

## **E-Book Reading Genre Preferences of Teachers Teaching in Foreign Languages in Private Schools (Case Study / Iraq)**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the electronic book reading preferences of teachers who teach their subjects in a foreign language in secondary school, high school, and university in terms of different variables. This study examines the teachers' electronic book reading interests, the types of books, and book reading pages regarding gender variables. In the research, a descriptive survey model was used. Descriptive analysis was carried out on large groups. The opinions and attitudes of the individuals in the group were taken, and the facts and events were tried to be described (Karakaya, 2012). The study was carried out with 23 teachers working in 3 different private institutions in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in the 2021-2022 academic year. According to the findings, teachers' e-book reading genres increased in subjects that appealed to their careers. The researchers found that the difference between male and female teachers' book preferences is worth examining. This study explored what types of fiction and nonfiction genres teachers prefer to read digitally when digital reading is popular worldwide. This study is expected to contribute to the subsequent studies in related literature.

**Keywords:** Digital Applications, E-Book, Genre Preferences, Private Schools, Teaching in a Foreign Language

### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays there are many ways to access any information (Berkelaar, 2017). We can also access most of this information by reading (Henry, 2006). Therefore, reading is one of the skills that is tried to be given to individuals at every stage of learning. Reading, which means extracting meaning from written symbols (Koda, 2005), is one of the most important steps of understanding (Krashen, 2004). Schools' primary goals include teaching and spreading reading habit to learners (Murugathas, 2008). Therefore, teachers who have just started their service in almost every school can be expected to set an example for their students through their reading habits (Unrau, Ragusa, & Bowers, 2015). It does not seem easy for individuals to acquire this habit during the teaching period who have not made a habit of reading during their student period. Moreover, reading habit for teachers who conduct their teaching in foreign languages is important.

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Reading is indispensable for teachers as it is related to the other three skills, listening, speaking, and writing, (Mart, 2012a; Cho & Krashen, 2019). Developed countries focus on the social benefits of reading (Williams, 2003; Wagstaff, 2020). Experts emphasize that reading habits are associated with economic and social development, criminality, school leaving, and success in their work (Le et al., 2019).

Martin (2009) emphasizes that devices and applications such as laptops, internet, mobile phones, social communication sites, e-mail accounts, satellite-connected televisions, digital cameras, navigation devices and online shopping are the result of technology. It is of interest to people that technology brings progress in every sector. As in other fields, very important technological developments have emerged in education. In recent years, the increase in computer and computer-aided language teaching has made language learning and teaching more fun (Zhang, 2012). In Iraq and the Kurdistan autonomous region, movements such as the widespread use of interactive boards in private and semi-private universities, increased internet use, and the Ministry of Higher Education's demand for compulsory training for teachers to reach a pedagogic level also show that technology is used efficiently in education (Gov. KRD, 2021).

One of the innovations that technology offers to education is the application of electronic books (e-books). The e-book application, which means that a book is displayed electronically instead of being printed, has become popular and has started to attract the attention of a new generation of teachers. E-book offers us the possibility of image and sound in addition to writing because it has technological content (Reinhard, 2014). The e-book application offers people access to the book in any environment and at any time. Since a new book published anywhere in the world takes more time to reach us and is highly costly, e-booking provides convenience to book lovers and those who want to access information (Ahmed, & Kouzmal, 2016).

The proliferation of e-book technology emerging in the United States and the rapid increase of e-book users have contributed to the creation of a worldwide market in this field (Polanka, 2011). Research shows that half of the U.S. adult population has a tablet or e-book reader, and 3 in 10 people read e-books in 2013 (Zickuhr & Rainie, 2014). Although published books are still the most common form of reading, e-books have been on the rise rapidly in the last 10 years. But as we know, the e-book project met with the reader in 2007 with Amazon's Kindle move (OECD & Goslin, 2012). Amazon, which has been selling printed books for more than 25 years, announced in mid-2010 that e-book sales had surpassed hardcover book sales for the first time. A few months later, news broke out that e-books had passed the sale of paperback books from Amazon (Öncel, 2011).

