
A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ELT REAL PRACTICE UTILIZING E-MAGAZINE IN AN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY

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Received: 30 May 2023

Revised: 12 June 2023

Accepted: 26 June 2023

ABSTRACT

Authentic material could be promising in providing real use of language materials, one of them is e-magazines. English e-magazines are the teaching media utilized by the teacher (as the subject of this research) in their ELT class that become the focus of this study. Aiming at describing the real practice done by the teacher in order to look closer on how e-magazine presence in class can help ELT teaching learning process, this article presents a case study of an ELT class of 30 students in an Indonesian art university, involving a teacher and several students in the process of data collection through observation, interview, and document study and analyzed by having critical look on the process of real teaching practice. The result shows there are gained benefits related to students' learning autonomy, with some potentials and challenges related to teaching practices, hoping that ELT teachers could develop their teaching ideas and might consider using e-magazine in their next class meetings.

Key Words: Authentic materials, E-magazine, ELT

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers believe that the utilization of authentic materials for English teaching in EFL settings has been a long term discussion, even debates, since many of them thought that authentic materials are considered "safe", stimulating, and real. Some said that authentic materials put the real use of communication into the class. But some others think that authentic materials do not meet the learners' needs for communication. These are some of the reasons why it gained popularity in EFL teaching and learning.

Richards (2006) was quite pessimistic saying that the use of authentic materials cannot be realistic since it deals with the students' level and language problem. Moreover, Khaniya (2006) believes that authentic materials are mostly beneficial only for students with high level English competences.

Cahyani et al., (2022) in her study about the arts integration in English teaching, emphasizes that the art university students are in demand of not only English competences but also including terms and words in arts. It is one of the reasons behind the idea of finding out relevant authentic materials

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related to Interior Design study program.

Magazines or which now are transformed into e-magazines are still exist even though their publications are not reaching all people. Srinivas Rao (2019) agrees that Magazines are one of valuable authentic materials that support vocabulary building and can help ELT even if it is mixed-level class.

There have been a number of studies about using authentic materials in reading (Gavell, 2021; Namaziandost et al., 2022; Pustika, 2010; Berardo, 2006;) Also in writing (Albiladi, 2018; Forsia & Syekh-yusuf, 2022; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019). However, the researcher has not found the study of authentic materials in the form of magazine or e-magazine in teaching English. This study intends to find out the gained benefits, potentials, and challenges of utilizing e-magazines in English teaching and learning in university level.

METHODS

Research design

Case study, which is an intensive analysis considering developmental factors in the environment (Flyvbjerg, 2011) is the methodology employed in this study. It is a case study of how a teacher utilizes a seldom-experienced

teaching media that is English e-magazines to teach English to his students. In line with the purpose declared in the previous section, this study concerns the process and analyzes supporting factors of utilizing e-magazine for the students' learning process through guided exploration.

Research site and participants

The research takes place in one of art universities in Indonesia, in a class of Interior Design students in their second semester, involving 30 students with multi-background and various level of English competences. Class observation was done during the process of teaching and learning with the e-magazine utilization. The teacher and some students are invited for interviews after the document study (including the e-magazine pages and students' responses) are examined. The teacher is a 30-year-old with 10-year experience in teaching English, who likes to try new media and interested in various teaching methods.

Data collection and analysis

Data is collected through in-site observation, interviews, and document study. The research site is in an art university in Indonesia, particularly in the class where the utilization of e-magazine occurs. The researcher is also

an English teacher in the same university along with two other teachers. Her research roadmap includes best practices and teaching methods of English teaching in higher education. Data is collected through observing the class session to understand the process, the class atmosphere, and the students' responses. There were also some interview sessions with the students and the teacher to reveal what cannot be seen in the observation.

After data is gathered, notes are taken, they are organized and displayed to find out how things are related. The researcher made two categories based on the magazine page contents the teacher used in class, which are two different things to highlight "e-magazine" as the main actor in the teaching learning flow. The two categories are the utilization of 1) particular-topic e-magazine content and 2) the entertainment page. Data are then analyzed to find supporting factors of e-magazine utilization which are potential for English teaching practices references teachers can consider.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the data collected, regarding to utilizing English e-magazine in teaching English, this section covers the story of

real practice of how things were going on in class, how teacher implemented e-magazine as teaching media in teaching English. The two distinguished highlights below indicate two different sessions with different types of e-magazine contents and teaching techniques.

