Students' Perception Towards the Use of Webtoon to Improve Reading Comprehension Skill

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Abstract. Technology development has prompted English lecturers to be creative in selecting teaching media. One of the ways to do this is by utilizing Webtoon, an online comic, to improve English reading skills. Standing from this issue, this inquiry examined students' perceptions of using Webtoon to enhance reading comprehension ability. The respondents of this inquiry were 50 English education students majoring in IAIN Kediri, State Islamic Institute of Kediri. The data were gathered through surveys consisting of five statements. The respondents were asked to choose "agree" or "disagree" to each statement. After analyzing the data, the researcher found out that majority of the respondents agree that; 1) Webtoon helps them to improve their reading comprehension skill, 2) it is easy to use Webtoon, 3) Webtoon helps them to master reading comprehension skill, 4) the use of English on Webtoon motivates them to enhance their reading comprehension skill, 5) it is necessary to use Webtoon to escalate their reading comprehension skill.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Students' Perception, Webtoon

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental capability for students because they can expand their language, experience, reading capability, and minds (Ayu et al, 2017). Moreover, students will get new concepts and insight from what they read (Sasalia & Sari, 2020). It supports Pustika's (2019) statement that Indonesian students shall learn to read English to examine meaningful writings for their careers. Agreeing with McDonough et.al (2013), students could obtain a comprehensive understanding and thought from the content by perusing an English as a foreign language text. Overall, a reading action can shape the students' lifelong habits since they keep revising and gaining new information every time they do reading (Pustika, 2018).

Today, particularly for Indonesian students, students cannot be isolated from their smartphones because most students are inquisitive about something advanced and modern. In this case, computerized media could be maximized for instructing and learning (Oktaviani & Desiarti, 2017). Furthermore, there are different platforms and applications to memorize English that can be accessed by students at any time (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019; Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020; Putri & Sari, 2020; Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021). Due to this problem, the researcher of the present study focuses this inquiry on the use of Webtoon to enhance students' reading skills. Webtoon is a new

compound word comprising "website" and "cartoon". Webtoon is an online comic originating from South Korea. Webtoon is distributed through the internet and optimized for the computer screen. Besides, it can be downloaded by Android and iPhone users via the Play Store and App Store. In addition, Webtoons have a special feature, such as a voice feature, that Webtoon comic writers can add. That is why, nowadays, webtoons are popular among teenagers. This popularity could be used as a teaching medium in the educational sphere.

Language learning needs innovation through technology to increase the quality of education and learning forms and make learners independent (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019; Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019). Technology development impacts how the teacher instructs, handles, and proposes distinctive learning strategies suitable for the learners' characteristics, which tend to be inquisitive, related to something advanced, and modern. Besides, it also enables the students to be independent learners (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018; Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2020; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020). Hence, the teacher plays a critical part in choosing the teaching methodology (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020), particularly in this case, which is associated with how to teach reading. Additionally, utilizing the proper methodology could create a more fun and engaging learning atmosphere for students.

All in all, the teacher's teaching planning should be well executed within the class while teaching English reading so that the students can read English well. Furthermore, reading strategies are also needed to assist students in comprehending the content (Kuru-Gonen, 2015, p. 2924). Besides, the teacher can utilize the school facilities to support the teaching and learning process (Ayu, 2020). These points could contribute to increasing the accomplishment of learning results.

2. METHOD

This inquiry implemented a qualitative research design to investigate the students' points of view towards using Webtoon to enhance their reading comprehension skills. In terms of the subjects of the study, 50 students were from the English Education study program, Faculty of Education, IAIN Kediri. Regarding the data source, the data were obtained through surveys. The surveys were distributed to all respondents. The surveys consist of 5 statements. The scales of each explanation are to "agree" and "disagree" and section answers.

