



Improving Students Reading Comprehension by Using Webtoon Comic Application at Professional Reading Class of English Education Study Program

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Abstract

The aims of this research were to improve students reading comprehension by using webtoon comic application as a reading material. The participant of the research were students in Professional Reading Class of English Education Study Program in the academic year 2023/2024. Collaborative Action Research was used as the method in this study. The data were collected from Test and Interview. The criteria of success were 70% of students reach 75 score. The result showed that there were 10% of students (2 students) got 90 score, 5% of students (1 students) got 85 scores, 15% of students got 80 scores (3 students), and 45% of students got 75 scores (9 students). All in all, 75% of students reached 75 scores as a minimal score. It means students reading comprehension are improved after the use of webtoon comic application as reading material. Students' response towards the use of webtoon comic application in improving their reading comprehension are fun, enjoyable, interesting and engage their motivation in reading.

Keywords: *Webtoon, Reading Comprehension, Reading Class, Collaborative Action Research, Improving Reading*

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INTRODUCTION

Related to the student's difficulties in reading, teachers have an essential role in improving students' reading comprehension. Wallace (Antoni, 2010) argues that teachers with good strategy will observe readers during reading to assess outcomes in the form of answers to the comprehension questions that generally follow a reading task. Regarding the teacher's role in teaching reading comprehension, teachers should choose their strategy based on the type of students that they teach. Moreillon (2007), in her book "Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension," said there are seven strategies in teaching reading comprehension: activating or building background knowledge, using

sensory images, questioning, making predictions and inferences, determining main ideas, using Fix-up options and synthesizing.

The Researcher considers methods that can be used in general to improve students' comprehension from several existing methods above, and the Researcher consider using the sensory image method to improve students' reading comprehension. Sensory images are part of the prior knowledge readers bring to a text. Students' understanding is improved when they are encouraged to use all their senses when reading. Additionally, sensory imagery may help readers remember and enjoy their literary encounters.

Students today cannot be divorced from their gadgets; they often use their phones to watch and read. Teachers must find a way to teach students reading that cannot be divorced from their gadgets. The relation between gadgets and the teaching method, the sensory imagery method, can be found in the comic application. One of the applications that might help teachers in teaching reading is the Webtoon Comic Application. Comics are not like other material that is full of text. It is full of pictures and uses accessible language features so it can be easily understood, and a comic has various genres that can make those who read it interested and entertained because of the exciting story.

However, to the present Researcher's knowledge, there are two accessible studies carried out concerning this topic in the Indonesian context so far. Erya & Pustaka (2021), with the title "Students' Perception Towards the Use of Webtoon To Improve Reading Comprehension Skill," used Qualitative research and a sample that the researcher used from Teknokrat Indonesia University. This study indicates that students are more motivated to read using the Webtoon comic application. That research explains how students can improve their interest in reading by using applications. The second is Yuliani (2022), under the title Webtoon Short Story in English Online Class: Students' Perception. The researcher used a qualitative design, and the sample that the researcher used came from three Senior High Schools in Pekanbaru in the eleventh grade. The result showed that students have a positive perception and interest on webtoon short story and significantly shown in high level while qualitative approaches showed that webtoon short stories used in English classroom was interesting, enjoyable, and motivating.

Based on the preliminary study results that the researcher conducted. The result shows that Students have low interest in reading text. The reason is that they always face text full of words. They want something that can engage their interest, like the picture and kind of it. Moreillon (2007), in her book "Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension," said that one strategy in teaching reading comprehension is a sensory image. Teachers did not utilize the media to maximize teaching with sensory images, which could engage students' interest better.

The researcher is interested in conducting a study to explore and improve students' reading comprehension through digital media, and the digital media that the researcher chooses is Webtoon Comic Application. Therefore, the study being conducted under the title "Improving Students Reading Comprehension by Using Webtoon Comic Application at Professional Reading Class of English Education Study Program." The difference between this study and the previous study is that the researcher takes a sample in Professional reading class at university level, whereas the previous studies takes place in university as a general and twelve grades in Senior High School. In previous studies, they used qualitative research, which used questionnaires and interviews to collect the data in

their research. This research used Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and used pre-test/post-test and interview as the instruments to collect the data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Reading

