Perceptions of EFL students on e-book based extensive reading at a tertiary level

Yüksek Öğretim EFL Öğrencilerinin E-Kitap Tabanlı Kapsamlı Okumaya İlişkin Algıları

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Abstract

Printed reading texts have been transformed drastically which allows readers to read books in an electronic format flexibly. Reading e-books extensively has received much attention globally thanks to their advantages such as portability, convenience and affordability. Likewise, the popularity of extensive reading programs has increased dramatically. Correspondingly, the number of publications related to e-books and extensive reading has risen tremendously which has urged the researcher to combine both in a single study. In this respect, the current study was conducted to pinpoint the perceptions of students who joined an e-book based extensive reading program at TISHK International University within 2022-2023 Academic Year in Erbil, Iraq. 50 freshman students were chosen by adopting convenience sampling method, and the data were collected via an extensive questionnaire, a survey and interview. The data collection process which included the instruments of a mixed methods design within 11 weeks through SPSS 23 and NVivo revealed that e-book based extensive reading improved students' performance, increased their motivation, facilitated overcoming language learning anxiety and changed overall attitudes towards learning English with reading e-books extensively. The findings of this study can have some implications for researchers who are planning to conduct an e-book-based ER instruction at their institutions.

Keywords: Extensive reading, IELTS Speaking Test, self-confidence, attitudes towards learning English.

Özet

Basılı okuma metinleri, okuyucuların elektronik formattaki kitapları esnek bir şekilde okumalarını sağlayarak büyük ölçüde dönüşüm geçirmiştir . E-kitapları yoğun bir şekilde okumak, taşınabilirlik, kolaylık ve satın alınabilirlik gibi avantajları sayesinde küresel olarak çok dikkat çekmiştir. Aynı şekilde, kapsamlı okuma programlarının popülaritesi önemli ölçüde artmıştır. Buna paralel olarak, e-kitaplarla ve kapsamlı okumalarla ilgili yayınların sayısının muazzam şekilde artması araştırmacıyı her iki konuyu tek bir çalışmada birleştirmeye yönlendirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışma, Irak'ın Erbil kentinde 2022-2023 Akademik Yılı kapsamında TISHK Uluslararası Üniversitesinde e-kitap tabanlı kapsamlı okuma programına katılan öğrencilerin algılarını belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. 50 birinci sınıf öğrencisi kolaylık örnekleme yöntemi benimsenerek seçilmiş ve veriler kapsamlı bir anket, ve görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. SPSS 23 ve NVivo aracılığıyla 11 hafta içinde karma bir yöntem tasarımının araçlarını içeren veri toplama süreci sonunda, e-kitap tabanlı kapsamlı okumayla öğrencilerin performans ve motivasyonları artmış, onların dil öğrenme kaygısının üstesinden gelmelerine yardımcı olmuş ve e-kitapları kapsamlı bir şekilde okuyarak İngilizce öğrenmeye yönelik genel tutumlarını değiştirmiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, kurumlarında e-kitap tabanlı bir kapsamlı okuma talimatı yürütmeyi planlayan araştırmacılar için bazı etkilere sahip olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kapsamlı okuma, IELTS Konuşma Sınavı, özgüven, İngilizce öğrenmeye yönelik tutumlar.

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Introduction

Learning a language is related to effective communication. Therefore, proficiency necessitates accuracy and facility (Daskan & Yildiz, 2020). In this context, reading plays an indispensable role in people's lives, so reflections of reading can be observed at different stages of lives. Mastering reading by following proven techniques is essential to unlock the full potential. Reading ability cannot be underestimated as having endeavors to decode words because reading is an active process that requires the learners to integrate six essential elements into their learning environments successfully. These elements include oral language growth, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, which can serve as a milestone in learners' lives (Kumar & Palukuri, 2022). The learners who are equipped with these elements are expected to master other vital 21st-century skills such as information, digital, media and financial literacy without having much difficulty. Likewise, the learners who have mastered reading and other 21st-century skills can earn more dignity in society (Kara & Yildiz, 2022; Ulker et al., 2021). To illustrate, a good pilot who keeps regularly can develop problem-solving skills to be used in an emergency while flying. In addition, a journalist who is familiar with current news by following various websites can be distinguished from others in terms of having accurate and updated information. Moreover, a software engineer who catches up with the latest developments in computer science can grab the opportunities to make a difference in the field. After that, a visionary farmer who reads frequently to be knowledgeable about the latest proven techniques on agriculture can be a role model for others. Similarly, an educator who reads on a daily basis to fill the knowledge gaps can earn the respect of other educators and revolutionize education to a large extent. It can be stated that reading helps individuals to unlock their full potentials regardless of their occupations.

