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A SURVEY ON INTEREST AND READING OF EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading plays important skills in language in developing the students' success in their learning. This study aims to find out if EFL students preferred reading skill. It also intends to determine their interest in learning English in general. It employed a descriptive statistics technique. Data were collected from questionnaires and observation. The result showed that the interest and reading are somewhat varied. The majority of EFL students have no interest in reading other sources like newspaper and magazines and the rest have little interest in reading other sources in general. It also indicated that it is contrary to their statements stating that reading is important to their future. It is concluded that teachers and parents should encourage the students to like reading as well as providing a wide range of reading books so that they may have various sources to read. It could be interesting to consider the awareness of the students. Teachers are then to build and motivate the students' interest in reading.

Keywords

Reading, Students' Success, Interest, Awareness

1. Introduction

Often the writer raises questions before starting teaching his class. These are the questions: 'How often do you borrow books from campus library? And how many books have you read for this week? Another occasion, he asks different questions related to the language skills. Most of the students keep silent. Only one or two answers to the questions. The rest remain silent which the writer considers that they have no interest in reading at all. There is also an indication that the students are

unmotivated and uninterested in learning the language. This phenomenon has attracted the writer to carry out research related to interest in reading skill. The students are also passive.

In the context of learning the language skills, reading is also one of the important language skills to be mastered. It is believed that when the learners read more, they would be able to write better. Current research focusing on learning tool such as digital story on language skills has pointed out that today's teaching and learning of language skills can be improved by the use of learning tool. A study conducted by Nassim (2018) shows that digital story as a tool can improve the learners' language skills.

Regardless of the students' low interest and laziness in reading, teachers should help the students understand by giving comprehensive knowledge about reading skills and competence that it is not only recognizing the words but rather on involving the process of thinking whenever they are about to acquire the language. This is in line with Harmer (2002) stated that reading is useful for language acquisition. In line with Patel and Jain (2008) stated that reading comprehension involves understanding the meaning of context, vocabulary, and grammatically structure. Reading skill, however, plays a highly important role in learning language skills and facilitates the learners to comprehend the written materials. Gambrell et al (in Ness, 2009) state that comprehension is the most important thing in reading. They may obtain a large number of information from various resources to enrich their knowledge. Labarrete (2019) said that reading competence is regarded as a vital skill for academic survival and success.

Simply, reading interest is defined as readings when students are not in the school (see McKool, 2007). It is believed that reading interest will help the students have more ideas whenever they are writing. Several scholars (Taylor, Fyre, and Maruyama, 1990; Anderson, Fielding and Wilson, 1988) carried out a study on reading interests showed that there is a strong relationship with the success of the students in their life and schools. A study conducted by Adjah (2012) said that reading interest has a close relationship with motivation. He further said that previous experience, level of education, and knowledge diversity contribute to a different point of view and reading interest which suit their needs.

Besides, based on the writer's observation, most of the students lack interest in reading due to their difficulty to understand the text they read. They seem to read a very short text. Some of them even dislike reading thick books. Another reason is that they are not accustomed to reading. Therefore, they have poor result in reading. To meet the objective of reading, teachers should provide appropriate reading text, for example, the text should be familiar to the students, and the level of difficulty. Such criteria are called micro and macro skills of reading (see Brown, 2004, pp- 187-188). Reading is a skill that must be learned, reading requires time and effort that is carried out continuously

so that it can be fun and easy. Some students find it difficult while others try to avoid it because it is complicated (Wallace, 2007). The primary objectives of the study were as follows:

- To find out the EFL students' interest in general
- To find out the EFL students' interest in reading

2. Method

This research is a case study conducted in English Department, English Teaching Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Kristen Indonesia in batch 2015-2017. The number of the students were 51. It aims to describe the EFL students' interests and reading. This study employed explanatory mixed method design, in which according to Creswell (2012) it enables the researchers to gather qualitative input, to explain and extend the quantitative results where its purpose is to obtain a comprehensive insight of the study. This study was conducted from January to May 2019. Additionally, the participants of this study are the whole students of the English Education Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesia batch 2015- 2017. The sample was taken using the purposive technique. The total number of the respondents was based on the whole number of the students of each batch. To obtain the interview data, a set of interview questions was also administered to some students who are randomly taken from each batch. The questionnaires are adopted and modified from Schoenbach, Greenleaf and Murphy (2012). The interview was administered to a number of students who were randomly taken from each batch.