### **1.1 What is an E-Book?**

According to Sargeant, (2015), the term e-book is widely used as a computer-aided presentation of a physical book and is the content written directly as a book in a digital copy of the book or directly in electronic environment. Unlike printed books, e-books are prepared for use in electronic environment (Ahmad & Brogan, 2012). This includes online books that are used over the Internet, directly connected to a specific page (Schayan, 2001).

In Iraq, as well as in the U.S., e-books have become popular, and some publishers have even allowed access to books for free (Council, 2021). In 14th Erbil Book Fair (Run from April 3 through 13, 2019), the latest figures justify that the Erbil 'International Book Fair' leaped from averaging 9,000 to 36,000

visitors a day after two years at Erbil International Fairground in Sami Abdulrahman Park, Erbil, Kurdistan. 300 publishers from 21 countries took part in that year's event. Erbil International Book Fair is the largest gathering of its kind in Iraq. It embodies the finest International Publishers serving in the field of education and this represents a unique opportunity for attendees to get acquainted with the latest publications and the printed & electronic educational tools, including the latest developments in the field of libraries Information Technology and its applications (Williams, 2019).

In language teaching, reading is one of the most widely used techniques. Language teaching includes speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills, and three other skills can be given within the reading activity. It can be difficult to fully understand every word and sentence in language text. However, if it is understood what the author means, he or she will have achieved the purpose of reading (Sanden, 2012). Reading is a requirement for teachers who teach in that spoken language (Kuzborska, 2011) and in this way the teachers can:

1. Gain the ability to understand and interpret well,
2. Improve vocabulary knowledge,
3. Get rid of monotonous life,
4. Make reading his/her habit (Mellor, and Patterson, 1991).

While shaping education, teachers can learn new foreign languages and cultural elements in the target language utilizing e-books to motivate learners positively and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge more easily and efficiently (Mart, 2012b; Celik & Yildiz, 2019). Teachers who teach in a foreign language can follow a few reading books needed for the course or read books about the areas of interest outside the course. One may read books to understand, and others may read for their curiosity. Therefore, it is not possible to see the habit of reading books in individuals who read from time to time. Moreover, with the development of technology and media, those teachers who do not read books habitually spend either less time on reading or do not read at all. In this technology era, teachers mostly prefer to spend their free time by watching movies online, listening to music, and social networks such as Facebook, Tik-tok, Instagram and Twitter (Priajana, 2015).

In the modern world, one of the most important ways to access information is reading, which is one of the most important steps in understanding. Experts emphasize that there is a relationship between reading and society in terms of economic development, criminality, leaving school, and success at their work (Le et al., 2019). According to Celik and Yildiz (2017), teachers are expected to be committed to their profession and so they never get satisfied with what they already have. Their responsibility is to seek new information and new ideas to contribute to the students (Mart, 2013). Therefore, they use the technology widely in education to spread this knowledge as well as in all fields (Bonk, 2009). E-book application is one of the innovations that technology offers to educators. E-books have become popular around the world and are becoming preferred by people (Gunter, 2005). Even in Iraq, teacher participants in the survey stated that they liked reading e-book in their free time. However, more than half of the participants do not prefer digital reading books to published books but almost all the teachers read e-texts online related to their profession for their professional development.

## **2. Methods**

This research focuses on the e-book reading preferences of teachers who teach their subjects in a foreign language in the private educational institutions of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Hence, the descriptive research method was used to examine the reading interests of teachers in terms of different variables because descriptive research describes a given situation as precisely and carefully as possible. The most used method of research in the field of education is the study of the descriptive analyzing because researchers summarize the characteristics of individuals, groups, or physical environments (Atmowardoyo, 2018).

### **2.1 Participants**

Target population of the study consists of 23 native and foreign teachers working in a private secondary school, a high school and a university in Kurdistan, Iraq, in the 2021-2022 academic year, who teach their subjects in English or Turkish.

### **2.2 Instrument and Procedures**

Teachers, like students, read books in preparation for class or for fun. There are many applications that allow one to read books electronically. Amazon Kindle, Aldiko Book Reader, Cool Reader, FBReader, ReadEra, KyBook 3, Moon+ Reader, Wattpad, Librera and Kobo are the most popular ones. 11 open and closed-ended types of questions have been applied in google form to get more precise information about the reading preferences of teachers who frequently use computers and the internet. Teachers' age group, years of teaching experience, academic identity and reading choices according to gender differences, reading rates, and for what purpose they preferred electronic reading were investigated.