Extensive reading (ER hereafter) is a promising approach to second language learning which highlights granting freedom to the readers about the content, duration and genres. In addition, it prioritizes getting pleasure and increasing knowledge rather than sticking to certain activities and forms in English. Therefore, language learning effectively depends on learner autonomy. Language learners must be self-directed (Yildiz & Yucedal, 2020). In this regard, it differentiates from other approaches because learners can actively construct their knowledge and progress accordingly. According to Robb and Kano (2013), implementing an ER based instruction at educational institutions offers several benefits such as increasing word power, developing reading fluency, figuring out grammar patterns, incidentally, learning various collocations and enhancing overall comprehension skills. The learners who have improved their skills considerably through ER can also have certain advantages in other subjects because they can identify, comprehend and make interpretations easily while reading texts. In addition, teachers are encouraged to enrich their classes with supplementary activities in line with modern teaching methodologies, so ER can be of greatest importance to change learning atmosphere positively (Celik, 2018). Thanks to the increased popularity of ER globally, several prominent publishers such as Oxford, Penguin, Cambridge and Pearson have been increasing the number of publications in various stages to welcome all learners and allow them to progress gradually.

Traditional teaching practices have transformed tremendously thanks to the advent of web-enhanced tools in education. Web-enhanced tools such as YouTube, Zoom, Flickr, Zip Grade, Kahoot, Padlet have contributed significantly to increase the engagement of the students in classes. In the same vein, the practices of reading have been affected from this modification as well. E-books have been receiving much attention as they offer numerous advantages for readers and teachers (Abdulrahman & Kara, 2023). E-book is an electronic version of the traditional book which allows readers to read on the internet through their mobile devices such as laptops, cell phones, tablets and PDAs. Reading books online is flexible because readers can read with their readily available mobile technologies conveniently. In addition, they can zoom in and out to focus on certain points, bookmark and save the page to be continued later. In addition, they can install an e-dictionary and figure out the meaning of any unknown word instantly. After that, mobile technologies are at the heart of students' lives, so they can find more common grounds if they read the books with them. Subsequently, they can improve other skills while reading electronically because e-books are mostly accompanied by audio-tracks or illustrated videos. Readers can improve their listening and pronunciation as well. On the other hand, it has some negative implications which need to be handled wisely to increase the

satisfaction rate of the students. To illustrate, distractibility, increasing costs, limited battery life, eye fatigue and losing the respect for reading on the paper need to be considered and fixed, so readers can develop good habits towards reading books electronically (Fraser & Abbot, 2016). In addition, balancing the time is fundamental while implementing an e-book-based instruction because reading on paper is the standard globally despite some advancements in e-book technologies. Readers can easily feel demotivated in their classes where they are exposed to traditional instruction including reading paper-based books if e-book sessions last longer than pedagogically advised time. It can be argued that e-book-based ER can help students develop their linguistic competence if certain measures are taken to implement it in a professional manner.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

This study investigated the perceptions of students on an e-book-based ER program. In this regard, the research questions were formulated to be explored in the survey, questionnaire and the interview.

- Does e-book-based ER program increase students' motivation to read more ambitiously?
- Does e-book-based ER program enhance students' performance in classes?
- Does e-book-based ER program affect their overall attitudes towards learning English?

Significance of the Study

Extensive reading programs have been implemented at many educational institutions. Once the published studies have been examined, it has been observed that accessing to a wide range of paper-based books has been one of the most chronic problems suffered by the researchers. In the same vein, the cost and unable to highlight certain points electronically or use e-dictionaries have been cited as other weaknesses of extensive reading. In addition, it has been scanned that the number of publications on e-book-based extensive reading has been limited with a few studies, so this study was conducted by combining extensive reading with e-book initiatives to measure the effects of it on students' motivation, performance and overall attitudes at a tertiary level in Iraq context. However, it is rare to encounter highly motivated and focused students, as most students are preoccupied with

their untouchable social media accounts, which tends to transform students into introverts. Still, this condition can be beneficial in leading students to read online (Yildiz, 2019).

Literature Review

Extensive reading programs have been prevalent in different versions on a global scale as it allows more freedom to readers about the content, duration and level. Another intriguing point of ER is that readers join reading activities to derive pleasure rather than being forced to take the exams upon reading the book (Day, 2018). There are some theoretical underpinnings of ER, so its popularity has been increasing in the last two decades. For example, Krashen's five hypothesis which are natural order, acquisition, monitor, input and affective filter can be noticed clearly in ER activities. Krashen (1992) puts forward the idea that learners can learn well if activities are ordered in a logical order where the items to be learned should be neither too easy nor too difficult. In other words, learning goals should be in line with learners' current levels. Krashen (1983) also postulates that learners with a high degree of motivation, self-esteem and a low level of anxiety progress faster than others who have less motivation, self-respect and more anxiety. In addition, Vygotsky's (2011) ZPD was in line with ER programs because ZPD urges the learners to improve their skills with the guidance of an expert which are ensured with a teacher in ER programs. In other words, learners can embark on a learning journey with their teachers, so they can enhance their performance correspondingly in ER programs. Likewise, ER programs are consistent with John Dewey's (1938) theory of learning which highlights that students learn well when they join, discuss, brainstorm, experience, share, evaluate and apply actively. ER programs offer a welcoming learning atmosphere to read, exchange their ideas, improve critical thinking skills and learn some valuable lessons from the books to be used in social life.