2.1 Findings and Discussions

2.2 Demographic Data

As shown by Table 1, only a few of the participants were male, the participants were dominated by the female participants and their age varied from 18-21 years old. In this study the participants who participated were only three batches-batch 2015-2017 of English Education Department Universitas Kristen Indonesia with the total number of the respondents is 51.

Table 1: *Participants Demographic Data (N= 51)*

No	Batch	Gender		Age (in years)				Total
		Male	Female	17-18	19-20	21-22	22-24	
1	2015	1	19		19	1		20
2	2016	1	16	16	1			17
3	2017		14	14				14

The writer decided to classify based on their responses. The first category deals with the EFL students' interest in general. It includes favorite subject, favorite past time/hobby, obligations besides college, talents and sports, and favorite movie. Whereas the last category covers their interest in reading and supporting data from the interview.

2.3 Student' Interest in General

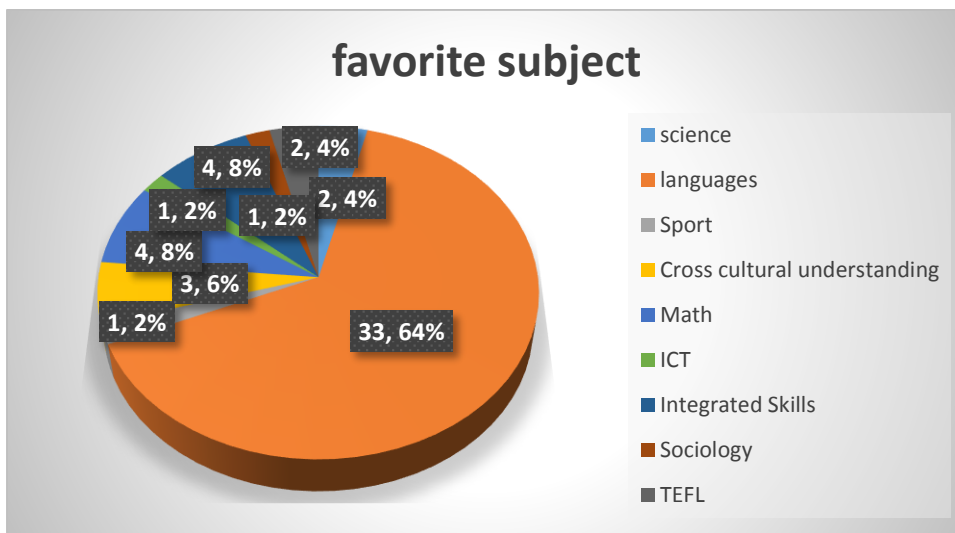


Figure 1: Favorite Subject

Based on Figure 1, the majority of EFL students have high interest in languages in general followed by Math and Integrated Skills. Next, Cross Cultural Understanding appears in the third position and followed by TEFL and science and the last three is Sport, ICT and Sociology. Literally, the students tend to like languages in which the writer considered it as contrary to what they are supposed to improve in their language skills such as reading and other language skills. The fact is that they have very low interest in language skills.

