most of students (74%) stated that they did not meet any nuisance in finding out the informal articles. However, it is important to note that there were 26% of the students who still get difficulty in obtaining the materials. Based on their written responses, one of reasons of the difficulty is that it is arduous for them to get reading material which is within their level of difficulty. For instance,

the article is appealing for them and is in their topic of interest but it contains many unknown words. The learners also feel that some article is not valid since it does not provide the writer's name. Besides, technical problem dealing with internet connection was experienced by the students. In relation to the last problem, hence, it is highly suggested for the institution that is engrossed in applying this kind of program to provide better free internet connection for the students in order they can retrieve much more valuable learning resources.

Benefit of Reading Informal Article

Related to the benefit of reading informal article, all students (100%) averred that is extremely beneficial. The data is as shown in table 7.

Table 7.
Learners' Opinion On The Benefit Of Reading Informal Articles

	Whether reading informal articles is beneficial for learners (%)
Yes	100
No	0

The advantages of this activity are among other things: 1) the students can get new real life information which may cover various field, such as politics, education, health, etc., 2) it improves their vocabulary size, 3) the students can gain new knowledge, 4) it improves their reading fluency, and 4) it introduce them to various grammatical structure. This finding is in accordance with some previous studies stating that ER increases the students' vocabulary (Pigada and Schmitt, 2006) and their general language proficiency (Bell, 2001; Sheu, 2003; Iwahori, 2008).

Difficulty in Comprehending the Articles Content

Ideally, the text for ER program should be easy and within students' level of difficulty (i+1). In this study, nevertheless, the learners stated that they suffer difficulty in various frequency. Table 6 notifies that some of them (6%) always feel it and most of them (94%) sometimes find it whenever they read the article.

Table 6.
Learners' Frequency In Getting Difficulty In Comprehending The Articles' Content

	Whether the learners get difficulty in comprehending articles' content (%)
Always	6
Sometimes	94
Never	0

In the questionnaire, the students confess that there are two main causes of the difficulties; the articles contain many unknown words and they use complicated grammatical structure. In the researcher's opinion, it is natural since informal article is a kind of ungraded or unsimplified text. However, there must be a way out for this case, so this rich-information material could be exploited maximally. In order the students can enjoy reading, the articles should be ideally sligthly above their level (i+1) rather than easy text (i-1). It will be very beneficial if there is a party who could produce graded informal articles although, according to Claridge (2012), publishing graded readers is a big business.

Benefit of Writing a Reflection

Writing a reflection after reading each article is one activity in RWS cycle in this ER program. All students (100%) opined that this activity is advantageous for them.

Table 8.
Learners' Opinion On The Benefit Of Writing A Reflection After Reading The Article

	Whether writing a reflection is beneficial for learners (%)
Yes	100
No	0

Some of their frequent written responses obtained from questionnaire dealing with the benefits of writing a reflection are:

- It sharpens their comprehension and keeps what they have read in their mind.
- It trains them to comprehend, retell, and provide critical comment on what they have read.
- It sharpens their writing ability, e.g., it enables them to arrange sentences and/or paragraph using their own words.
- It helps them to gain the main ideas of the articles
- It stimulates their brain to think critically.
- It provides them an opportunity to express their view

Necessity of Individual Oral Presentation

In this study, the majority of the learners (98%) opined that presenting the article content orally is needed and only 2% of them stated that this activity is not needed at all.

Table 9.
Learners' Opinion On The Necessity Of Individual Oral Presentation

	Whether doing individual oral presentation is needed (%)
Highly needed	98
Not needed at all	2

The greater part of the students think that this activity gives some benefits for them. First, it could evaluate their level of comprehension and stimulate them to read more before presenting to the class since it provides question-answer session and, in result, it increases their intellectual capacity. Second, presenting a topic orally in front of the class truly trains them to be a good public speaker as well as enhance their confidence. It supports Al-Hebaish's (2012) research stating that learner's self confidence correlate significantly to their oral presentation. The more self-confident learners were, the higher their scores were in the oral test. Highly self-confident

learners were ready to try to speak in front of others. Lack of general self-confidence, on the other hand, resulted in lack of interest to strive for high quality oral performance. Third, in this session, they could obtain a range of new information from their friends as each students present diverse topics. Finally, this activity trains them to retell what they have understood.