Different versions of ER programs can include paper-based, online or hybrid which have certain advantages and disadvantages. A number of scholars postulated that extensive reading is a more fruitful approach than others in terms of improving cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of learning (Horst, 2005), lexical expansion (Nation, 2009), reading comprehension (Nuttall, 2005), enhanced listening skills (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016), mastering grammar (Celik, 2019) and boosting speaking (Mart, 2012). In addition, a growing

number of scholars asserted that ER affects motivation positively (Tanaka, 2017), changes students' overall attitudes towards learning English in a positive way (Takase, 2009) and reduces language learning anxiety sharply (Kargar, 2013). Accordingly, there is a plethora of study in this respect.

To name a few, Iwata (2022) conducted a study on Japanese university students which revealed that ER improved their reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge considerably when they read the books by choosing from different genres available in the school library. Hussein Hakeem Barzani (2020) conducted a study on university students majoring in ELT at a private university in Iraq which displayed that students noticed positive effects of ER during their education because ER helped them to fill the knowledge gaps gradually and become proficient in English. Additionally, Kargar conducted a notable study in Iran context where she examined the effects of ER on reading anxiety at a tertiary level which revealed that ER reduced reading anxiety after being exposed to graded readers. Afterwards, Jang et al. (2015) explored the effects of ER on motivation with Korean high school students which unearthed that ER not only increased their motivation but also developed their proficiency in English. Similarly, Dickinson (2017) found that Japanese university students changed their overall attitude towards learning English after being exposed to ER in a systematic way. They reiterated that they were hopeful to master English in the short run because they noticed that language learning was not as challenging as expected if materials were graded based on their levels.

Some studies focused on the effects of online ER on improving students' linguistic competence. To illustrate, Al-Jarf (2022) integrated mobile fiction apps into the curriculum to support students' learning at a tertiary level in Saudi Arabia which unearthed that they encouraged the students to read more e-books based on fiction stories and novels, so students' attitudes towards reading changed positively. Similarly, Keita (2022) encouraged Japanese university students to read books and take relevant quizzes on XReader website which offers online books and quizzes to promote reading rate globally. His study uncovered that reading e-books and taking quizzes increased students' awareness to read more carefully and get pleasure simultaneously. Likewise, Zhou and Day (2021) conducted a study at an American university which revealed that XReading program improved their English proficiency. The students asserted that using portable devices and accessing electronic books at any time were main reasons to join this study more enthusiastically. In addition, Nkomo (2020) conducted a pioneering study in South Africa on primary school students which revealed that online ER program not only improved them academically but also personally. Students reported that they improved their English and became active speakers in conversations thanks to reading various books electronically.

Apart from traditional and online ER, some studies reflected the effects of hybrid ER programs on improving students' skills in various domains. To name a few, Fatimah et al., (2022) conducted a study on Indonesian EFL students at a tertiary level which revealed that hybrid extensive reading activities raised the standards in many dimensions. They attested that reading books traditionally and electronically increased students' engagement, so they were more motivated during the study which boosted their overall performance dramatically. Additionally, Kuru Gönen and Zeybek (2022) carried out a pioneering study in Turkey on integrating QR codes into ER books which revealed that being directed to further information to satisfy curiosity about certain themes in the books increased EFL students' motivation and marks tremendously in a British culture course. Furthermore, Klassen and Allan (2017) found that Japanese students increased their success considerably when they read the books from the library and took online quizzes on MReader website which offers free quizzes for graded readers globally.

Methodology

Research Design and Instruments

Research design to have been adopted in this study was mixed methods on grounds that it allows the researchers to use quantitative and qualitative instruments based on the necessities. Additionally, a mixed methods research design reduces the pressure on the researcher to stick to only one method which can limit the flexibility to a great extent. Thus, the researcher had the freedom to organize the study in a way to receive numerical and verbalized data as equal as possible and cross-check them (Morgan et al., 2004; Dhakal, 2022). In this regard, a questionnaire, an interview and a survey were formed to receive quantitative data. The survey and the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS 23. which required to use Cronbach Alpha reliability test, Shapiro Wilkinson Normality Test, Mann Whitney U Test, Frequencies. In addition, NVivo

application was used to categorize the transcripts in the interview and analyze accordingly.

Participants, Sampling and Setting

The setting of this study was TISHK International University (TIU hereinafter) where around 5000 students have received a top-notch education in 29 departments in Erbil, Iraq as of 2022-2023 Academic Year. Convenience sampling methods were employed to narrow the population and analyze them thoroughly. Thus, 50 Foundation English course students out of 150 were chosen to initiate and finalize the study. Foundation English course has been offered at the university by TIU Language Preparatory School as a technical non-elective course spanning the whole year so that freshman students, whose English levels are not sufficient according to taken English proficiency exam, can sharpen their English in 4 domains with experienced and dynamic academicians. Their lessons are enriched with CALL and MALL to catch up with the demands of the 21st century and keep the students engaged with real life examples. Additionally, students are encouraged to join some short talks and write some essays, so they are granted privileges to improve their English in a written and spoken format. The underlying reason to choose TIU as the setting of this study was that it has been offering all the courses in English and encouraging the academicians to take advantage of the current trends in language learning and teaching process.