3. RESULT

This section discusses the study's findings by exploring the students' responses toward using Webtoon to improve reading comprehension skills. The table below describes the results of each item of the questionnaire. The detailed results can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Students' responses towards the use of Webtoon to improve reading comprehension skills

Statement	Results	
	Agree	Disagree
1. Webtoon helps me improve my reading comprehension skills	78%	22%
2. It is not difficult to use Webtoon to improve reading comprehension skills	80%	20%
3. Webtoon helps me to master the reading comprehension skill	74%	26%
4. The language used on Webtoon motivates me to improve My reading comprehension skills	72%	28%
5. It is necessary to use Webtoon to improve my reading comprehension skills	72%	28%

Based on Table 1 in Statement 1, it could be understood that 78% of the respondents

agreed that Webtoons could improve their reading comprehension skill; on the other hand, 22% of them disagreed. Regarding statement number 2, it could be perceived that 80% of the respondents did not agree that using a Webtoon is difficult, while only 20% agreed that using a Webtoon is difficult. Next, in statement number 3, 74% of the respondents agreed that the Webtoon helps them master reading comprehension skills. In contrast, those who disagreed comprised 26% of the total respondents. Regarding the language used on Webtoon, 72% of the respondents thought that it motivates them to escalate their reading comprehension skills through the foreign language used. However, 28% of them thought vice versa. Finally, regarding statement number 5, 72% argued that the Webtoon application needs to be used to develop their reading comprehension skills. On the other hand, 28% did not think in the same way.

From the findings above, the researchers interpret that most respondents agree that Webtoons help them improve their reading comprehension skills. Although the language used in Webtoons is often Indonesian, they also read English Webtoons. They thought reading Webtoons written in English was engaging, entertaining, and fun. Furthermore, several respondents also asserted that the webtoon uses a simple and understandable language; hence, it is suitable as an English reading practice medium. However, some respondents said they were not interested in webtoons, and sometimes only read them when bored. Thus, their goal for reading webtoons is not to practice English reading skills. Meanwhile, the other respondents argued that Webtoon can also interest students in reading because it has pictures, colorful outlines, straightforward topics, and plots.

Reading comprehension is related to cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as activating foundation, outlining content, and creating questions to capture the top of mind. Knowing the meaning of words can contribute to understanding the content being read. Therefore, the students could drill their reading comprehension by reading English Webtoon, as 78% of the respondents agreed with statement number 1 and 72% with statement number 4. Notwithstanding, it needs to be underlined that 22% of the respondents considered that Webtoon did not help them enhance their reading comprehension, and 28% of the respondents stated that they faced difficulty grasping the language used on Webtoon. In this case, it is essential that the teacher also assist the students in understanding the English content in the comics. Furthermore, the teacher could list the complex vocabulary found by the students on Webtoon on the classroom board.

To a further extent, it needs to be noted that Webtoon also has various genres, including romance, thriller, slice of life, comedy, and so forth. Therefore, the students could drill their reading comprehension skills through these myriad genres. However, the teacher must assist the students in discovering appropriate Webtoon genres based on age. Overall, the most challenging part of utilizing Webtoon as a learning medium in teaching English reading is controlling the students' focus so they do not get distracted. Therefore, the teacher must apply specific strategies in teaching reading to boost the students' reading skills (Wahyudin et al, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

As the final remark, the researchers summarize that most respondents considered Webtoon a good medium to improve their reading skills. It is proven through the survey result demonstrating that 78% of them chose "agree" and only 22% of them chose "disagree". Regarding accessibility, the researcher found that 80% of the respondents argued that Webtoon is easily accessible. In a paradox, 20% thought Webtoon was challenging to access. Discussing reading comprehension mastery, the survey demonstrates that 74% of the

respondents agreed that the Webtoon helps them master reading comprehension skills. On the contrary, 26% of the respondents considered vice versa. Regarding the language used on Webtoon, 72% argued that their English competence rises through reading Webtoon. On the other hand, 28% of them did not think Webtoon could increase their English competence. Ultimately, 72% stated that the Webtoon could be an option medium to enhance their reading skill. Unfortunately, 28% disagreed.

In a nutshell, there are several recommendations for future scholars. The upcoming researchers are suggested to expand the findings of this study by analyzing in depth the activities of teaching English reading utilizing Webtoon, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, group discussion, or presentation. Moreover, the next scholars could also deepen and enrich the data by interviewing the teacher and the students. Besides, this study is also suggested to be further investigated in other educational contexts, such as secondary and high school, considering that Webtoon is popular among teenagers. Thus, this sort of research might be relevant.

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