### **2.3 Data Analysis**

In this research, teachers' answers to 7 closed-ended statements and 4 open-ended questions were taken from the google form database and transferred to excel to learn about their digital reading pages and types of literature read. These data were examined according to the gender variable and the results were found to be significant. It has been determined that teachers mostly read research articles, science fiction, biographies, textbooks, novels, and magazines.

## **3. Results**

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Institution, has reported on reading habits around the world. Yildiz (2020) argues that reading is an important tool in learning life and a ramp to bounce to success and a means to take the individual to happiness. However, it is known that the average reading time for an Arab child is six minutes a year compared with 12,000 minutes in the West (UNESCO, 2016). Therefore, teachers' reading habits of published books or e-book form can reshape the reality of reading rates of the society. Furthermore, teachers can pioneer about the reading preferences of their societies. More specifically, teachers' support for students' reading activities can change society step by step.

In this section, frequency values and calculations related to the gender distribution of the teachers participating in the research, the types of literature they are interested in, and the reading rates are presented.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

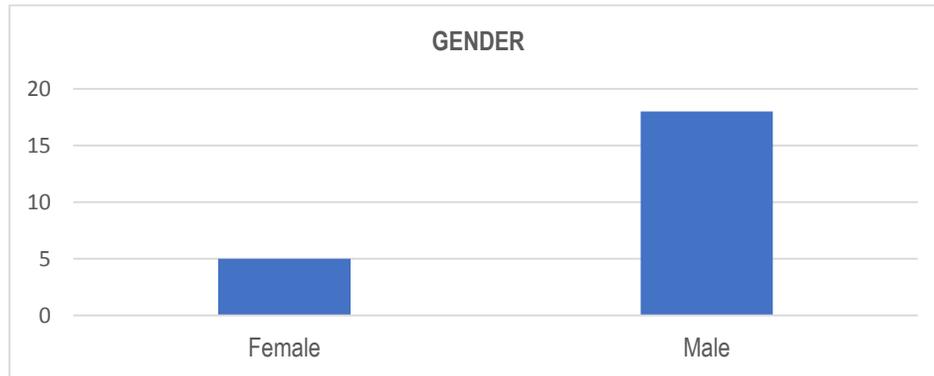


Figure 1: Distribution of teachers' genders

According to figure 1, 18 (78%) of the 23 teachers who replied to the survey questions were male, and 5 (22%) were female teachers.

Table 1: Fiction genre preferences of e-readers by gender

Gender	What fiction books do you e-read mostly (more than one alternative possible)?
Female 1	Science Fiction
Female 2	Novels; Science Fiction; Adventure Stories
Male 1	Novels; Detective Stories; Thrillers/Horrors
Male 2	Novels; Science Fiction; Adventure Stories; Comics
Male 3	Novels; Science Fiction; Comics
Male 4	Humorous stories; Comedy; Comics
Male 5	Novels; Detective Stories; Love Stories; Adventure Stories; Comics
Male 6	Science Fiction

In Table 1, eight of the teachers who participated in our study were found to be more interested in fiction style literature, with six of the participants being male and two females.

The survey participants of 23 teachers in the 3 private schools were found to have read significant fiction e-reading genres in 2021. Accordingly, it was observed that male teachers had more fiction genre preferences when female teachers were choosing to read a few fiction genres of e-books in 2021.

Table 2: Non-fiction genre preferences of e-readers by gender

Gender	What non-fiction books do you e-read mostly (more than one alternative possible)?
Female 3	Biography
Female 4	Encyclopedia; Dictionary; Scientific Articles
Female 5	Magazines
Male 7	Textbooks; Scientific Articles
Male 8	Textbooks; Magazines; Scientific Articles
Male 9	Textbooks; Newspapers
Male 10	Encyclopedia; Textbooks; Dictionary; Newspapers
Male 11	Encyclopedia; Biography; Dictionary; Scientific Articles
Male 12	Encyclopedia; Biography; Newspapers; Scientific Articles
Male 13	Biography; Textbooks; Dictionary; Magazines; Scientific Articles
Male 14	Newspapers; Scientific Articles
Male 15	Encyclopedia; Biography; Textbooks; Newspapers; Scientific Articles
Male 16	Encyclopedia; Biography; Magazines; Newspapers; Scientific Articles
Male 17	Biography
Male 18	Textbooks; Scientific Articles

In Table 2, fifteen of the teachers who participated in our study were found to be more interested in non-fiction style literature, with twelve of the participants being male and three females.