Validity and Reliability

The items in the questionnaire were cross-checked by the committee who were experts in testing and evaluation, so the researcher tested the constructs in the questionnaire were relevant and easy to comprehend. Thus, content validity was ensured by updating the questions according to the opinions of the experts. Later, Cronbach Alpha was run to measure the reliability of the items within 5 main categories which culminated in .877, so internal reliability was also sufficient enough to conduct the questionnaire in practice with the participants.

Table 1.
Reliability statistics of piloting phase.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	5

Procedure

The students joined this study for 11 weeks which encompassed orientation workshops, receiving consent forms, showing the procedures, giving some tips to increase the satisfaction rates. The first week was the orientation period which was designed to introduce the basics of e-book-based ER with clear examples from around the world. In the next step, students were provided with a wide range of graded readers which were available in the school library. Once students decide upon the title of 5 books in cooperation, the researcher provided audio-tracks and illustrated video versions on YouTube. The conduct of the lesson was to read and listen to the books individually at first which converted to having reading, listening, speaking and writing activities in the second week. The rationale to have some flexibility at first was that the students would get pleasure and set their reading pace themselves while they were reading. The researcher expected that students would be more alert to join further activities about the book if they read in advance. In the second week, students read the chapters, listened to the audio versions, summarized key points, wrote a short summary and took a brief quiz having only 5 questions for each book. The essential difference of this study was that students followed the activities with their mobile devices to zoom in, go forward, rewind, use dictionaries and be directed to other websites related to the book summaries. This cycle was repeated in each book. As can be seen, the researcher prioritized 4 skills simultaneously to support each other. When all the books were covered and analyzed correspondingly, the students took a survey and questionnaire to collect the data, so students' sincere opinions could be uncovered.
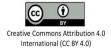
Table 2.
Graded reader list chosen by the participants in cooperation.

Title	Author	Type	The number of pages	Words	Level	Publisher
Eyes	Rob Sved	Narrative Non-fiction	32	672	1	Oxford
Earth	Richard Northcott	Narrative Non-fiction	40	820	2	Oxford
Jobs	Kamini Khanduri	Narrative Non-fiction	40	855	2	Oxford
Free Time Around the World	Julie Penn	Travelogue	48	1328	3	Oxford
Super Structures	Fiona Undrill	Narrative Non-fiction	48	1200	3	Oxford

Eyes illustrates the function of eye for animals and people with distinctive examples. Additionally, it depicts parts of an eye to teach some daily- life words. Furthermore, it shows positions, numbers of eyes. Subsequently, it gives some tips to keep eyes safe and healthy. Ducks, geckos, crabs, elephants, hawks, monkeys, owls, sharks, frogs, chameleons, seals, lemurs, dogs, cats, spiders, scallops, dragonflies, camels, meercats and people are described starkly in this book while describing distinguishing qualities of eyes and their importance. The lesson to be learned in this book is that eyes can serve different purposes according to the particular need of the environment.

Earth helps the readers explore different places on the Earth such as rivers, mountains, seas, oceans, plains, deserts and forests. It also gives information about Earth's rotation and its meaning for a sustained life. It also depicts some mountains in China, cliffs in Australia, canyons in Peru, caves in Slovenia, waterfalls in Canada and deserts in the USA. Additionally, it shows magnificent photos taken in the Arctic. In addition, it tells that Monsoon Rains mean a period of heavy rain in India; Amazon Rainforests have diverse plants and animals in a humid tropical climate. The lesson to be learned in this book is that Earth is a vast area to explore more and more.

Jobs introduces various jobs such as being a doctor, a teacher, an office worker, a flight attendant, a construction worker, a fire fighter, a tour guide, a chef, a potter, a bus driver, a farmer, a fisher, a miner, an engineer, a police officer, a vet, a railway worker, a soccer player, a taxi driver, a musician, a director, an actor, a producer and a cameraperson. After describing their duties consecutively, it gives further information about their shifts which can be part-time or full-time. The lesson to be learned in this book is that chosen occupations may span the whole career,

so it is essential to choose a job through which you will get pleasure and work with an increasing enthusiasm each passing day.