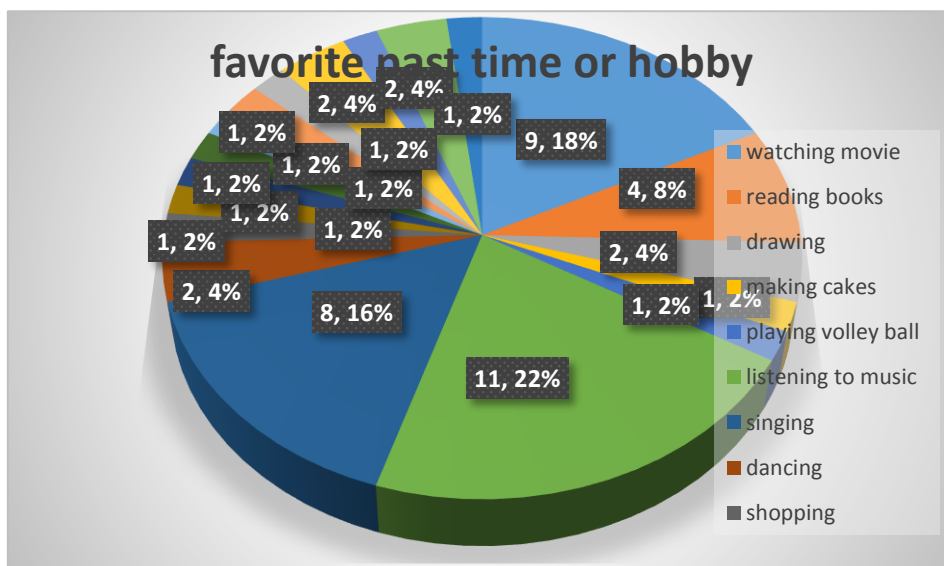


Figure 2: Favorite past Time or Hobby

Figure II illustrates the EFL students' favorite past time or hobbies is various. It is obvious that the majority of the students have many past time activities or hobbies that many of them have low interest in reading (4 = 8%). Most of them enjoy listening to music (11= 22%) and followed by watching movie (9=18%). A few number of students have (8=16%) for singing. It may be concluded if the students' hobbies on reading books are less compared to listening to music and watching movies.

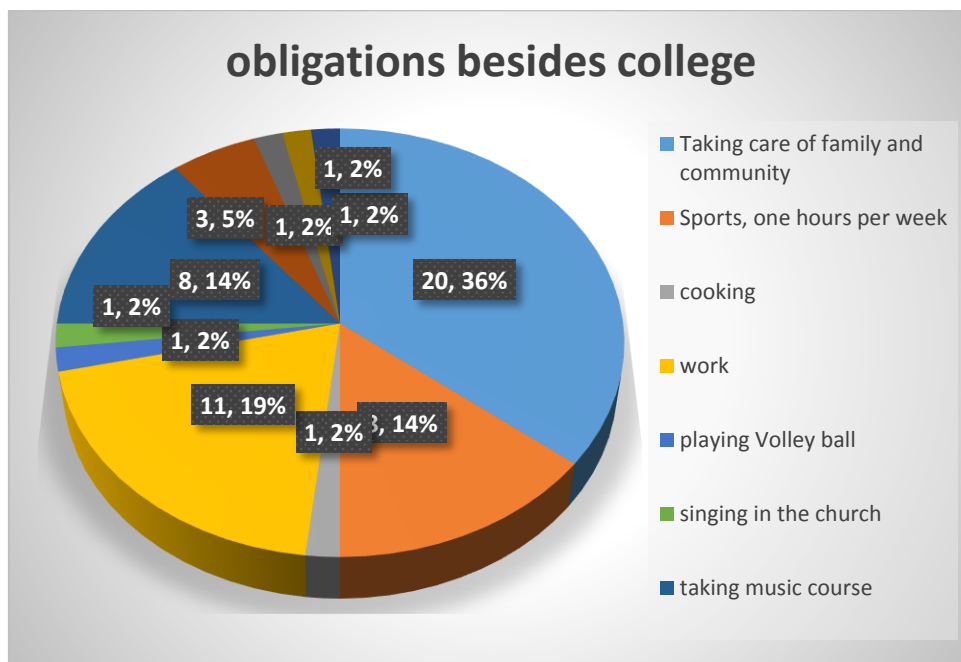


Figure 3: Obligations besides College

From Figure III, it can be seen that there are a number of obligations the students have besides college. The majority of the students state that they have to take care of their family and community (20=36%). They also have to work besides attending their college. They have to take music course and do sports one hours per week. The rest of the students mention that they have other activities like cooking, shopping, singing in the church and they even do nothing meaning that they have no obligations besides college.

