

A COMPARISON OF EXTENSIVE READING AND VIEWING PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Stella Francisca¹ and Muhammad Ainur Rizqi^{2*}

^{1,2}Tanjungpura University, Indonesia

stellaguru123@untan.ac.id¹ and ainurrizqi89@gmail.com²

*correspondence: ainurrizqi89@gmail.com

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Abstract

Although extensive reading (ER) programs are proven to provide many benefits for students' language development, many students are still encouraged to read by classroom tasks. This research aims to see the possibility of applying a more-liked activity, i.e. extensive viewing, by comparing these two programs. It aims to see what reasons influence students' preferences in choosing the ER or EV program. It involved 120 participants studying English courses at the university level. Data were collected using closed and open-ended questionnaires. The overall results showed a tendency for students to prefer the EV program to the ER program. However, if we look closer, several aspects of ER were still preferred. This research suggests that an EV program can be a good alternative for students with low interest in reading. Several aspects of the EV program, however, need further investigation, such as the ways to decide the leveling system in EV.

Keywords: extensive reading, extensive viewing, Mreader

Introduction

In the past decade, the Extensive Reading (ER) program has received significant attention from experts in English language teaching. This approach has been extensively researched to examine its influence on language learning, covering areas such as reading speed, comprehension levels, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation. In general, researchers have supported the use of this program as a facilitative approach for students to acquire a second language implicitly, such as English. According to Renandya and Day (2020), this implicit language acquisition process is the most effective way to assist students in learning a new language. For this reason, it has been widely implemented in various countries, especially those with a well-established reading culture, such as Japan and Singapore. In Indonesia, this program has just begun to spread nationwide.

However, it cannot be denied that reading is not inherently a common habit among Indonesian students. Anecdotal evidence says that Indonesians prefer socializing and conversing over reading. This assertion is supported by data from the OECD (2018), an organization that regularly surveys children's literacy rates worldwide. One of its indicators is reading literacy, and in almost every report,

Indonesia consistently ranks lower, indicating low reading literacy among Indonesian children.

Thus, it is necessary to provide the students with inputs that ER can provide, but with a visual medium. This approach is called Extensive Viewing (EV) and was introduced by some experts (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Although it has not gained the same popularity as its predecessors, ER and Extensive Listening (EL), the approach has started to be implemented in some English language classes. However, because the EV program is relatively new, the author needs to understand the students' responses to EV and compare them with the ER program. The research aims to bridge the gap in the absence of empirical research on EVs.

Understanding extensive reading (ER) and its benefits

Many experts have recommended the use of ER for English language learning. Day and Bamford (2002) were among the pioneers who advocated for the use of ER. They created ten key principles of ER, providing recommendations for educators seeking to incorporate this approach into their instructional practices. 10 principles differentiate ER from the conventional reading activities commonly employed in educational settings. These are:

1. students read as many books as they can.
2. reading materials cover a wide range of topics.
3. Students are free to choose reading materials based on their interests.
4. Reading with the primary purpose of pleasure or gaining general knowledge.
5. Reading is its reward.
6. Students read materials at their language proficiency level.
7. Reading is conducted silently and individually.
8. Promoting reading at a rapid pace.
9. Teachers orient the goals of the ER program.
10. Teachers act as role models of enthusiastic readers for their students.

Numerous studies have documented the benefits of ER programs for students. One frequently cited study is Nakanishi's (2015) meta-analysis, which examined 43 academic works. The research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of ER programs in student language learning. The results concluded that students who received ER programs in their classrooms performed better than their peers who did not participate in such programs. This aligns with the findings of Aka (2019), who reported that participants in their research demonstrated improved reading comprehension levels after engaging in an ER program. Interestingly, Aka also noted that ER is one of the most viable ways to overcome limitations in contact with native speakers for students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments.

Moreover, many experts associate ER with the acquisition of new vocabulary. Liu and Zhang (2018) exemplify this connection, as they found a substantial impact of ER on students' vocabulary acquisition. Alsaif and Masrai (2019) also presented similar results, with participants in their study experiencing a 15% increase in new vocabulary. The focus of Alsaif and Masrai's research was on incidentally acquired vocabulary resulting from extensive reading over an extended period.