Free Time Around the World illustrates different free time activities based on the popularity for given countries. For instance, it depicts that football and futsal are so popular in Brazil where players can play on the street with or without trainers. Skiing, tobogganing, dog sledding are popular winter sports in Canada. Additionally, an artificial snow dome, built on a desert, in the UAE allows the people to do different winter sports. Subsequently, Bollywood dance is more famous than any other ones in India and is spreading to other countries as well. Moreover, Tae kwon do is a national sport in South Korea where it is so popular that some courses are integrated into school curriculums about Tae kwon do. Furthermore, manga, a type of comic book, is the most popular genre in Japan. Also, basketball is so popular in the USA and China where there are many events to increase the popularity of it. After that, singing, dancing and playing instruments are popular pastimes in Nigeria. Afterwards, beach sports are favorite pastimes in Australia where a beach cricket championship has been held annually. Finally, scouting and cycling are popular pastime activities in the UK and the Netherlands respectively. The lesson to be learned in this book is that there are different inclinations about popular sports in each country mostly shaped by the climate and promotions.

Super Structures promotes various schools, bridges, castles, skyscrapers, tunnels with clear examples. For example, it can be learned that Seikan Tunnel in Japan is one of the longest tunnels in the world. Likewise, Laerdal Tunnel in Norway is one of the longest rod tunnels in the world. In addition, the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway is one of the longest beam bridges in the USA. In addition, Burj Dubai and Petronas Twin Towers are famous landmarks as

skyscrapers in the UAE and Malaysia respectively. Furthermore, the Itaupu Dam, between Paraguay and Brazil, is one of the tallest dams in the world. Subsequently, Beijing Capital International Airport is one of the biggest terminals in the world. The book also depicts some structures with different shapes such as O2 in London, Biosphere in Arizona, Ice Hotel in Sweden, the Poseidon Undersea Resort in Fuji, Halley Research Station in the Antarctic, the International Space Station in space.

The book ends with different structures built by animals such as tunnels by wombats, dams by beavers, mounds by termites. The lesson to be learned in this book is that human beings and animals are capable of building unique structures according to their creativity and needs.

Considering the genres and levels, it can be suggested that a variety of genres and levels were integrated into e-book-based ER to increase the engagement of the students.

Findings

Three subcategories, which were survey, questionnaire, and survey were forged to interpret the findings in detail. The findings of each data collection tool can be explored below:

Survey

Items in the questionnaire included strengths and weaknesses of e-book based ER activities and students' inclinations to join such studies in the future voluntarily.

Table 3.
Thematic distribution of items on e-book based ER program

Items	Options	N	Percentage
	Having fun in an interactive learning environment	42	84 %
	Expanding knowledge on numerous fields	46	92 %
	Deriving pleasure	49	98 %
	Developing a regular reading habit	39	78 %
	Convenient to read via mobile technologies	41	82 %
What are some appealing sides of e-book based ER?	Being more creative	44	88 %
	Enhancing critical thinking skills	40	80 %
Mean	86 %		
	Distractibility	37	74 %
	A variety of eye problems	34	68 %
	Technophobia	4	8 %
	Financial burdens	42	84 %
	Battery related issues	46	92 %
What are some weaknesses of e-book based ER?	Unable to take notes and transfer them conveniently	47	94 %
Mean	70 %		
Would you join a similar study in the future?	Yes	41	82 %
	No	9	18 %

Once Table 3 was analyzed on e-book-based ER, it was observed that participants were asked to choose some options which applied to them regarding advantages, weaknesses and preferences for a future study. To illustrate, they emphasized getting pleasure, increasing knowledge and being more creative as advantages, however, they warned about difficulty taking notes, distractibility, and financial burdens as the weaknesses. When the mean scores were compared, it was also revealed that advantages of e-books (86 %) outweighed the weaknesses (70 %). Another noteworthy finding of the survey was about their preferences which showed that an overwhelming majority of the participants (92 %) would like to join such a similar study in the future.

Questionnaire

Table 4.
Students' Overall Satisfaction Rates within 5 primary categories

Construct	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
Macro-skills	E-book based ER program helped me improve my reading skills.	2	5	4.58	0.81	0.657
	E-book based ER program helped me enhance my listening performance.	3	5	4.86	0.45	0.204
	E-book based ER program helped me boost my speaking performance.	3	5	4.66	0.56	0.311
	E-book based ER program helped me sharpen my writing skills academically.	1	5	3.94	1.28	1.649
Micro-skills	E-book based ER program helped me sharpen my grammatical competence.	2	5	4.14	1.14	1.307
	E-book based ER program helped me boost my pronunciation.	4	5	4.8	0.4	0.163
	E-book based ER program helped me expand my vocabulary knowledge.	4	5	4.6	0.5	0.245
Motivation	E-book based ER program helped me increase my intrinsic motivation.	1	5	4.66	0.8	0.637
	E-book based ER program helped me spark my extrinsic motivation.	2	5	4.28	1.18	1.389
	E-book based ER program helped me restore my self-confidence in terms of reading.	4	5	4.74	0.44	0.196
	E-book based ER program helped me restore my self-confidence in terms of listening.	4	5	4.76	0.43	0.186
Overcoming Language Learning Anxiety	E-book-based ER program helped me restore my self-confidence in terms of speaking.	3	5	4.56	0.73	0.537
Overcoming Language Learning Anxiety	E-book-based ER program helped me restore my self-confidence in terms of writing .	2	5	4.12	0.77	0.598
Overall Attitudes Towards learning English	E-book based ER program changed my overall attitudes towards learning English positively.	4	5	4.96	0.2	0.039

Table 5.
The Analysis of 5 main categories.