It can be assumed that for those who have to take care of their family and community, do the sports one hour per week, play football, and do nothing might have no time to read books whereas those who take music course, sing in the church and work might have read some information or books to help and improve their obligations and interest.

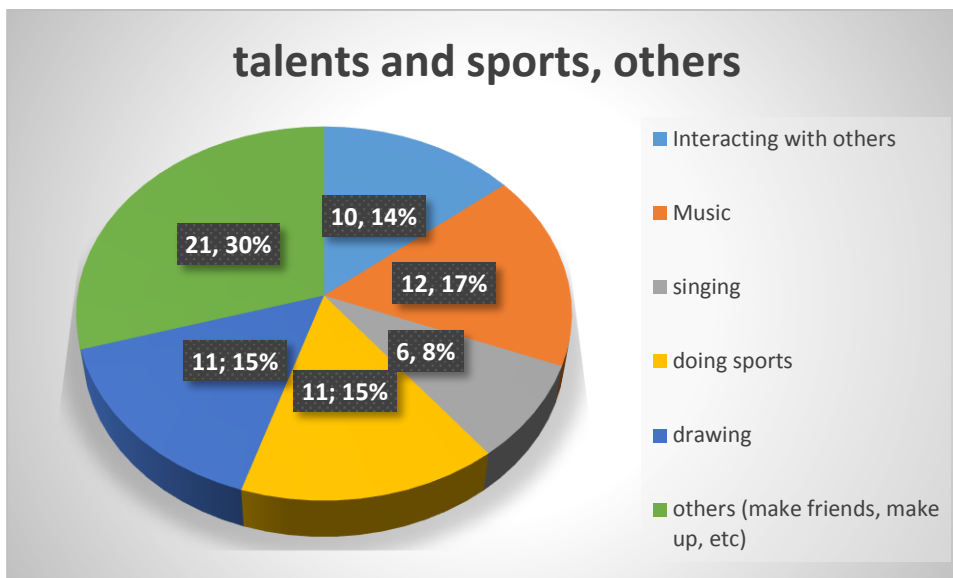


Figure 4: *Talents and Sports and Others*

Figure IV indicates that most of the students also have various talents and sports. 30% of the students have their ability to make friends and to make up their faces. Although this categorized as others, it is not the highest percentage of their preferences, it is a compilation of all their abilities. The highest one is their talents on music (17%). Some of them are fond of doing sports and drawing (15%). Some other like singing (8%). The rest of them like to interact with others (14%).

In summary, it is clear that every student has a number of talents and sports they like to do.