Apart from the aspects mentioned earlier, experts have linked ER to other areas, such as the enhancement of students' reading processes (Masrai & Milton, 2018). Additionally, the benefits of ER have been reported in non-linguistic

domains, including positive attitudes toward reading (Hagley, 2017; Lee, Schallert, & Kim, 2015) and improved motivation (Yang, Chu, & Tseng, 2021).

Challenges in implementing extensive reading

While extensive reading programs offer numerous benefits, their implementation is not without difficulties. Several challenges are commonly encountered during execution in the classroom. Renandya, Hidayati, and Ivone (2021) summarized the obstacles encountered when implementing these programs. One of the cited challenges is the delayed impact of extensive reading, a point that is supported by research such as that of Huang (2015). Another obstacle is the lack of understanding among implementers regarding the extensive reading approach. In 2015, Day conducted a worldwide study on the implementation of extensive reading programs and found various variations in how these programs were executed. These variations often depended on the field context and the teacher's understanding of extensive reading. He categorized these variations into four types of implementations, some of which merely used the term "extensive reading" in name only. In other words, these studies adopted the term but did not adhere to the fundamental principles of extensive reading as outlined by Day and Bamford (2002). Furthermore, Renandya, Hidayati, and Ivone (2021) mentioned that there are misconceptions among some teachers about extensive reading. One of these misconceptions is the belief that extensive reading is only suitable for proficient English speakers and that the books used should be of high quality, not lightweight materials. However, Renandya and colleagues believe that students should be introduced to lightweight materials first to capture their attention and motivation before moving on to more serious books.

Renandya, Hidayati, and Ivone (2021) also highlighted the low motivation of students as a stumbling block for teachers implementing these programs. In 2015, Huang conducted a large-scale study involving 79 individuals interviewed in several Forum Group Discussions (FGD). The study examined students' attitudes toward extensive reading and found that many students were not highly motivated to read. Several students considered the available reading materials at their schools to be unappealing. However, teachers and stakeholders had devoted substantial time to selecting books that matched students' levels and interests. Experts emphasize that fostering enjoyment is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of these programs.

Understanding the concept of extensive viewing

Departing from these challenges, researchers have recognized the need to seek alternative approaches based on students' preferences. Through personal interviews with students, the researchers found that many students have a greater inclination for watching rather than reading. They find this activity more engaging because it presents information in an audio-visual format, combining visual animations and images with sound. This strategy, known as Extensive Viewing (EV), has been identified by experts (Ivone & Renandya, 2019) as a possible option to address the gap between students' inclination to receive input in the target language and their preference for watching. Rodgers (2018) defines EV as an effort to assist students in learning a new language through abundant audio-visual inputs or visual content. This approach draws inspiration from the Extensive Reading (ER)

program and aims to boost students' motivation and confidence by making the activity enjoyable and exciting. In the context of Indonesia, specifically, it is observed that the cultural practice of reading from a young age is not common, resulting in a significant number of students lacking familiarity with extensive reading.

Conversely, watching is often perceived as a more comfortable and somewhat addictive activity. Numerous studies report that people spend more time watching than reading (Salim & Hanif, 2021; Webb, 2014). Various forms of viewing include watching TV drama series, films, or short videos on the internet. The internet's presence has also significantly captured attention as it offers various platforms for viewing. Lidwina (2021b) reports that YouTube is the most frequently used internet platform in Indonesia for watching short videos. On average, Indonesian residents spend approximately 26 hours per month watching content on YouTube, a considerable amount. In a different report, Lidwina (2021a) states that YouTube is the most accessed platform in Indonesia, surpassing other popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and even TikTok. Therefore, the author argues that if some of this time is allocated to watching videos in English, it could potentially have a positive impact on students' linguistic development.

However, since this approach is relatively new (Rodgers, 2018), research on EVs is also limited. Currently, the available research is primarily conceptual, as exemplified by Ivone and Renandya (2019). While their work predominantly focuses on Extensive Listening, there are portions related to Extensive Viewing. One aspect worth mentioning is the alternative material for Extensive Listening, which has evolved from using only audio from graded books to incorporating short videos from platforms like YouTube. They also provide recommendations for websites that can be used as Extensive Viewing materials and, most importantly, how to assess this program for students. They refer to the use of logs and assignments that evaluate student comprehension, such as retelling, role play, or summarizing the main idea of what they watched.

