Exploring Interest through Pleasure Reading: The E-Reading Experiences of ESL Learners

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Abstract: The reading interest of students goes with technological advancements. This qualitative study, employed phenomenology, aimed to identify the e-reading experiences of ESL learners as a form of pleasure reading. Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion were carried out. Significant themes were identified through thematic analysis. Results showed that students viewed their e-reading experiences as a form of pleasure reading for relaxing and stress relieving. It is entertaining and entails lessons as well as it capacates them to have an understanding of emotions, improving their reading skills as well as enriching positive thinking. Conversely, comprehending reading texts, improving macro skills and grammatical skills, and learning new words are the improvements gained by the ESL learners. An instructional material was developed to cater the needs of the learners to become motivated to read and being the best version of themselves. E-reading increased the interest of the students to explore the wonders of reading. Indeed, they filled out the gaps in the reading process. Having the necessary skills led them to understand the texts which encouraged them to read more. It is indispensable on the part of the students to engage more into e-reading since they applied the situations in their own lives. They learned lessons as well as the competencies to confront the challenges that they are facing in life. E-reading integrated the skills which would be necessary for students to love reading and improve their communicative competence.

Keywords: e-reading, experiences, pleasure reading, ESL learners

Background of the Study

Every learner has to develop their reading skills. It is always coupled with comprehension so that they would be able to appreciate the texts. Students who spend time on reading will have the necessary skills which are found to be important during the teaching-learning process. Though, it was observed that there were still a lot of students who struggled in reading even though they were already in the secondary level. Hence, it brought a big problem among teachers especially concerning the strategies to be employed.

Those students who engaged in pleasure reading showed to have a higher score comparing to their non-reader counterparts. It concluded the link between pleasure reading and the success of students academically (Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan, 2019). Prior to this, a similar study was conducted among the Japanese EFL students. The result revealed that those who engaged in pleasure reading performed better in their comprehension both in pre-test and post-test (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012).

Research findings of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2002) reiterated that enjoyment in reading contributed to the educational success of children and could fight against social exclusion and increased the standards of education. In the same vein, this has positively impacted students' achievement in writing and reading comprehension. Importantly, this gives them relaxation and comfort while expanding their vocabulary and grammatical structure (Mohammad Abdullah Attiyat, 2019).

Though this endeavor has similarities in the aforesaid studies, however, this will deal with the experiences of students on e-reading. Knowing also that there are a lot of students who are engaged in this reading process gives them pleasure but the majority of them read texts in Filipino. This is a bit different from supposed to be the engagement of students as ESL learners. Aside from this, no such study was conducted similar to pleasure reading in the local contexts. Hence, this is the gap of the study.

Correspondingly, this study is timely and significant in the developing the reading skills of the ESL learners. Relative to this, knowing their experiences will give a better picture and may eventually help them in improving their reading performance in English. Henceforth, the development of an e-reading material will be crucial in the parlance of teaching where it may help motivate them to engage in reading the English texts.

Statement of the Problems

This study aimed to determine the e-reading experiences of ESL learners as a form of pleasure reading. Specifically, it answered the following research questions:

1. How do ESL learners view their e-reading experiences as a form of pleasure reading?
2. How do pleasure reading help ESL students improve their reading skills?
3. What e-reading material can be developed based on the findings of the study?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify the e-reading experiences of ESL learners as a form of pleasure reading. Meanwhile, this will gain insights about the significant influence of this strategy in improving their reading skills. More importantly, this study will come up with an e-reading material crucial to the reading needs of the ESL students.

Methodology

Method Used

This qualitative study employing phenomenology aimed to explore the experiences of ESL learners on e-reading as a form of pleasure reading. In definition, qualitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as language (Asper & Corte, 2019). This methodology is used to understand individual subjectivity which leads to the giving of meaning to their social reality. The data can be collected using diary accounts or in-depth interviews with the analysis of the themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Phenomenology, on the other hand, enables the researcher to explore experiences and sensory perception of research under study. As such, the formation of understanding on these experiences and perception (Gill, 2020; Paley, 2016). This is anchored on the following assumptions: with meaning and knowing are social constructions, the investigator is part of the experience being studied and the investigator's values play roles in the investigation; bias is inherent in all research and should be articulated at the beginning; participants and investigators share knowledge and are partners; common forms of expression such as words are important; and meanings may not be shared by everyone (Boss et. al, 1996).

Hence, this study did not utilize any statistics in order to interpret the findings. It was phenomenology because the researcher shared the experiences of the participants. Moreover, themes were extracted from the responses. Thus, their participation is important in the presentation of the findings.