1. Major-related specific pages

E-magazine used by teachers to teach in class is a e-magazine that is in accordance with the major of students. In this case, the teacher used electronic English e-magazines, with interior design content named "Canadian Living" March 2023 issue to teach Interior Design students. In the e-magazine, there are included not only interior design, but also lifestyle that allows students to explore more and even various themes. The content presented in this e-magazine is about fashion and beauty, health and fitness, life and community, home, and garden, also cooking and foods.

"I really feel that I had to find a real English source for my students who studied interior design, this began when I was in my needs analysis trying to find what Interior Design materials, I should involve in English class content. Then, the 'aha moment' was when I found the design content in e-magazines. So, I asked myself why not try this in class..."

(Interview excerpt, with the Teacher)

Before the reading started, the teacher provided several questions to guide or direct students to find information. The students are to open certain pages related to their major (Interior Design), which is in the home and garden section, which is related to decorating and designing. This activity is objected to the students to: 1) describe the parts of the e-magazine that grabbed their attention, it could be something new to them, 2) to give opinions, and 3) as a chance for them to tell a story reflecting their feelings and emotions, 4) to learn new vocabularies by listing 10 to 15 words they did not know and had they study the meanings, and 5) to write about the parts of the e-magazine content that inspired them related to their design view. Those five numbers of tasks must be done mostly in written form first (although the teacher also allowed them to give answers by recording their voice), before bringing them to class for oral discussion in forum.

"I enjoyed the e-magazine task, I feel like I was given a space to choose and learn what I liked. The discussion we had in class about the e-magazine contents we have learned was very satisfying. Me and my friends talked about interior design stuff also beauty contents we found in the e-magazine. I learn a lot of vocabulary."

(Interview excerpt, with student A)

Besides reading certain pages of Interior Design, the students could also open the entire pages of the e-magazine and explore what seemed interesting for them. Some of the students confessed that they enjoyed other lifestyle contents and loved to see e-magazine images and the latest information. They personally have other interests and passions they can find in the e-magazine.

"I can feel the students enjoy their learning through reading or viewing e-magazine pages. There were students who responded to the task in written form passionately, she wrote her opinions and all in three pages, although I instructed them to give response about the task in only two paragraphs at minimum."

(Interview excerpt, with the Teacher)

The students responded to the teacher's questions and uploaded their files on an online storage class folder. After the submission date was over, the teacher checked the files one by one to see their responses. It turned out that the tasks brought enthusiasm, shown through the students' works.

However, one of the students in his spoken comment stated that he did not like e-magazines, especially the lifestyle pages, for showing hi-class

standards through their lavish and luxurious lifestyle contents.

“He just did not like it, however, his 3-minute answer stating his opinion was what mattered the most, as the goal of the activity was to increase the students’ experience of being open and exposed to new things such as English e-magazine. “(Interview excerpt, with the Teacher)

The e-magazine contents the students accessed were also related to the next lesson which was the presentation and academic writing. The students needed ideas and inspiration for what to say and to write, and e-magazine could be one of the best sources for them.

2. E-magazine entertainment page

Another e-magazine content used by the teacher was taken from *Happiful E-magazine*, whose content was related to mental-health and well-being. The teacher found one page entitled “the well-being wrap” containing latest random fun facts from all over the world including eight paragraphs with around 50 to 100 words each, and four additional mini facts in sentences. All are just in one paragraph.

The facts were various and fun, such as: a little true story of generosity by a pizza owner who gave pizza for free in January 2023; a Hollywood actor who

helped a cancer survivor; and transatlantic pen pals who celebrated their years of friendship through their first video call.

Knowing that many of the students spoke English well, the teacher brought the copies of the e-magazine page to class, and the students were asked to read the facts to find one or two facts that seemed interesting to them. After making sure that the students understood the instruction, the teacher gave them fifteen minutes to read by themselves while finding unfamiliar words and deciding the most interesting facts to their interest. Group discussion followed afterwards. They talked with their peers related to their fact selections.

In the whole class discussion, the teacher allowed the students to tell their friends about their favorite facts, their reasons, and their opinions. Some students related the facts with their experiences. There were no facts liked by no one in class. The class was full of enthusiasm, the students raised their hands and spoke a lot. Another thing that impressed the teacher was that they did further research about the facts they liked the most, then told the additional information to their friends. They also learned new words and gained new understanding related to things they never even thought about.