Another noteworthy study is Rodgers (2018), which provides a comprehensive concept of Extensive Viewing and encourages the use of serialized viewing content. This approach aims to familiarize students with the plot, vocabulary, and characters within the storyline. After completing one series, students are advised to watch another series of the same genre to facilitate better anticipation and comprehension of the storyline and characters in subsequent series. This claim is supported by Pujadas and Munoz (2019), who conducted empirical research involving 106 students in Mexico. Their research highlights the use of captions as a tool to aid students in comprehending the text and acquiring new vocabulary. Nevertheless, Rodgers (2018) does not dismiss the possibility of watching short videos available on the internet. A significant contribution of Rodgers's work lies in his suggestions for future research, where he provides numerous recommendations regarding unexplored research areas. For instance, experts need to investigate how students decide whether to continue watching or switch to another channel and what their attitudes are toward the EV program.

Research questions

Based on the discussion above, this research subsequently formulates three guiding questions, as follows:

1. What are the differences in participants' perceptions towards Extensive Reading and Extensive Viewing programs
2. What categories encourage them to undertake an EV program?
3. What categories encourage them to undertake the ER program?

Method

Research design

This research used a comparative research design. It compared students' perceptions while participating in extensive reading and watching programs. During this research, students took part in extensive reading and extensive viewing programs. This program provided the opportunity to read and watch English material for a total of 4 months. The reading program was implemented in the first two months with a minimum reading target of 10 thousand words (around 10-20 books). Meanwhile, for the viewing program, students were asked to watch short videos for approximately 2 months with an accumulated viewing time of around 5 hours. To help researchers monitor reading targets, researchers used a web-based application Mreader. During this program, participants could choose several printed books out of a thousand collections. After that, participants took a quiz provided by the Mreader website. With this website, student reading data can be recorded automatically so that the data can be processed more quickly and reliably. Meanwhile, for the viewing program, researchers used the Canvas application which researchers have modified to suit research needs. In this program, participants watched dozens of videos with various genres. This application has been integrated with YouTube, an application that is widely accessed by Indonesian people (Lidwina, 2021b) so that the videos watched by participants were available for free. Apart from that, these videos already have captions, either provided directly in the video or captions produced by YouTube.

Participants

This research involved 120 participants from the university level, taken from one of the largest universities in West Kalimantan. The research sample was selected purposively from classes that implemented these two programs simultaneously. In other words, the criteria for sampling in this study were university-level classes that had English courses. The class should implement extensive reading and viewing programs as part of their course curriculum. These participants represented the fields of engineering, teaching, and social sciences.

Data collection and analysis

After participating in both ER and EV programs, participants were asked to compare these two programs. They were given a series of statements and asked to rate which statement worked best for either ER or EV. The research also explored the reasons why one program was preferred over the other. Researchers measured it using a questionnaire as the main instrument. This questionnaire was prepared based on the basic principles of an extensive reading program. Of the 10 principles expressed by Day and Bamford (2002), researchers summarized them into 4 categories. Then, the researchers added one additional category. These categories were then broken down into 16 statement items in questionnaire form. Table 1 below summarizes the categories and statement numbers.

Table 1. Table of specification

No	Category	Item
1	The purpose of participating in the program, i.e. to increase general knowledge and information	7 & 12
2	The interest/comfort in participating in the program	3, 6, 8, & 9
3	The level of materials used in the program	1, 5, 13, & 14
4	The variety of available materials	2 & 15
5	Platform services such as convenience of using the platforms, quizzes, etc.	4, 10, 11, & 16

The results of this research were analyzed quantitatively with a focus on looking at tendencies toward reading or watching programs. The data were displayed in percentage form and presented in a graph to help readers understand the results better. Because this research used a continuum questionnaire, the two highest percentages on each side were combined to allow readers to understand the data presented in this research. In this way, the combined percentage of ER and somewhat ER were compared to the combined percentage of EV and somewhat EV.

Findings and Discussion

Differences in student perceptions between ER and EV

The results of this study present differences in students' perceptions of extensive reading (ER) and extensive viewing (EV) programs. It shows which programs people tend to choose and get more positive perceptions from participants.