Source of Data

The data were sourced out from the informants. Their responses were the basis for the identification of the major themes. They were grouped into two: the Key Informants and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). There were 10 Key Informants and 5 students who participated in the focus group.

Data Gathering Instrument

The interview guide questions were used in the gathering of the data. It contained a series of questions which were aimed at digging deeper into the experiences of the informants relative to e-reading. This underwent validation by a pool of experts. For the interview, a recorder was used in storing the responses of the informants.

Population and Sampling Technique

The informants of this study were Junior High School students. In-depth interviews were observed. Purposive sampling was applied in the selection of the informants, specifically the criterion-based sampling. Hence, the following criteria were set that they must be engaged in e-reading for at least a year and officially enrolled in the school year. As mentioned by Polkinghorne (2010), there were at least 5-25 participants in a phenomenological study.

Procedure of the Study

This process provided the thick description of the process of the study. It observed the Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness, such as credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. Credibility was observed by triangulating the sources of the data. This was done through thorough understanding of the related literature and the theory base. The researcher made sure that the data was true which should be based on the transcripts of their responses. Hence, the audit trail was presented. To attain this, the researcher returned back to them and allowed them to conform to the interpretations of the data.

Confirmability was made out by getting as close to objective reality. Some of the considerations were the essence of emergency. The researcher accepted the mere fact that there could still be some changes not only on the design but also on the informants. Also, the researcher did not contain the research environment by helping the informants what they had to respond during the interview. They were allowed to express themselves relative to the topic (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003).

Transferability is a proposition that the research findings could be replicated by other researchers in the same field (Stahl & King, 2020). The researcher presented a thick description of the findings of the study, the same with the methodology. Above all, the findings could be utilized by the students especially on the applicability of the developed instructional material based on the contexts of the research findings.

In attaining dependability, one of the things that the researcher observed was that his paper underwent peer debriefing (Makel et. al, 2022). The purpose of this was to allow those who were knowledgeable in the field to suggest and check my paper. On one hand, member checks were done by allowing my co-teachers to read and have their comments.

Ethical Considerations

The approach in the observations of ethical considerations in this study was under the premise of Fleming and Zegwaard (2018). One of the ethical standards to be observed was the acquisition of informed consent. Its cornerstone reiterated that the informants must be fully informed about the nature and flow of the study. Thus, it was his role to provide them ample time to read the contents of the consent-to-participate form where they had to affix their signature. Indicated in this form my name, the intention, the needed data to be collected, the level of commitment needed from the informants, how the data should be reported, and the potential risks of their participation.

Another was the essence of observation of risks or harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. Since the informants are students, the researcher ensured that they would be protected. Their names were concealed; thus, codes were employed. Only the researcher had the full knowledge of their identities. As such, after the study, their responses were destroyed properly.

Finally, the researcher did not have the conflict of interest by manipulating the results just to make it adequate and suited the contexts of the problem (Mecca et al., 2015). Removing myself as the assessor of the informants' participation would not stain the findings of the study. Sufficient data was culled out from the students as to their knowledge of the concept of this research study. One of the important considerations is the essence of reciprocity where tokens will be given for the time and efforts they will have to extend.

Data Analysis

The responses of the informants were analyzed using the MAXQDA. This software is responsible for the grouping of the responses of the informants which have the same meaning. As well, coding was done for the easy identification of the sources of the themes.

Results and Discussions

Themes and Core Ideas on the ESL Learners View on Their E-Reading Experiences as a Form of Pleasure Reading

Table 1 presents the themes and core ideas on the ESL learners view on their e-reading experiences as a form of pleasure reading. There are five themes which were generated from the responses of the informants. These are relaxing and stress relieving, entertaining and lesson learning, understanding emotions, improving reading skills, and enriching positive thinking.

Table 1

Themes and Core Ideas on the ESL Learners View on Their E-Reading Experiences as a Form of Pleasure Reading

Themes	Core Ideas
Relaxing and stress relieving	Increases peace of mind
	Reads during vacant time
Entertaining and Lesson Learning	Finds happiness while reading
	Relates situations in real life
	Learns lessons through reading
	Delights with the story lines
	Relieves the boredom
Understanding Emotions	Internalizes the sadness and happiness in the story lines
Improving Reading Skills	Understands and discovers things while reading
	Applying knowledge learned
Enriching Positive Thinking	Encourages optimism in life

The first theme shows that e-reading is relaxing and stress relieving. This theme reveals that e-reading helps students to have peace of mind. Relaxations through reading soothes the mind. Stresses are relieved because after the hectic schedules and household chores, the students read and are able to explore the meaning of the story. It was mentioned by the informant that:

> *"Para sa akoa maam kay ma relax ko tapos mawala akoa kakapuy kung mkabsa ko."* (For me, it's relaxing and stress reliever). Informant 2

In the same manner, an informant shared that:

> *"Makalipay magbasa maam kay mawala akoa kalaay. Di ko kasabot sa feeling kay basta malipay ko kung magbasa po."* (It is a happy feeling because it gets me out from boredom. It's hard to explain the exact feeling). Informant 3

Similarly, this is in consonance with the statement of Informant 7 who stated that:

> *"Makahatag ug kalipay sa akoa ang pagbasa maam kay mawala akoa stress."* (I find happiness in reading because it can relieve me from stress). Informant 7

More importantly, Informant 10 reiterated that:

> *"Naa koy peace of mind maam pag naga basa ko."* (I have peace of mind every time I read). Informant 10

This implies that e-reading brought enough relaxation and relieved the stresses of the students who engaged into e-reading. As individuals, it was one way of enjoying the spare time that they had. Instead of wasting it, they preferred to read which led them to relax after their hectic schedules and household chores.

Similarly, the findings of Hider (2022) that reading improves the minds of the person. It relaxes the soul because they are learning and internalizing what they are reading. Reading books that provide

situations that may have an impact to the reader can have a positive result on the person's view of life and the world.

Next, e-reading is entertaining and indicates lesson learning. It is through e-reading that the real meaning of life can be savored. As they delve into the circumstances that transpired in the stories, they tend to relate this into their own lives. In the same manner, e-reading enabled them to change their perspectives in life as a person and as individuals. As a matter of fact, they find happiness while reading. The extracts of the interview revealed the responses of the informants:

> *"Malipay ko kung magbasa maam kay ma entertain ko bisan words lang tanan kay maka imagine ko sa gina story."* (I find happiness in reading because I am entertained even though those are only words but I can imagine things and scenarios). Informant 5

In addition,

> *"Oo maam kay daghan ko makuha nga lessons sa ilahang gina portray nga karakter."* (Yes, because I can learn lessons especially when they are portraying their characters). Informant 5

This concurs with the statement of Informant 7 in which she said that:

> *"Ang story about sa family ug friends maam kay naa kay makuha nga lesson."* (The story is about family and friends because of the moral lessons it can give). Informant 7

Even the Focus Group affirmed that:

> *"Kanang maabot na sa point na kanang sa excitement ana gud."* (Just like what they have said, if you get excited when reading the story. It happens mostly in the climax part of the story). Participant 3

Indeed, e-reading brought so many things to the students. By looking into the dimensions, the most important things are the lessons which they gained from the experiences of the characters being portrayed in the story. Therefore, it caught their attention to engage more into reading so that they could explore more about the essence of life being portrayed in each story.

Reading develops the metacognition of the person. Through this, they can see the brighter side of life. More so, they can put their situations into the shoes of the characters in the story. Thus, the story increases their awareness about life. This directs them to be better versions of themselves (Lewis, 2018).

One of the themes which emerged about e-reading is its understanding of emotions. As e-readers, they were able to internalize the sadness and happiness in the story lines. As humans, they are able to relate to the situations that the characters experienced in the story. During the interview, one of the informants verbalized that:

> *"Ang mga story sa online maam kay malingaw kay daghan ka mapilian nga mga story tapos kanang malipay ka maam, magguol pud dependen sa story. Kalingawan pud nako mabasa."* (Stories online are entertaining, the different emotions I can get like sadness and it is one of my hobbies also). Informant 2

One of the participants of the Focus Group Discussion confirmed that:

> *"Additional sa yeah, kanang maka alter siya og emotion. Kato lang."* (In addition, those stories that can alter your emotions). Participant 2

Thus, it connotes that e-reading connects the readers with the texts. With this, the readers dig deeper into the perspectives being incorporated in the story. With this, they tend to see the value of being human who expresses their feelings. They were carried away with how the characters are being portrayed in the story that they read.

The connection between the texts and the reader determines the capability of the reader in general. This means that they could understand the situation in the story. Aside from that, they see the value of the characters and being able to apply the lessons in their own lives (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt, & Kamil, 2003; Kunze, Ishimaru, Utsumi, & Kise, 2013)

In the same manner, e-reading improves their reading skills. As they read, they discovered a lot of things. They even applied the knowledge that they have learned. In addition, the time spent on e-reading was worth it since it made a difference on their quest toward a higher learning.