Construct	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
Macro-skills	Developing 4 macro-skills	3.5	5	4.51	0.452	0.204
Micro-skills	Improving 3 micro-skills	3.7	5	4.51	0.427	0.182
Motivation	Increasing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.	1	5	4.48	0.639	0.408
Overcoming Language Learning Anxiety	Coping with language learning anxiety in 4 domains.	3.8	5	4.54	0.377	0.142
Overall Attitudes Towards learning English	Being hopeful in the language learning process.	4	5	4.96	0.198	0.039

As shown in Table 4 and 5, e-book-based ER was appreciated by the participants with varying degrees in terms of macro-skills. For example, their satisfaction level descended from listening to writing. Although the satisfaction level was significant in reading. listening and speaking, the same satisfaction level was not observed in writing. It can be argued that reading in large volumes, listening to audio tracks and summarizing the key points improved their skills in 3 domains, however, writing necessitated setting aside much time which could reduce the number of books read in this study. It can be stated that some modifications could be needed to enhance students' writing skills as well.

The questionnaire uncovered noteworthy points in terms of sharpening micro-skills which encompassed grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The findings revealed that participants noticed a considerable improvement in vocabulary enhancement and pronunciation thanks to following the program by reading and listening to the audio-tracks simultaneously. In other words, designing the reading and listening activities harmoniously helped the participants to have some gains in vocabulary and pronunciation. However, grammatical competence was not prioritized as it was the pre-requisite of intensive reading activities. It can be stated that ER could improve students' macro and micro skills with a well-established program. Findings of the questionnaire on participants' motivation deserve special attention as well. The findings unearthed that their intrinsic motivation was stimulated more than extrinsic motivation. In other words, they participated in the activities in a voluntary way rather than being motivated for a reward or punishment. It can be stated that real-life connections, having fun, learning cooperatively could increase their enthusiasm towards joining the reading activities more actively.

Suffering from language learning anxiety is another phenomenon which grips many students. The findings in the questionnaire offered some data to monitor closely. The majority of the students reiterated that they stepped forward on the way of fixing the obstacles in 4 macro-skills except writing. This finding hints that more connections needed to be built between ER and writing.

The last construct in the questionnaire was designed to measure whether participants were driven to change their overall attitudes towards learning English. Nearly all participants unanimously chose strongly agree which can be interpreted as a positive gain. It can be stated that ER can support language learning process and change students' overall attitudes tremendously.

Once the items in the questionnaire were analyzed categorically, it was observed that e-book based ER produced more promising results in terms of handling anxiety and changing overall attitudes towards learning English. Additionally, positive gains in other categories were also appreciated with a 4.48 and higher mean scores. It can be stated that the findings of the items were consistent with the common categories.

Prior to conducting further analysis, a normality test was run in order to figure out whether the gathered data were distributed in a normal range or not. This test was put into practice through Shapiro Wilk formula of SPSS 23.0 for windows. The criterion was whether p-value was higher or less than 0.05. The result of normality test of the writing test could be observed in the table 2.

Table 6.
Normality test of questionnaire items

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Macro-skills	.211	50	.000	.859	50	.000
Micro-skills	.213	50	.000	.862	50	.000
Motivation	.292	50	.000	.752	50	.000
Anxiety	.167	50	.001	.899	50	.000
Overall Attitudes	.540	50	.000	.198	50	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

In this study, in inference statistics, if the data was normal, parametric statistics was used which required t-test and if the data was not normal, non-parametric statistics was applied which

required Mann Whitney U test. Once p-values of Shapiro Wilk test were observed, they were measured as .000 which was less than 0.05. The p-values revealed that the distribution deviated from the normal distribution in a significant way,

so it required to apply Mann Whitney U-test to test whether there was a statistically significant difference between the findings of the questionnaire and independent variables such as age and gender.

Table 7.
The Analysis of Mann Whitney U Tests in terms of age

Mann Whitney U Test					
Age	Macro-skills	Micro-skills	Motivation	Anxiety	Overall Attitudes
Mann-Whitney U	65.000	110.000	103.000	86.000	67.500
Wilcoxon W	1100.000	1145.000	118.000	101.000	82.500
Z	-1.572	-.084	-.332	-.876	-4.287
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.116	.933	.740	.381	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.132[b]	.950[b]	.778[b]	.412[b]	.150[b]

Upon analyzing the participants' responses in general, Mann Whitney U-test was run to pinpoint whether there was a statistically significant difference between participants in terms of age and gender. Once p-values were analyzed in terms of age, it was noticed that there was no statistical difference between participants except overall attitudes category. P- value, .000, was less than 0.05, so a significant difference was

prevalent in overall attitude category, however other p-values which were .116, .933, .740, .381 were higher than 0.05, so no significant difference was observed between participants in terms of age. It can be argued that participants aged between 18 and 22 had a higher satisfaction rate than 22 and 26 ones in terms of changing overall attitudes toward language learning process.