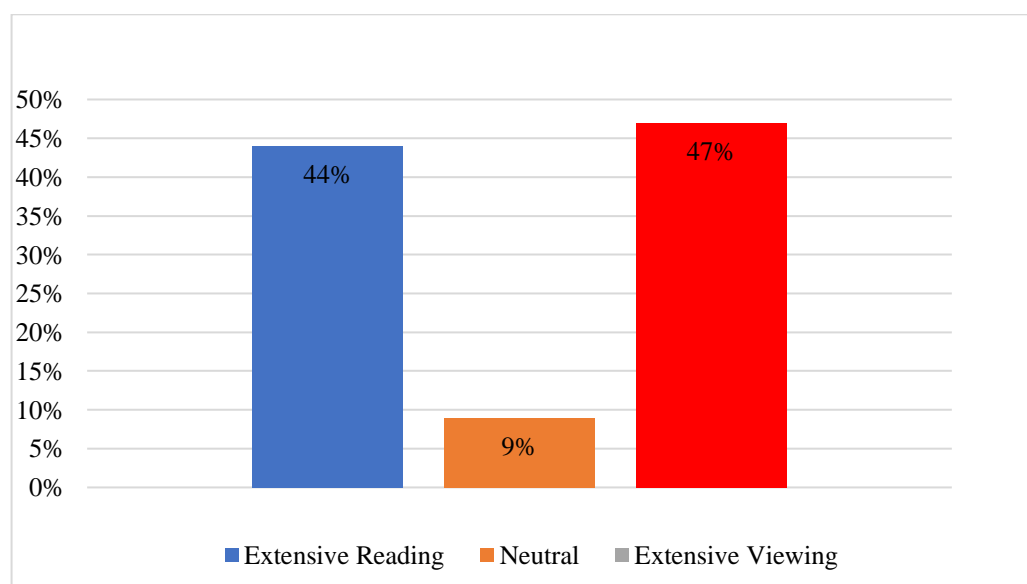


Figure 1. Comparison of student perceptions of ER and EV

Based on Figure 1, extensive viewing (EV) programs receive higher positive perceptions than extensive reading (ER) programs. Nearly half of the participants (47%) were likely to choose the EV program, compared to 44% for the ER program. Interestingly, the differences between the two are quite subtle. The EV program is only slightly superior by 3% compared to ER. In fact, at first, researchers assumed

that the EV program would be far superior to ER considering the large interest in watching among the public.

If we look closely, we can better understand which categories are positively appreciated by participants, which makes EV outperform ER. On the other hand, even though ER tends to get a lower percentage, participants still prefer the ER program in several other indicators. A more detailed explanation of this is discussed in the next sub-chapter.

Category choosing an EV program

This section aims to answer the second research question, namely the categories that encourage participants to choose the EV program. In the previous chapter, it was stated that this research collected student perception data by comparing EV and ER in five categories. The four categories are inspired by the ER principles proposed by Day and Bamford (2002). One other category was added because it relates to the use of technology or applications for both programs. The results of this research then show that three of the five categories were the reasons why participants in this study chose the EV program. Details of the differences in perception across these three categories are illustrated in Figure 2.