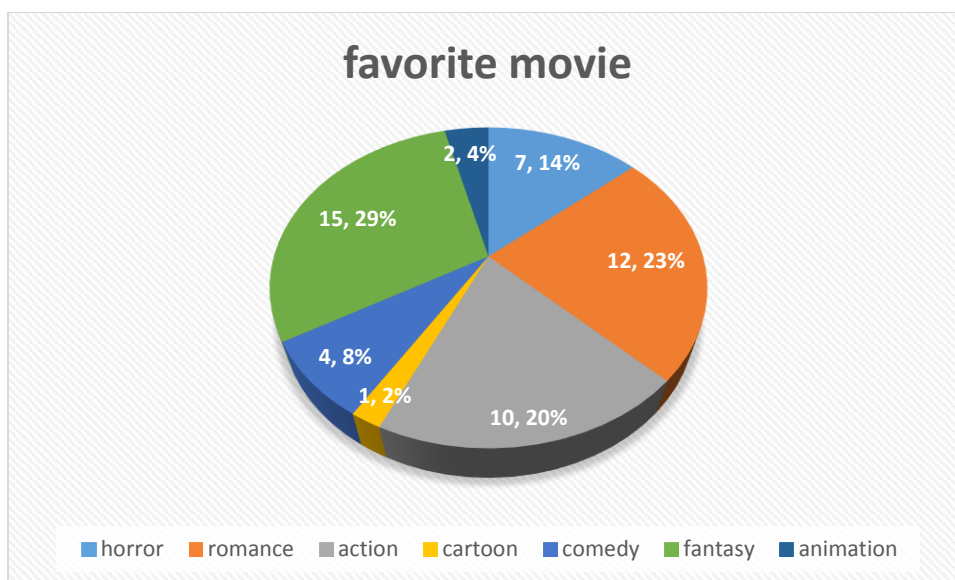


Figure 5: *Favorite Music*

Figure V illustrates that the students like to watch fantasy movie (29%), romance (23), action (20), horror (14%), comedy (8%), animation (4%) and cartoon (2%).

To sum up, the result show that every student has various choice and interest in general. As considerations for teachers or faculties to pay more attention when designing their material to be taught in their class since the students have so many interest specifically when creating language skills material. The most important thing is that helping the students to put their interest in reading.

2.4 Interest in Reading

The findings show that the EFL students have various answers related to their interest in reading. The following findings discuss the result of their interest in reading and the interview result of the respondents.

Table 2: Interest in Reading Result I

no	Questions	0-10 books	more than 10 books	more than 25 books	more than 50 books	more than 100 books
1	How many books are there in your family?	12	22	14	2	1
	Questions	yes	no			
2	Does your family get a newspaper regularly?	20	31			
	Questions	yes	no			
3	Does your family get any magazines regularly?	5	46			
	Questions	Not English	English			
4	Does your family read in a language other than English? Yes or no/. if so which language(s)?	51	0			
	Questions	parents	Siblings	You yourself	No one	
5	Who reads a lot in your home?	23	14	8	2	

Table 2 shows that a large number of the students mention that they possess more than 10 books in their family. Some of them possess more than 25 books. They also mention if they get a

newspaper and magazines regularly while more than a half of the students do not get a newspaper and magazines regularly. Pertaining what language used when reading, none of the respondents' family read English books. Regarding who reads more at home. Surprisingly, the parents are the most dominant to read a lot home and followed by their siblings. Whereas only 8 students mention if they read at home. 2 of them do not even read it at al. This indicates if they are not interested in reading.

The data were also supported by the respondents' interview result when the respondents were asked why they have to possess books. Only few of them said that they want to read them in their free time. A respondent interviewed (R2) said, "I have books because I want to enjoy reading it when I have time." Another interviewee (R5) stated similar response, "it is because sometimes I have time and can read my favorite books." However, most of them do not like reading. Interviewee (R6) stated that I don't like reading because it is boring. Another interviewee (R12) 'No, I don't like reading books. I only like reading short text.'

In summary, the teachers should provide interesting books for the students to read and the books provided should be in English. This way is to help the EFL students who are taking English so that their English can be developed gradually.