> *"Naa silay kalahian duha maam kay kung mag sige ka basa ug enhglish kay makabalo ka unsaon pag konstrak ug sentence sa Filipino ug English."* (Yes there is because when you read English stories you will learn how to construct sentences both in Filipino and English language). Informant 4

E-reading improves the reading skills of the students. It cannot be denied that e-reading is a fad among the younger generation. It was easy for them to download these stories and read it during their free time. Likewise, they generated knowledge that strengthened their reading capabilities.

> *"Kung magbasa ka maam kay daghan kayo ka matun.an ug ma discover nga mga words sa English. Dili ka malisdan ug istorya sa klase human makalingaw pud siya maam."* (When you read you can really learn a lot like discovering a lot of words, learn how to speak, read thoroughly and it's also good to make it as a hobby). Informant 4

The importance of e-reading has influenced the student to have learned terminologies which widens her perspectives of the contexts of the material being read.

> *"Oo maam. Pareho sa akoa nasulti ganina kay daghan ko natun.an nga English words. Daghan pud ko nakuha nga ideya sa mga story nga magamit pud nako sa akoa pagsulat. Makalingaw pud magbasa maam."* (Yes maam. As what I have mentioned, I have learned new English terms and language. I also get ideas from stories where I can use it to my own writings. I also find it fun). Informant 6

In the same vein, this proves that e-reading enables a student to have the profound understanding of the lesson in English. Through this, she has the ability to respond to questions without any difficulties.

> *"Oo maam nay kalahian. Katong nag umpisa nako ug basa maam nga hobby na nako kay dali na lang ko maksabot sa lesson sa eskwelahan sa English subject ug wala nako naglisod ug tubag sa English kung nay recitation."* (Yes ma'am, there is a difference. Because when I started the hobby of reading, it was easy for me to understand the lessons in school especially in English

> subjects and I don't have difficulties anymore in answering questions during class recitation). Informant 8

Correspondingly, this made them feel happy because it taught them to correct their own flaws especially in grammar. Thus, it enhanced their language skills.

> *"Para malipay ko maam. Ma tarung nako akoa grammar ug mag maayo pa akoa skills."* (For me to feel happy, learn to correct my grammar and enhance my skills). Informant 9

As such, Participant 2 of the Focus Group Discussion accentuated the learning that she gained through e-reading.

> "My answer is the same as Participant 3. My pronunciation has improved and if there are words that are new to me then I will automatically search them through the internet and once I know the meaning then I can conclude that I am doing right."

Therefore, e-reading allowed students to apply the value of learning language. It enabled them to have the awareness toward their skills to speak and write. In the same vein, it encouraged them to increase capabilities to have the confidence in expressing themselves in the English language.

Reading in general improved the capabilities of the students. They can easily express themselves in writing, speaking, and even by listening to details of the shared stories. Moreover, their skills to construct sentences have shown a higher level of increase (Huang, Hew, & Fryer, 2022).

With the lessons they gained through e-reading, the students expressed that it enriched their positive thinking. It led them to be optimistic and looked into the brighter side of life. Undeniably, these learners had so much to say about their experiences on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, but they tended to shift their attention to e-reading.

> *"Para sa akoa nga estudyante maam kay positive akoa life."* (As a student, it encouraged me to be positive in life.) Informant 8

> *"Makatabang siya sa akoa maam mag move on sa kinabuhi especially kung nay problema."* (It helps me to keep moving on with life). Informant 8

E-reading leads the students to value the essence of life. Being optimistic, even in the midst of quandary, they could overcome the challenges that lie ahead. Whatever problems they faced; these students who engaged into e-reading forgot that they were battling the strongest enemies. It is one way of easing the impact of the pandemic and it bridges their journey to become readers who can be the source of inspiration.

One of the impacts of reading is the changes of the perspectives of the readers towards the meaning of life. From being negative to being positive has proven that reading provides help to students to be more consistent in their views about life. Correspondingly, it ignited their hearts to move on from the bondage of pain and focus on things that would help them grow and prosper (Rasulova & Karimov, 2022).

Themes and Core Ideas on the Improvement on the Reading Skills among ESL Students

Themes and core ideas on the improvement of the reading skills among ESL students are revealed on Table 2. It presents three major themes. These are comprehending reading texts, improving macro skills and grammatical skills, and learning new words.

Table 2

Themes and Core Ideas on the Improvement on the Reading Skills among ESL Students

Themes	Core Ideas
Comprehending Reading texts	Unlocks word meanings
Improving macro skills and	Expresses through easy writing
Grammaring skills	Increases speed in reading and able to spell words correctly
	Learns to use the grammatical structures
	Speaks with confidence
Learning new words	Gathers novel vocabulary

In comprehending reading texts, the students were able to unlock the word meanings. This happens when they understand the message being implied by a sentence or a paragraph through a specific word. In particular, e-reading helped them comprehend the story though these are written in the English language.