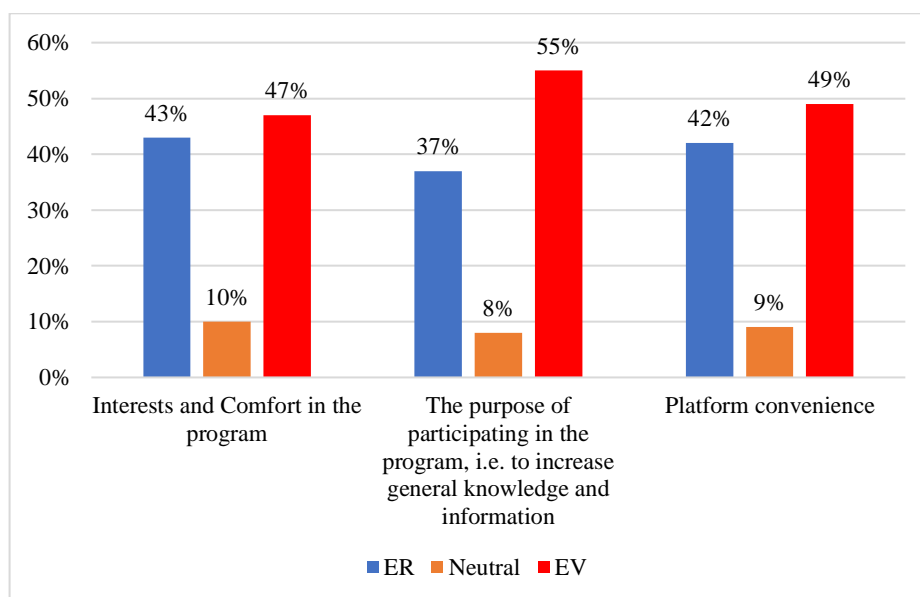


Figure 2. Categories that encourage participants to choose EV

The first category in which EV was superior to ER was related to interest/comfort in participating in the program. This category was inspired by the 10 ER principles, namely that reading material (watching) must be interesting for participants. This category was made up of four statements, namely the freedom to choose reading material (watching) according to their preferences (statement no. 3), the desire to continue watching even though it has finished (statement no.6), the acknowledgment that they are happy to have participated in this program (statement no. 8), and feelings of not feeling pressured while participating in the program (statement no. 9). As seen in Figure 2, 47% of participants preferred the EV program compared to 43% who chose ER. This figure reflects a 4% difference between the two.

In the next category, more participants chose EV, by more than half. The difference with ER is also quite large (18%), which makes this category the category with the biggest difference. This category focuses on program objectives where participants are expected to gain a lot of insight and general information by participating in the ER and EV programs. This category was built by two statements: the participant's acknowledgment of gaining a lot of insight (statement no. 7) and the program's ability to answer the participant's curiosity (statement no. 12).

Finally, this research asked what they thought about the platform services used in both ER and EV programs. Almost half of the participants chose EV (49%), 7% behind those who chose ER (42%). In this category, participants admitted that the quiz (statement no. 10) and the platform (statement no. 11) used in EV were easier to answer and use, and more interesting (statement no. 16). Uniquely, participants agreed that platform orientation (introduction) in the ER program was easier than platform orientation in EV (statement no. 4). However, on average, EVs are still superior in this category.

Category choosing an ER program

The final question in this research, namely the categories that encourage participants to choose ER, is answered in this section. There are two categories where ER gets more percentage than EV. A clear picture is shown in Figure 3 below.

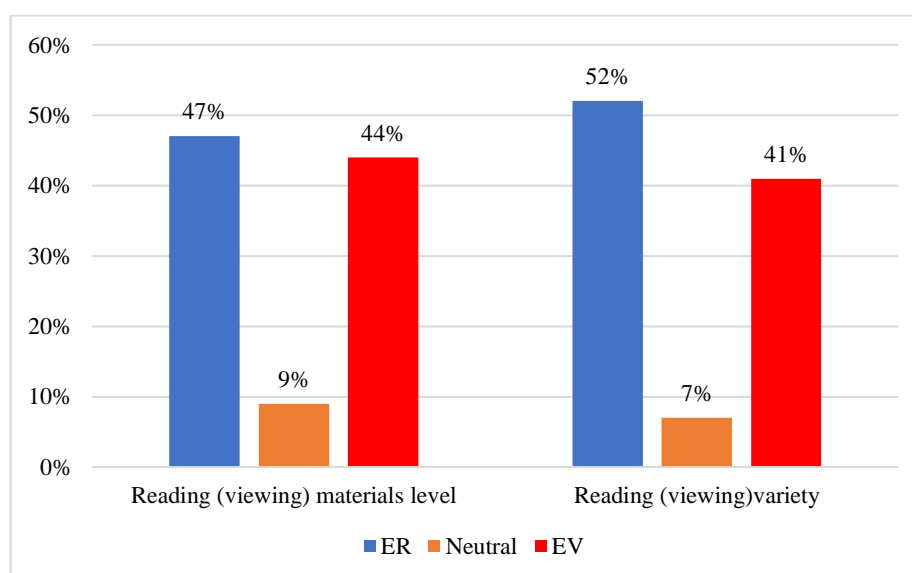


Figure 3. Categories that encourage participants to choose ER

One category where ER was superior to EV was reading level. The figure above shows that 47% of participants felt that ER had a more appropriate reading level for them, compared to EV. This figure is 3% behind participants who said that the level of difficulty in EV was appropriate to their level of English proficiency. This category was marked by their statement that ER was not difficult (statement no. 1), their ability to read quickly (statement no. 5), the large amount of vocabulary

that could be understood (statement no. 13), and their ability to continue reading without feeling bothered by difficult vocabulary (statement no. 14).

Furthermore, the ER program was often chosen because it had a greater variety of reading material than the EV program. More than half of the participants (52%) said that, which was quite a big difference from the EV program (41%). This category was characterized by the recognition that ER has a greater variety of topics than EV (statements no. 2 and 15).