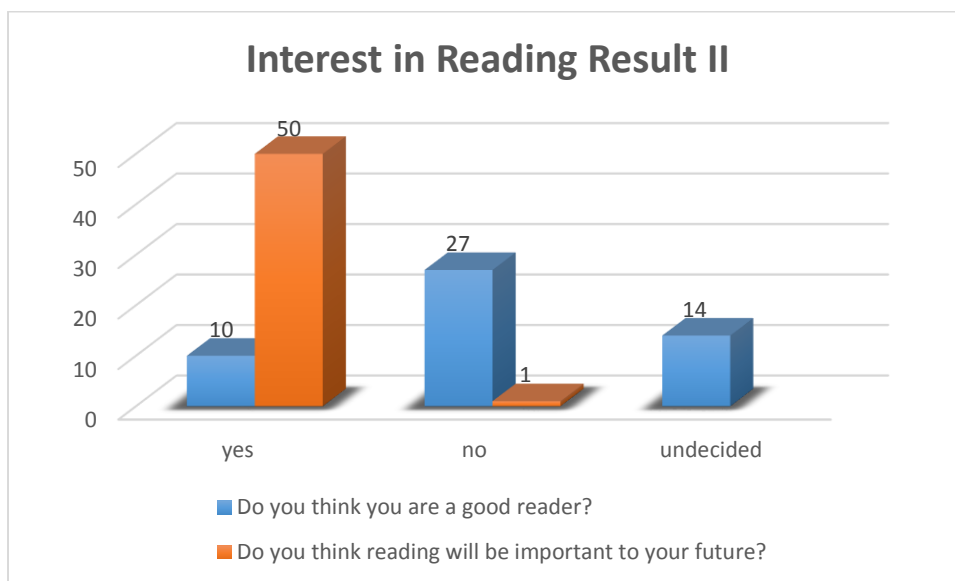


Figure 5: Interest in Reading Result II

Figure V shows that the majority of the respondents stated that they are not a good reader. A number of the student's undecided whether they are good readers. The rest believed if they are a good reader. When they are asked if reading will be important to their future. Most of them agreed. Only one of them disagreed.

The data were supported by their interview result. When they were further asked why they think reading will be important to their future. Respondent (7) said, "by reading, I will understand

many things not only the story but also the lesson from it.” Respondent (12) has similar response stated, ” I can learn from others experience by reading.”

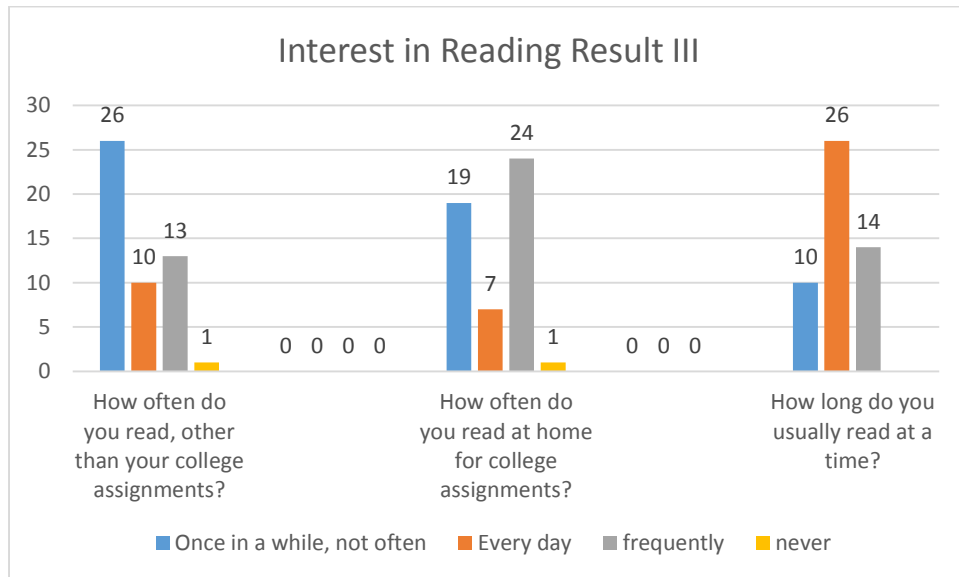


Figure 6: Interest in Reading Result III

Figure VI shows that the majority of the students once in a while read, other than their college assignments. 13 students also mentioned if they frequently read, other than their college assignments. 10 students mentioned if they every day read it. 1 person never reads it. Whereas most of them also often read at home for their college assignments. 19 students once in a while read at home. In terms of how long they usually read at home. 26 students mention they usually read it at a time.

This finding was supported by the interview result. When the they were asked whether they read their college assignments. Only few students admitted if they read their school assignments because of an obligation. A respondent (R/3) said, “I often read my assignments form my teacher because it is a must”. Another respondent (R/6) said, “I read it because I want to have good scores form the teacher.”