One of the four language skills taught to English language learners is reading. There is no quick and simple way to learn this reading. Therefore, students' ability to accept the author's ideas must be improved, which requires an understanding of reading instruction. Moreover, reading has many advantages for adding to and pursuing knowledge. Students must master reading comprehension as one of the skills. Read more since reading increases understanding, and while reading more about reading ideas, conclusions, details, and word understanding, students will also be able to reach the graduation level for reading comprehension.. Reading is meant to help students become more skilled, knowledgeable, and well-rounded to learn more effectively and efficiently about anything. As stated by Tang et al. (2019), Reading is the process of reducing confusion about the meaning of a text. The process is the outcome of the reader and the text negotiating meaning. The reader's knowledge, expectations, and tactics for expressing textual meaning might then be mentioned in relation to reading. Each is essential to the reader's negotiation of the text's meaning. Reading is the process of deciphering the meaning of written words or symbols. It involves both the process of obtaining symbols corresponding to one's oral language and obtaining the author's intended message. Recognizing and comprehending words is an active skill process in reading.

Harris (2011) also stated that we could define reading as an activity of picking meaning or understanding not only from a series of written words (reading the lines) but also the meaning contained between the lines (reading between the lines), even the meaning contained behind the rows (reading beyond the lines)..

Definition of Comprehension

The process of extracting meaning from the text is called reading comprehension. Therefore, the aim is not to determine meaning from a single word or sentence, but to develop a general understanding of what is presented in the text. As students read, they create mental models, or representations of the content of the text, that help them interpret the content in the text. There are two types of mental models: textual models, which are descriptions of the propositions of the text, and situational models, which are descriptions of the text content. (Van Dijk and Kintsch, cited in G. Wooley, 2011).

a. Mental Modeling

While reading, the reader can often construct the text as a model, that is, a mental representation of actual words. Propositions derived from reading consecutive sentences are sometimes supported by necessary thoughts to integrate with the structure of the text. Comprehension in the field of writing requires symbolic representation of words, phrases, and sentences. At the same time, readers need to connect ideas in sentences and create a conceptual model of larger concepts that include complex concepts and stories. (G. Woolley, 2011)

In contrast, textual models differ from situational models. The model of the problem model is a dynamic structural process determined by the reading relationship, text structure and semantic content. It is a coherent representation of the ideological meaning of the text. When creating a design, readers should try to incorporate local and international levels and cut across different points based on background knowledge. In this task, readers follow the model using information from the text and their prior knowledge. Therefore, it is thought that the main difference between the structure of the text and the structure in the content is the difference in thinking, the structure of the text is less preferred in thinking, and the patterns in the context carry a deeper meaning. (Woolley, 2011).

b. Comprehension: A Cognitive Process

Comprehension requires connecting multiple abilities and processes; Sometimes problems may arise that lead to misunderstandings. (G Woolley, 2011). In cognitive science, understanding is defined as the psychological process of the brain at a higher psychological level. . and relationship (R) and create an OAR model of an object or attribute by binding the object or attribute to the appropriate memory. (Wang & Gafurov, 2003).

Quoted from Cognitive Systems. At the 2003 Second IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Computing, Wang and Gafurov (2003) stated that the cognitive model of cognition is based on cognitive processes that can perform the following steps:

- a. Find connections between real and virtual objects and between objects and existing objects.
- b. Create a simple or adequate OAR model on the site.
- c. Split and connect to the appropriate LTM group to complete the OAR model.
- d. Note the new OAR model and its connection to LTM.

No According to this theoretical framework, the reader and the text play an important role in comprehension. The idea is that the reader's knowledge of the text never enters the reader's consciousness, but that the reader simultaneously integrates the information as knowledge and as prior knowledge (Dreher cited in Wooley, 2011)te the new OAR model and its connection to LTM.

c. Meaning and Comprehension

Many readers, texts, and situations affect reading comprehension, including understanding, inferring meaning, and interpreting texts. (DeCorte et al., 2001). Meaning is created in the reader's mind, which means that a prior knowledge influences the type of meaning created by the text (G. Woolley, 2011).

According to the above considerations, the reader's understanding of the text depends on the reader's ability to think, think, create rules and content patterns.

Level of Comprehension

According to Latiri (2022), the level of understanding is divided as follows:

a. Literal comprehension

literal Comprehension is the ability to accept ideas and facts clearly expressed on the printed page or to understand what the author has written. Reading comprehension is easiest because the reader does not need to understand anything beyond what is clearly stated.

b. Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension means going beyond what is explicitly stated and understanding what the author is trying to say. Inferring unstated main ideas, identifying cause-effect relationships, referring to pronouns and adverbs, affirmations, defining words, author's purpose, predictions, inferences, and Conclusions are all thinking skills.

c. Critical Comprehension

The ability to analyze, evaluate, make decisions and respond personally to the ideas and information presented by the author in the text is called comprehension. In critical reading, readers evaluate written material; They evaluate ideas in the literature and draw conclusions based on their existing knowledge.