> *"Yes ma'am kay sauna nga wala pako sige ug basa kay maglisod ko sabot sa mga uban nga words pero katong sige nako ug basa kay dali na lang nako amsabtan." (*Yes, it did. Like there are terms before that I find it difficult to read but because of consistent reading online, it was easy now easy for me). Informant 1

This implies that students have the capabilities to understand what is meant by the text. Eventually, their level of comprehension is expanding to a degree that can be motivated in captivating the core of the story. In conclusion to this, e-reading is the best strategy for the students to encourage themselves since it provides them the room to discover their own potentialities.

For Giorgis and Johnson, (2022), unlocking the meaning of words is the first skill that every reader has to fulfill. There is no connection that can be built with the reader and the text if the former does not have the capacity to recognize the meaning of this word. As such, readers can easily draw implications from the story (Benonguil & Barnido, 2022)

Meanwhile, e-reading improves the macro skills and grammaring skills of the ESL students. They have the capability to read, write, and even speak because of the materials that they read.

> *"Nkatabang siya sa akoa pagsulat maam kay nagasulat man pud ko. Nakabalo pud ko ug daghan nga words tapos sakto nga paggamit ug grammar"* (My way of writing through essay, because I get to learn how to use words and correct grammar). Informant 2

Through e-reading, the students have the capacity to read with ease. Aside from that they have shown a big improvement in spelling as well as in speaking. The following extracts represent these implications.

> *"Mas paspas nako magbasa karun maam human kahibalo nako unsaon pag spelling."* (For me is reading speed and correct spelling). Informant 4

> *"Mas paspas nako karun magbasa maam human kabalo na gyud ko mag spelling."* (My speed in reading and spelling really improved). Informant 5

> *"Paggamit ug grammar nga English maam ug pas istorya pud ug English."* (The usage of grammar and English language speaking). Informant 6

As such, through e-reading the students were able to explore the possibilities of expanding their horizon. From being a beginner to someone who has the confidence in expressing themselves in the English language. In particular, they could observe the structures of the language both in written and oral discourses. Nevertheless, e-reading is a strategy which students have to enrich because they can exonerate themselves from the bondage of ignorance.

In learning English, students should have to consider their macro skills. The development of the command of the language as well as their capability to construct sentences enable the students to know more of the texts. In addition, the students could see the value of the characters in every story that they read (Larsen-Freeman, 2019).

One of the importance of e-reading is that readers learn new words. These words enrich the vocabulary of the reader. Every time that they read this word, they immediately have the grasp of its meaning.

> *"Dili pa kayo ko paspas magbasa maam pero daghan nako natun.an nga mga English words."* (I am not yet fast in reading but I learn to slowly use English terminologies). Informant 3

Hence, the participant of the FGD added that:

> *"Before tong wala pa naga read og ebooks or wattpad, kanang kanang naai mga kanang naa pa kai mga wah nabal-an na mga words then after na nagbabasa kana ng ebook or wattpads, nagdaghan na ang nadugang sa imuhang vocabulary nga mga new words." (*Before when I was not into e-reading, there are only few words I knew but when I started e-reading in wattpads and e-books then I learn a lot of vocabulary). Participant 5

This concurs that e-reading is crucial in the reading development of a student. Learning a new word means that they are extending their level of understanding of the texts. For non-native language speakers of the English language, this is already a mile of success for them. In the long run, they could utilize these words in expressions both in written and oral.

Learning new words expands the perspectives of the readers. Through this, they may construct more sentences and even apply theses in other aspects of communication. The fluency of the students begins with the richness of words stored in their mental lexicon (Jarema & Libben, 2007).

Conclusion

This study found out that e-reading increased the interest of the students to explore the wonders of reading. Through this, they filled out the gaps in the reading process. Having the necessary skills led them to understand the texts which encouraged them to read more. Also, it is indispensable on the part of the students to engage more into e-reading since they applied the situations in their own lives. Through this, they learned lessons as well as the competencies to fight the challenges that

they are facing in life. Truly, e-reading integrates the skills which would be necessary for students to love reading and improve their communicative competence.

Recommendation

This study recommends the following. First, this can be replicated by employing male e-readers. By looking into this aspect, they can determine the disparity of reading skills generated by looking into the gender of the informants. As well, this study should be applied in the classroom setting where teachers have to assign students to engage in e-reading during their free times. Instead of focusing on nonsensical activities, they can assign this activity to their students. Perhaps, this will eradicate the problems of non-readers and those who could poorly comprehend the reading texts. Above all, the e-copy of the material developed will be distributed to the students for them to read.

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