It is concluded that the students read the assignments because they are assigned to fulfill their requirements, not because they are interested in their reading.

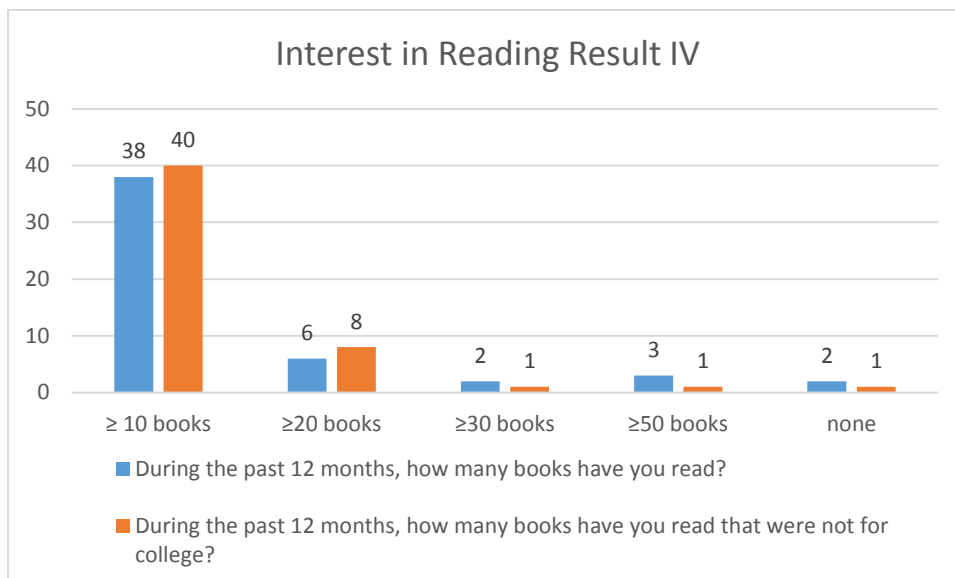


Figure 7: Interest in Reading Result IV

Figure VII illustrates that they like to read books that were not for college and the majority of them stated that they only have ≥ 10 books. 6 respondents stated if they have ≥ 20 books. 3 respondents mentioned they have only ≥ 50 books.

The interview result also supports the current findings. A few number of the respondents were asked whether they have many collections of nonfictions or fictions books. Most of them said similar responses that they have less books. An interviewee (R/9) said, “I don’t have many books to read, maybe only ten books.” Respondent (R/14),” no, not many books. I think only 3 books.”

It is obvious that that the majority of the respondents have no interest for their college assignments. Besides they have less books. It is highly recommended that the teachers be more creative in giving assignments for their students.