Table 8.
The Analysis of Mann Whitney U Tests in terms of gender

Mann Whitney U Test					
Gender	Macro-skills	Micro-skills	Motivation	Anxiety	Overall Attitudes
Mann-Whitney U	293.500	306.500	301.000	305.500	286.000
Wilcoxon W	699.500	712.500	554.000	558.500	692.000
Z	-.290	-.030	-.148	-.050	-1.267
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.772	.976	.882	.960	.205
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	293.500	306.500	301.000	305.500	286.000

Moreover, participants were analyzed in terms of gender which revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female ones. P-values were recorded .772, .976, .882, .960, .205 consecutively, so no p-value was less than 0.05. Considering these figures, it can be argued that no statistical difference was observed in terms of gender.

During the study, I got so much pleasure because I joined all the activities willingly. The instructor designed the lessons in an engaging way. We read, listened to, spoke and wrote. Additionally, we expressed our ideas about each book independently. After that, the quizzes were so useful to increase our comprehension and read more carefully in the following days. Personally, the most useful part of this study was about improving pronunciation. I listened to the audio

tracks several times which helped me master my pronunciation skills. I wish I had read book in this version previously, so I could get so much pleasure. (P 4)

I used to hate reading books during my high school years because it was very tiring to read and understand. However, we studied the books chapter by chapter in this study which increased my motivation. Additionally, we learned from each other by telling the summaries. Once we exchanged our ideas about the books, I saw that there were many interesting points in the book. Thus, I read the following books more eagerly to notice more secrets and learn more novel information. Splitting the activities into manageable sessions in an interactive environment was awesome for me. I am glad to have joined such a unique study. (P 9)

I am interested in travelling to different places, so Earth, Free Time Around the World and Super structures were real page-turners for me. I could not stop reading them again and again because there were many interesting details in them. Once I read passionately, I joined all activities willingly. As a result, my satisfaction rate was quite high. Another point to be emphasized was that we were granted the freedom to use our mobile devices, so reading closely, using search engine freely and expanding our knowledge about the books on the web increased our learning and motivation dramatically. (P13)

My favorite subject was geography in high school, so the book named Earth was the best one in this study. I learned a lot about the planets and their functions. Additionally, I got much information about mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. Once I continued reading and listening to the sentences, I figured out many new words and improved my pronunciation. In addition, speaking and writing activities were designed by considering our levels, so I derived so much pleasure from beginning till the end. (P21)

My weakness in English is figuring out the topics in listening. I practiced a lot to sharpen my listening in this study. In addition, having e-book and using mobile technologies increased my motivation to read and listen to them as much as I want. When I understood all topics easily in the books, I could express my ideas confidently. As a result, the period when I participated in activities was a memorable one because I increased my knowledge in terms of different skills. (P34)

I learn better when I am exposed to learning materials visually. The learning materials in this study was enriched with visual materials, so I was so enthusiastic to join activities voluntarily. When I noticed that I could learn challenging words without having difficulty, I looked forward to having another memorable class. In addition, our instructor corrected some our pronunciation mistakes s/he noticed with the help of an e-dictionary. Listening to the books and reading aloud later helped us to fix many mistakes related to pronunciation. Upon listening to the books, we discussed common themes in each book briefly which was also another mind-blowing period. I was so satisfied with the top-notch education provided in this study. (P37)

Our instructor urged us to form some groups and complete some activities related to books. During that time, we strengthened our relationship with our friends. When we had a tight relationship with them, we could ask further questions to learn better. In addition, the students, whose English levels were better than others, tutored the other students who could not learn well. Once students learned from each other, their success rate rose accordingly. Transferring the sole responsibility from the instructor to some clever students yielded better results in this study. (P 39)

My weakness in English is writing which demotivates me. In this study, we summarized key points in a spoken and written format. Although I improved my speaking dramatically, I could not show the same success in writing. I wished to have had more writing activities in this study, but my instructor told me that reading and listening were main areas to be developed in this study. S/he also expressed that speaking and writing activities were designed to support reading and listening skills. I think I need to study much more in Academic Writing course to be better. (P41)

The most favorable part of this study was boosting my intrinsic motivation. I got so much pleasure as I progressed. I learned a wide variety of words, fixed my chronic pronunciation mistakes and restored my self-confidence. Correspondingly, I could express my ideas easily in speaking sessions. I realized that feeling motivated for the sake of learning English and getting pleasure individually was what I needed most in language learning and teaching process. (P45)