In contrast to the low overall reading rate in the Middle East and Iraq, the survey participants of 23 teachers in the 3 private schools were found to have read significant non-fiction e-reading genres in 2021. Accordingly, it was observed that male teachers had more non-fiction genre preferences when female teachers were choosing to read a few non-fiction genres of books in 2021.

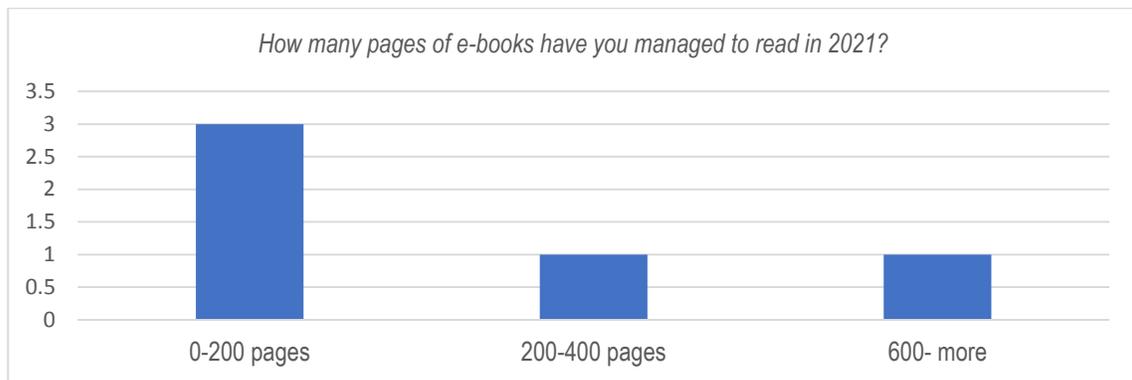


Figure 2: Female teachers' E-Book reading page rates

In Figure 2, it can be said that all female teachers spend time on e-reading, however they do not read digitally a lot.

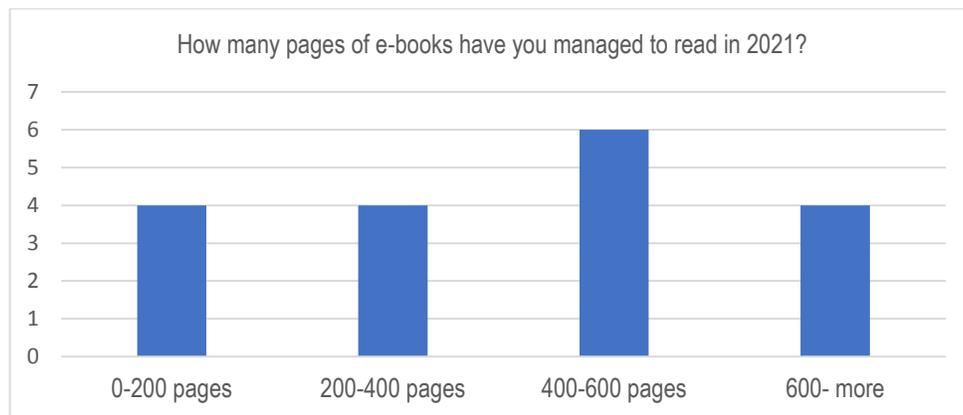


Figure 3: Male teachers' E-Book reading page rates

Comparing Figure 3 to Figure 2, it can be said that all male teachers spend much more time on e-reading, and they read digitally more than female teachers.

#### 4. Suggestions

The book preferences of male and female teachers vary by gender. Teachers are more willing to read an e-book that interests them and for their academic development. Teachers' reading books as a model may positively affect themselves, their families, and their students. Teachers having free access to each resource online in all educational institutions may help increase the reading rates of that country. Teachers who teach their subjects in a foreign language should advise their students to read digitally in preparation for their lessons because it is easy to reach the sources online.