“Teacher: Why are you mostly interested in the facts about Ryan Reynolds, that Hollywood actor?”

Student X: Because it is about Ryan Reynold. I just love him since he appeared in the Deadpool movie. I’m a real fan of him.”
(Observation Note excerpt)

The teacher also used the contents to teach students about types of sentences in English. Surprisingly, the sentences and paragraphs contained various kinds of tenses which could be perfect examples to teach structure and grammar, too. Simple present, present continuous, simple past, present perfect, present perfect continuous tense, and passive forms were all found in the page.

Discussion

1. The Gained Benefits

Magazine or e-magazine is one of visual authentic materials (Gebhard, 2006; Oura, 2001) that make it possible for the students to access real text used for communication purposes. In this study, students generally show high enthusiasm and engagement. The two kinds of e-magazine content pages brought joy to class. The specific topics related to interior design are relevant to the students’ major, which becomes a starter in having discussions and generating ideas. The students did the reading to give responses in oral

or written form. This activity promotes communicative language learning.

2. Some Potentials

Material selection really matters. The teacher had taken the material selection process although she did not have any prior theoretical knowledge related to this. However, her considerations were in line with what (Roberts, 2012) proposed, including: 1) the material familiarity and relevance (interior design as their major, and entertainment purpose which much relates to Z generation and matched their interest, 2) how it does not violate Indonesian cultures, also shown when the teacher removed one of the pages showing a woman in two pieces of underwear. (c) linguistic including language complexity and cognitive aspects, which rely on terms and words which are still acceptable to the students (not hard) and (d) how to use the text in her teaching practice. Thus, e-magazine has a big potential to utilize in English class in EFL setting.

The teacher takes a good step by guiding the students through the instruction before they are exposed to the authentic material and asked them to study the unfamiliar words in the text. However, there is a big

potential if the specific magazine content in this kind of activity is done in class, not just as an assignment as reported in this study. The use of authentic material works better for triggering class interactions.

What the teacher did in the class using e-magazines trains the students' English competences comprehension especially reading, writing, and speaking. Listening skills were trained during the oral dialog or discussion sessions. Thus, the listening itself is not authentic material. It is practice.

The second magazine content, which is for entertainment purposes, breaks down the wall between the higher and the lowers. Thus, easy materials to select can resolve the "eerie" feelings of entering real English environment through authentic materials.

There is also a possibility of combining authentic materials. E-magazine only appears visually. Thus, the teacher could consider searching audio or printed materials as additional teaching media which supports e-magazine, since e-magazine does not provide any listening section.

This study also proves that the use of e-magazine also can lead to

exploratory approach, discovery learning, which promotes learning autonomy. It is seen from the students' interest in searching for more facts that they need to know, to feed their curiosity.

3. Some Challenges

Researchers stated that authentic materials mostly benefit the advanced students (Beresova, 2015) This statement also corresponds to what happened in the research site of this study. Top students really show high drive or motivation. However, it may not be a hundred percent correct, because low levels with high enthusiasm and motivation also joined the joy. They participated actively and followed what their friends did. Especially when the e-magazine was about entertainment (fun latest facts). This is in line with Khaniya (2006) who recommends entertainment contents for low levels for giving its less threatening text. For the non-entertaining text, the teacher in this study gave space through easy tasks for the students at all levels to express their opinions and relate it to their experiences, which is pretty sure all of them can make it.

Another interesting finding is related to students' preferences, that some of them do not like the lavish

lifestyle and high standards shown on interior-related magazine pages. However, entertainment pages are fine for them.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

The use of e-magazine in teaching English at an art university as written in this article captures the situations of how the implementation went. Some gained benefits are the raise of students' engagement and willingness to do communication practice. Meanwhile, there is potential to develop to make the process of teaching and learning to be more optimal, such as material selections, class interaction, and text combinations. Some challenges found are related to a few low level and low initiative students who struggled during the sessions.

Surprisingly, one of the top students thought that he did not like magazines for their luxurious high-class contents. Thus, e-magazines are wonderful source of English learnings as they have billions of various contents to select, however, it is strongly recommended to pick entertaining easy materials for classes with several of the low levels.

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