Discussion

Although ER programs have received greater attention in recent decades, an alternative needs to be provided for students who are not as keen on reading. The presence of the EV program in recent years is one of them amidst rapid technological developments, which allows people to get access to short videos from various parts of the world.

This research confirms the anecdote of many parties that EV programs in English classes tend to be chosen more often than ER programs. This also confirms reports from Lidwina (2021a; 2021b) which stated that the video-sharing platform, YouTube, is the platform most accessed by Indonesian people compared to other platforms or social media.

Several reasons contribute to the findings of this study. One of the categories or reasons why EVs are chosen more often is because the EV program is considered more attractive. Even though both programs use tools or applications that are likely to attract students' attention, there are fundamental differences in terms of selecting reading material (watching). For example, Mreader (the website used in the ER program), uses leveled reading material, known as graded readers. Although the use of graded readers is widely known, the reading materials used are old stories that may be outdated and have been read or seen in another form. As a result, these stories no longer attract attention and seem outdated. In contrast, the content presented in the EV program via the Canvas platform is newer and involves a lot of content with themes of technology, travel, and world celebrity issues so it is more related to the daily lives of the participants. One more thing that makes Canvas seem more interesting is the serial content. Or, even if it is not a series, the content is presented with the same theme and YouTube channel so that it helps participants build context and familiarize themselves with the plot, characters, setting, and vocabulary in the videos they watch. Rodgers (2018) supports the use of video series like this to help students anticipate the next videos and make the process of understanding video content faster.

This research also shows that the EV program provides additional insight and more information to participants. As stated previously, videos that are new and taken from various parts of the world seem to be successful in igniting students' curiosity to see the outside world for real. The existence of this visual input provides a different sensation that is not found in ER programs where insights are obtained through text without seeing the original form of the insight in question. Therefore, Ivone and Renandya (2019) encourage taking input from various sources to help students understand spoken texts better.

One thing that surprised us was the positive response the EV program received in terms of platform usage. While the ER program uses Mreader as the main platform for tracking student reading data, researchers develop their own EV

program content with the help of the Canvas platform. Interestingly, most participants responded positively to Canvas which was adapted for the EV program because it was more attractive and easier to use. Besides, the questions given at the end of the video are also considered easier than the questions in Mreader.

Even though it looks promising, two things make participants still choose ER over EV. One of them is related to the reading material leveling system. Because ER has been studied for a long time and developed by various institutions and publishers (for example the Extensive Reading Foundation), the ER program has far more level options than the EV program. Some even have their leveling systems. This helps students easily adapt their English level to the books they will read. This is also related to the next category where the ER program has a much greater variety of reads than EV. Of course, one of the reasons is that many major publishers release graded readers with their versions.

This is very different from the EV program used in this study. Due to limited research in the field of EV, the selection of video levels in this study was carried out independently based on the researcher's knowledge and experience during dozens of years of teaching English. However, to make it more reliable, the researchers looked for videos that were short and with level articulation, but in a more limited number. To help students' understanding, researchers also looked for videos that had captions and could be captioned automatically by YouTube. The use of captions, although not asked about in this research, has been widely suggested by previous research (Pujadas & Munoz 2019) as a tool to help students understand videos.

Conclusion

This research shows that there is a tendency to prefer the EV program over the ER program among students, although, if looked at in more detail, several aspects of the ER program are still superior. This shows that the EV program can be a good alternative, especially for students with low interest in conventional reading.

The results of this research have practical implications for teachers and curriculum developers at school and college levels. This shows the importance of adjusting the ER and EV programs that will be implemented. If using the ER program, for example, teachers need to pay attention to selecting book topics that are more interesting and updated. On the other hand, to implement an EV program, teachers need to pay attention to the variety of videos and their number, which are not widely available either for free or for a fee.

The research then highlights several weaknesses and suggestions that researchers can make in the future. For example, researchers need to further examine the leveling system in the EV program. This aspect is important to optimize the effectiveness of the program and ensure its alignment with students' learning preferences.

In conclusion, while our research provides valuable insight into student preferences in general, it also represents an ongoing area of research. This ongoing exploration is critical to the continuous refinement and improvement of educational strategies, ensuring they remain appropriate to the changing needs and preferences of the student population.

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