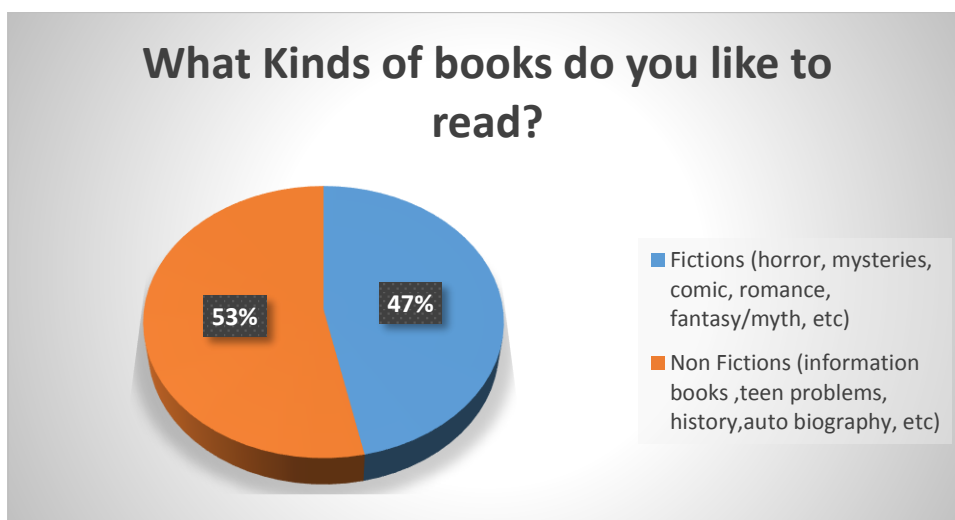


Figure 8: Interest in Reading Result V

Figure VIII clearly shows that 53% students like to read nonfictions books and 47% students like to read the fictions books. The finding was supported by their interview result. When they were asked whether which kinds of books they like to read in their leisure time. A respondent (R/1) said, “I prefer to read information books. It tells me much information.” Another respondent (R/13) said, “I like reading public figures biography. They can help me to understand their life and their success.” A similar response stated by (R/15), “Biography books I choose to read. The books is like a motivation for me.”

2.5 Interest in Reading Result VI

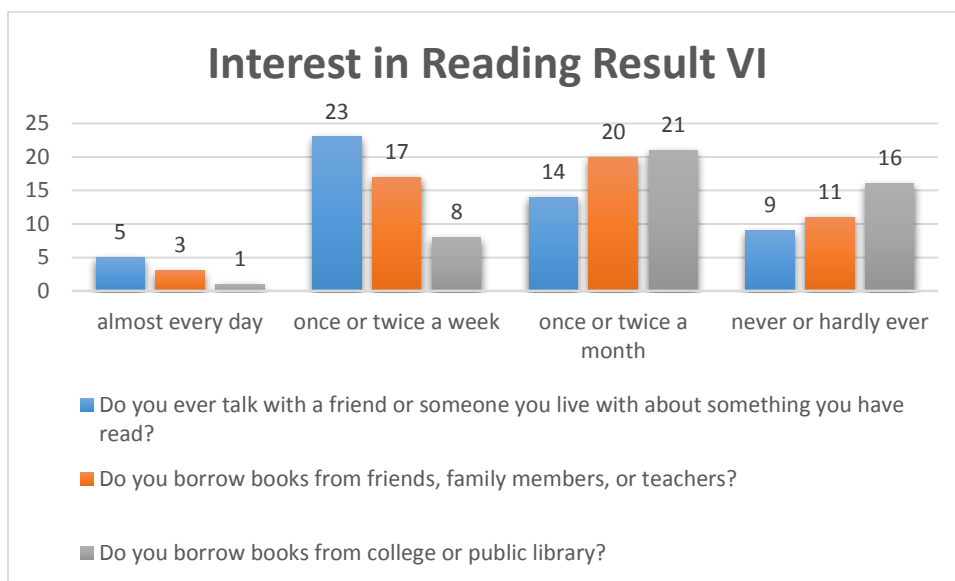


Figure 9: Interest in Reading Result VI

Figure IX shows that among 51 respondents, only 23 students ever talk with their friend or someone they live with about something they have read once or twice a week. 21 students also borrow books from friends, family members, or their teachers. Only 16 students borrow books from college or campus library.

The data from interview result also supported their statements when they were asked whether they like to read and borrow books from campus library. A respondent (R/15) stated, “I hardly ever borrow and read books from library it is because everything is on line today so I prefer to read online.” Another respondent (R/10) stated, “I do not borrow books from library but I borrow from my friends and my brother.”

3. Conclusion and Suggestion

Due to the nature of research question, this study was limited and based on qualitative research method. The result clearly shows that the students have low interest in reading. The teachers are then highly suggested to be more creative in designing their material. The teachers should also encourage

their students to read more by providing interesting material for reading. For the campus library, it must provide a wide range of either fictions or nonfiction books both printed and online version books or material. This way is to help the low interest of students in reading so that they can be encouraged to read any kinds of reading materials. Although the result also showed that EFL students have various interests in general, it does not mean that they have preferences in reading. Therefore, further research must also be investigated for a betterment.

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