Webtoon Comic Application

LINE Webtoon is a South Korean digital comic platform co-founded by LINE Corporation and NAVER Corporation (Fatimah, 2018). Webtoon is a new term created from the words "website" and "cartoon," which refer to comic books. Webtoons are cartoons published on the internet and designed to be seen on a computer screen. Because conventional paper comics continue to be strongly demanded, "webcomics" have yet to take shape. In Korea, Webtoon is a perfect example. Webtoons also have particular traits not present in other nations' online comics. (Erya and Pustika, 2021) Webtoon is a term used to refer to online-only South Korean manhwa or webcomics. In 2003 and 2004, the Korean website Daum launched a webtoon service. These services frequently publish webcomics that can be downloaded for free. Manhwa publications in print have dropped as digital comics have become a standard format. The content volume produced for webcomics has now surpassed that of offline publications. Online comics or webtoons are entertaining for all audiences, but children, in particular, enjoy them because they have appealing graphics and colors. Webcomics are likewise regarded as a form of classroom instruction. In addition, the comic is often regarded as exciting and motivating media.

Strength of Using Webtoon Comic Application

According to Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat (2002), there are a few reasons why comics are more effective than other teaching tools.

- 1) Middle and high school pupils are familiar with and fond of the comic.
- 2) Students like reading comic books as a type of literature.
- 3) Due to the well-liked and accessible comic format, students explore literacy more than they would otherwise.
- 4) Through the study of comics, students examine the use of dialogue, concise and dramatic vocabulary, and nonverbal cues.

This style makes a classroom more engaging and stops historical material from being dull and pointless, which it frequently is in regular classrooms.

Weaknesses of Webtoon Comic Application

There are several weaknesses of the webtoon comic application. First, students must be given control over stories based on genres because not all stories are suitable for readers under 17. The narrative might be violent and not suitable for school-aged children. So, more observation is required when choosing the story. Second, it can be challenging to understand Webtoon's words at times. They require time to read the story and check the dictionary. Finally, a gadget is required for reading Webcomics, but its use must be controlled. A reader who spends too much time on a device becomes addicted and loses focus on their studies. (Fatimah, 2018).

METHOD

The design of this study is collaborative action research (CAR). Frey (2022) believes that the purpose of research studies is to solve problems in disciplines such as education. Collaborative action research is viewed as the process of connecting theory and practice in schools where researchers explore social situations by asking questions, collecting information, and testing hypotheses through cycles of action. Additionally, Burns (2010) stated that CAR is used to solve problems that arise during teaching through practices, thus bringing changes and improvements in teaching methods.

When conducting research, researchers need to follow several steps called the research cycle. Kemis et al. (2014) stated that the research study consisted of four stages. These are planning, action, observation and reflection, which are considered as a research cycle.

Kemmis et al. get. (2014) defines the transformation of the planning, execution and monitoring process and the self-improvement cycle of the occurrence of change, thinking about the process and its consequences, and re-planning and taking action. Observations, thoughts, etc. based on. This cycle continues until the researcher is satisfied with the results of the research. In other words, if the teaching method changes and evolves, the researcher stops the research cycle.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The result of Using Webtoon Comic Application for Improving Students Reading Comprehension

The research question revolved around the effectiveness of the Webtoon Comic Application in improving students' reading comprehension. Students displayed more interest in learning to read through utilizing the Webtoon Comic Application. This application emerged as an alternative learning method that made reading enjoyable for students while enhancing their reading comprehension skills.

The findings from the study revealed that students lacked motivation when engaging in reading activities. Motivation plays a significant role, impacting various aspects such as achievement and interest. As per Sayrozi et al. (2017), students who lack motivation may

struggle with their studies, while highly motivated students can better meet their learning objectives. Introducing something new and different to boost student motivation can help provide a fresh experience, drawing their interest in learning. In this research, the Webtoon Comic Application was utilized. According to Erya (2021), reading Webtoons can enhance students' reading proficiency by engaging in constant reading and viewing, thus improving their comprehension. When lessons are presented in a Webtoon comic style, incorporating graphics and audible features, students might find reading very appealing and engaging, steering away from feeling bored or drowsy during reading. In the first meeting and the result of pre-test it can be seen that students have initial situation which is they have challenges in comprehending comic because it was the first time to students in comprehending text out of the traditional material but in the next meeting it can be seen that students were engaged in learning by using webtoon because of visualization that webtoon give and also the story of comic engages their interest.