Upon completion of this study, I changed my overall attitudes towards learning English. I had some hesitations on language learning before because of having some bitter experiences, however, I took up new perspectives after this study. I realized that language learning can be as engaging as possible while reading books because we not only study for main skills but also have a chance to improve our micro-skills. There is an idiom in English which is,'' Kill two birds with one stone.''. It means that we can realize multiple goals by doing only one action which summarizes all my gains via this study. Now I know how to expand my learning in English, so I changed my overall attitudes towards learning English. I am hopeful that I will master English soon. (P 47)

Discussion

Recent innovations in digital technology have prompted the researcher to integrate e-book based ER into the curriculum and investigate its effects thoroughly in this study. Considering the

findings of the study via a questionnaire, an interview and a survey, several points were highlighted which could be explored below:

Based on the findings in the questionnaire, the participants stated that they improved their macro-skills considerably. They reiterated that they developed good habits towards reading, listening and speaking, however, they demanded more instructions in terms of writing. These findings were consistent with Huang's (2013) study which revealed that e-book paves the way for e- discussion, so students can expand their learning in all skills subconsciously. Subsequently, the participants attested that they increased their knowledge in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. In contrast, they also postulated that grammatical competence was not triggered as much as expected. It was in line with Isaqjon's (2022) finding which unearthed that intensive reading was implemented to develop students' grammatical competence, however, extensive reading did not prioritize teaching grammar units. Likewise, Kirchhoff and Mision (2022) assert that audio assisted ER is a rational idea to teach some words and develop pronunciation. Another notable finding of the questionnaire was on motivation. The participants stated that they improved their intrinsic motivation more than extrinsic one because they read for the sake of getting pleasure and meaning throughout the process. Celik (2018) elucidates that reading e-books drive the learners to read regularly, so they read more willingly in a more motivated way. Apart from macro-skills, micro-skills, motivation, participants' opinions were explored in terms of overcoming language learning anxiety which affects many learners adversely. The participants articulate that the study helped them to overcome their language anxiety in four domains. This finding was in line with Turel and Sanal' s (2018) study which reported that e-book based ER can train the readers on how to overcome language learning barriers and read more confidently. The last thing to think about in the questionnaire was that almost all of the people who filled it out said that their overall feelings about learning English had changed. Pattuelli and Rabina (2010) and Yildiz (2020) say that e-book activities encourage learners to change their overall attitudes about learning English because learners can see the positive effects of e-books right away and this leads to academic success.

Findings of the interview emphasized noteworthy dimensions of e-book reading as well. To name a few, many students reported that they were more engaged to enhance their learning. In addition, the study helped them to overcome their weaknesses such as expressing their ideas in a confident way, comprehending conversations in the audio tracks and handling chronic pronunciation mistakes. Subsequently, they asserted that they removed some barriers in their minds, so their overall attitudes towards learning the language by technologically enriched proven techniques yielded fruitful results. After that, they stated that reading e-books expanded their learning in other skills thanks to having an integrated approach to teach language through e-books.

The findings of the survey unearthed essential points to be considered as well. The participants appreciated e-book-based ER for having fun, expanding knowledge, deriving pleasure, developing a regular reading habit, being more creative and improving critical thinking skills. Waller (2013) elucidates that e-books are feasible because learners can have fun, read in large numbers and derive pleasure, read more frequently, stimulate their creativity and evaluate the events from a critical perspective. The participants also stated that using mobile technologies in class enhanced their performance. Kara (2020) asserts that using mobile technologies in classroom activities can take the education into another level, so multiple benefits can be gained simultaneously if planned and monitored professionally. On the other hand, the participants alleged that some drawbacks such as distractibility, being unaffordable, leading to poor vision, suffering from technophobia, unable save notes conveniently and charging issues may reduce the positive effects of e-book-based ER. Alsadoon (2020) convenes that some barriers related to concentration, affordability and health can hinder students' learning rates in e-book based reading activities. The last item in the survey was whether they had positive views to join such a study again in the future which culminated in a hopeful way. All students except 9 stated that they would join an e-book-based ER voluntarily in the future. Noor et al., (2012) proposed that e-book-based reading satisfaction rate made it a reasonable technique to implement in future studies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought the effects of e-book-based ER program on students' performance, motivation and devising ways to overcome language learning anxiety. Analyzed and cross-checked data revealed that students improved their primary skills considerably except writing. In

addition, it was indicated that students sharpened their pronunciation and expanded their vocabulary power. However, the same success could not be observed in improving grammatical competence. In terms of motivation, intrinsic motivation was triggered more than extrinsic motivation. Subsequently, students reiterated that e-book-based ER encouraged them to overcome language learning anxiety in 4 domains. The final point to be considered was that they changed their overall attitudes drastically at the end of the study.

Some recommendations can be made for future studies. This study welcomed students' opinions on e-book-based ER which could be enriched with the exam results. Additionally, this study employed an ER based instruction which could be compared with an intensive reading group. Subsequently, the number of male students were less that female ones which could be equalized to get a more satisfying data from each gender. Moreover, the data was collected from a university which can be expanded with other educational institutions in the region.

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