#### 5. Conclusion

The e-book app attracts teachers because it is supported by audiovisual aids (Larson, 2010). Teachers read books in line with their interests. We can also conclude that female and male teachers read different types of books according to their gender. From the collected data, it was seen that more than half of the

participants prefer reading non-fiction genres, and more than half of the participants read scientific articles, magazines, and newspapers. Moreover, one of the most important issues to consider here is that male and female teachers tend to e-read different types of books. The books tell the story of the life of a famous businessman who will be of interest to men, which can make this text or subject repulsive for most female teachers. Similarly, texts that include shopping, fashion, celebrities' lives, and fairy tales, which are more commonly identified with women, can also be found repulsive by men. Teachers who know how to use a computer or applications on the internet can choose more and read more. From the collected data, it should be stated that e-readers read the books mostly for their career.

According to the survey data about teachers' fiction genres preference, female teachers were interested in novels, science-fiction, adventure stories while male teachers were found to be reading novels, detective stories, love stories, adventure stories, comics, thrillers/horrors, and science-fiction. It has been found that male teachers read more types of e-books than female teachers. Mostly preferred genres were science-fiction, novels, and detective stories in the fiction category. On the other hand, fairytales, myths, love stories, and horrors were the least preferred e-read fiction genres.

In the non-fiction genres category, male teachers preferred mostly encyclopedias, biography, textbooks, newspapers, scientific articles type e-book reading, while female teachers were more interested in magazines, biography, and dictionary which are shown in the table below.

Table 3: Teachers' E-book reading book genres and likely reading pages rate

Gender E-book Preferences	Female 5 (%22)	Male 18 (%78)
Fiction genres e-books	5	13
Non-fiction genres e-books	5	7
E-book reading pages in 2021	1600	7600

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## Appendix

Dear colleague.

We would like to collect some data about 'the e-book reading level of the teachers who teach their subjects in foreign languages in terms of different variables.' Therefore, your participation is highly appreciated.

Please rate the questions or statements in patience. Your reply will be anonymous, but the data collected will be publicized for the researchers and the interested ones. Consider the questions in terms of 2021-2022 academic year.

Thank you for your participation.

### *STATEMENTS*

#### A. Demographic questions

1- What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female

2- What is your age??

- a) 21-30
- b) 31-40
- c) 41-50
- d) 51-.....

3-What is your academic title?

- a) Instructor
- b) Assistant lecturer
- c) Lecturer
- d) Assistant professor

4- What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a) Bachelor's degree
- b) Master's degree
- c) Ph.D.

5- Your teaching experience in your field?

- a) 1-3 years
- b) 4-7 years
- c) 8-11 years
- d) 12 and over

6- Your working place?

- a) Secondary school

b) High school

c) University

B. Teachers' General Attitudes Toward E-reading

1- I like reading e-book in my free time

a) Yes

b) No

2- I prefer digital reading books to published books.

a) Yes

b) No

3- I read e-texts related to my profession.

a) Yes

b) No

4- I search the necessary literature online and read or download it to read later.

a) Yes

b) No

5- E-reading is an inevitable part of my life.

a) Yes

b) No

6- I read e-books for fun.

a) Yes

b) No

7- I read e-books for my professional development

a) Yes

b) No

C. Teachers' Preference of Genres and Reading Time

1- Which literary genre do you prefer in e-reading?

a) Fiction

b) Non-fiction

2- What fiction books do you e-read mostly (more than one alternative possible)?

- Novels
- Detective
- Stories
- Science
- Fiction

- Thrillers/Horrors
- Humorous Stories
- Love Stories
- Adventure Stories
- Drama
- Comedy
- Fairytale
- Legend
- Myth
- Comics

3- What non-fiction e-books do you prefer? (More than one alternative possible)

- Encyclopedia
- Biography
- Textbooks
- Dictionary
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Scientific Articles

4- How many pages of e-books have you managed to read in 2021?

- a) 0-200 pages
- b) 200-400 pages
- c) 400-600 pages
- d) 600-more