During the treatment activities where the researcher employed the Webtoon Comic Application for students, students feel comfortable and interested in use webtoon as learning material they feel webtoon can make complex concepts easier to understand. When students interest is going high, they chance in comprehending the text is more improve. the goal was to improve their reading comprehension. Several factors contributed to the success of the research. One significant factor was the students' familiarity with the Webtoon Comic Application, combined with using sensory images (visualization) as a teaching strategy. Moreillon (2007) pointed out in her book "Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension" that sensory images engage students' interest more effectively. Moreover, students' active participation in the class facilitated the implementation of the Webtoon Comic Application to enhance their reading comprehension. The success criteria for utilizing the Webtoon Comic Application in improving students' reading comprehension was that 70% of students could achieve a minimum score of 75. Students' comprehension was improved during the treatment, it can be seen from the result of the pre-test and post-test. The pretest showed 90% of students score under the minimum criteria of success and in the post-test revealed that 75% of students (14 students) managed to attain scores of 75 and above. Overall, after the treatment is done, Students level of comprehension can be said in Inferential until Critical Comprehension. Based on Latiri (2022) Inferential comprehension means going beyond what is explicitly stated and understanding what the author is trying to say. Inferring unstated main ideas, identifying cause-effect relationships, referring to pronouns and adverbs, affirmations, defining words, author's purpose, predictions, inferences, and Conclusions are all thinking skills and Critical Comprehension can be seen in students if they can evaluate ideas in the literature and draw conclusions based on their existing knowledge

Students Responses Towards the Use of Webtoon Comic Application

When students engage with a webtoon comic as a reading material, they first experience fun and interest due to its visual effects, which can significantly boost their motivation for reading. Additionally, webtoons boast attractive illustrations and character designs that stimulate students' imagination, transporting them to different worlds. According to student interviews, webtoon comics aid in improving reading comprehension by simplifying complex ideas and making them more understandable. Incorporating pictures and visual elements allows readers to grasp complex concepts by presenting them in more straightforward, understandable forms.

Students perceive webtoons as beneficial for enhancing their understanding, making reading more enjoyable, and sparking their interest in learning. There is a suggestion for its integration into the curriculum or the classroom. However, some students view webtoons as supplementary rather than a primary resources. They feel webtoons complement traditional learning materials like textbooks and articles, as they assist in better-visualizing content and understanding what is being taught.

Moreover, students express that webtoon comics cannot replace traditional reading materials such as textbooks and articles, which are equally important and necessary. They emphasize the importance of balancing reading webtoons and conventional reading materials, as each offers distinct benefits that contribute to improved thinking skills. While webtoons present a fresh and engaging learning method, students acknowledge the necessity of traditional materials for detailed information. They believe that using webtoon comics in tandem encourages critical thinking, enhances reading skills, and fosters interactive learning by enabling students to share thoughts and ideas.

The Strength and Weakness of Using Webtoon Comic Application for Improving Students Reading Comprehension

After completing the collaborative action research, the Researcher observed a strength in the form of improved students' reading comprehension. They displayed an expanded vocabulary and increased interest in engaging with reading activities. When it comes to learning, motivation, and interest are of paramount importance. Nor & Rashid (2018) underscore that teachers should harness various media to enhance students' interest in reading. Students are more active when engaged with unique or novel materials. Using a webtoon comic application as a resource has made reading more enjoyable for students. However, it's important to note that there are fewer comics tailored for educational purposes in webtoons, requiring teachers or lecturers to filter the content before presenting it to the students.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

In this research, the researcher employed the Webtoon Comic application as a tool to enhance students' reading comprehension. The aim was to assess the effectiveness of using the Webtoon Comic application in improving students' reading comprehension. The study's results indicated a positive impact on students' reading comprehension with the use of the Webtoon Comic Application. The comparison between pre-test and post-test results evidenced this. Most students met the success criteria, achieving a minimum score of 75. While the Webtoon application effectively engages students' interest in reading, it also exhibits certain weaknesses. One notable drawback is the limited availability of educational materials within the Webtoon platform.

From the conclusion above, the researcher proposes some suggestions for English teachers and other researchers. The lecturer needs to give more attention to students' interests and motivation. Therefore, the teacher has to use various strategies and maximize the use of media technology to engage students' interest and motivation. Webtoons can be one of the solutions to engaging students' interest in reading. Additionally, this research only focuses on Webtoon Comic Applications to improve students' reading comprehension. Therefore, another researcher may research the Webtoon comic application to improve the teaching and learning ability in the other subject.

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