The only negative comment on this activity is that it was not effective as it was carried out in a big class. A suggestion for this case is that it will be better if it is done in smaller groups. It is true since it will be easier for the teacher to control students' activity as well as giving direct or indirect feeedback or error correction. By so doing, oral presentation will be more effectual.

The Continuity of RWS Cycle

The last thing being investigated dealing with the use of informal articles in ER program is the continuity of RWS cycle. No students who disagree with the practice of this cycle. Most of the students (82%) highly affirmed it and 18% of them affirmed it with some revision. Table 10 notifies this fact.

Table 10.
Learners' Opinion On The Continuity Of RWS Cycle In ER Program

	Whether RWS cycle in ER program needs to continue (%)
Absolutely needed	82
Needed with some revision	18
Not needed al all	0

In their opinion, the cycle was helpful in sharpening, developing, and increasing the three skills (reading, writing, and speaking) all at once. The cycle was easily to do and it stabilizes what they have read. It improves their reading rate, trains their speaking skill, trains them to think critically, and increase their confidence and creativity.

Some suggestions offerred by the students, among other things, are that the teacher should pay more attention to errors made by the students both in pronunciation and grammar. However, there are many problems associated with oral error correction in the EFL classrooms. One of these common problems is the student and teacher disagreement on the amount of error correction, type, and techniques of correcting errors. A study conducted by Kazemi, Araghi, and Davatgari (2013) in Iranian setting found that the majority of the students in three different levels (elementary, intermediate, and advanced) had strongly preferred that their oral errors should be corrected and they preferred to receive constant error correction. Also the majority of the students preferred vocabulary error correction over the other types of errors. Also the least favored oral error correction technique was the technique in which the teacher ignores the students' errors as for as the most favored techniques by students of three different levels were the ones in which teacher repeats the original question, asks students to repeat the utterance, explain why the response is incorrect, and finally the teacher gives students a hint which might enable them to notice the error and self-correct.

The participants of this study also think that students should be given reading strategies theory although it has been given in the previous semester. Students' written reflection should also be controlled, for example, by interviewing them individually. It should be emphasized as well that oral presentation must be given in English language rather than in their native languages.

Conclusion

Although this RWS cycle in ER program might be quite interesting both for teacher and students, some positive and negative notes should be given here. The positive aspects, among others, are that: 1) It is very interesting since they may choose their own reading time, not always limited in the classroom. 2) Information sharing session is very beneficial for them since it occurs naturally and what they got is a lot of new real life information which they need as adult learners. 3) Searching and reading

informal articles make them curious on new information and this feeling brings them eager to read more and more.

Despite the positive ones, the procedure has some shortcomings. Among others are that: 1) Writing and submitting the summary and/or reflection of the articles in every meeting are sometimes boring. For them, it is time consuming. 2) Once in a while, they got difficulty in finding the articles in which the diffulty level of the text is at their level. It is, in the researcher's opinion, natural since informal articles are categorized as authentic materials and most of them are unsimplified.

It should be noted that the use of this sort of reading material described in this article is due to the absence of graded readers in college library. Taking into account the multiple positive impact as well as the merit of using informal articles in ER program, especially real life information and various grammatical structure contained in it, it is important to use them whenever possible. However, this article is open for criticism since it contradicts with a numerous articles suggesting to use graded readers in ER program. Nuttall (1996:178) states: "authentic material is the ideal, but if you cannot find enough at the right level, you will have to use simplified or specially written materials to begin with". Therefore, in this case, the role of library is felt to be a paramount importance. It has to facilitate those who couldn't find the right level of text by providing, for example, graded readers; books or texts of various genre with controlled syntax and lexis.

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