



The EFL Students' Perception Toward the Use of Wattpad To Help in Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the EFL students' Perception on use of the Wattpad application in helping reading comprehension. The research method used is a qualitative case study. The participants were three English Education students at a university in West Java, Indonesia. The data collection was carried out using semi-structured interviews. Then, the data analysis used the thematic analysis framework from Braun and Clarke (2006). The results of the study found two themes, namely (1) Wattpad Facilitates users for Reading Easily and (2) Achievement of Reading Comprehension Levels. The contribution of this research is to provide readers with empirical insight into the advantages of the Wattpad application to assist in reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Students' Perception, Reading Comprehension, Wattpad*

Introduction

Learning language through technology provides several advantages to students by offering sources of accessibility in learning that can be used anywhere and at any time, and various applications are used in learning (McCarty et al., 2017). It is not something new in education, and it has become increasingly popular around the world as an effective way to enhance foreign language education (McCarty et al., 2017).

Many kinds of technologies can be used to support the learning activity, such

as web platform and mobile phone or smartphone. It is one of the technologies, and not only used as a communication tool but also use to a social, work and learning needs (Darsih & Asikin, 2020). It is used by many people including among students in their learning process.

The use of smartphone can help students develop their knowledge and give positive results in learning process (Darsih & Asikin, 2020). Currently, smartphone users can download educational applications among the applications available on Google Play Store or iOS Store to help them learn English. Additionally, some are based on language learning and built for English-reading.

Reading is an activity that is usually learned in English as a foreign language. Reading has the main goal to make an understanding of the text and get the information (Rahayu, 2019). Reading comprehension is one of skills of reading. It is a process as an activity how the students find the meaning actively by using between their knowledge of the world and the text to comprehend what they are reading. There are several media that can be used to support reading learning process in smartphones such as blog, wordpress, and Wattpad.

Wattpad is one of the media that can be used in smartphone. It has been utilized as an online media for reading platform in the learning language. Wattpad is more popular comparing to other reading platform such as Wordpress, Blogger and Fizzo. It is because social media application that enables writers and readers to interact (Kardiansyah, 2019).

The aim of Wattpad is like social media communities such as Facebook, Youtube, and others to create some content to build interaction among users (Anggitasari et al., 2020)]. Wattpad benefits students to read a lot of stories made by authors from around the world. There are many categories of the story on Wattpad such as short story, classic, fiction, adventure, anime, romance, romance, fantasy, humor, spiritual, mystery, horror, poetry, science fiction, historical fiction, teen fiction, general fiction, and non-fiction (Furotun et al., 2021). It also can be used every time and everywhere. Wattpad can be a medium that can help improve students' reading comprehension.

Wattpad has been used by youth as a medium for reading. In Indonesia, teenagers, especially students, use Wattpad as a medium for reading and learning foreign languages. With this platform as well as social media, Wattpad provides interesting features such as searching for each genre of story, a library for saving stories, comments on each paragraph to express ideas and suggestions as a reader and a message feature for interacting with fellow readers or writers. In short, the Wattpad application can be an independent medium for learning foreign languages through the stories available on Wattpad.

Based on the phenomenon above, the researcher is interested to explore EFL students' perceptions about the use of Wattpad as a media for helping students in reading comprehension in terms of peceived benefits, perceived ease of use and percieved level of comperhension . The previous study, Sari (2016) has discovered the use of Wattpad can affect students' reading comprehension through a short

story. Therefore, this study similar to the previous study, it will discuss the use of Wattpad in reading comprehension. As for the gap, it is focused on the use of Wattpad in reading comprehension based on EFL students' perceptions.

Method

The design of the research is using Qualitative Case Study. According to Creswell (2012), a case study method is where the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. It is chosen because case study aimed to gain more in-depth insight into phenomenon about a person or group of people. Furthermore, it is used to know Wattpad in helping for EFL students' reading comprehension and how the Wattpad can help EFL students for their reading comprehension.

This research was conducted in a university located in Tasikmalaya West Java, Indonesia. The university was chosen because the participants are the students in English Department. Three participants of this study were chosen by five considerations; (1) They were the most users who frequently used Wattpad since they were teenagers, (2) they often used Wattpad application for reading stories, (3) They chose Wattpad application for reading because they felt that the application was easy to use, (4) they were willing to participate in this research; (5) they were the users since they were in past schools.

In this research, the researcher used interview for collecting the data. The type of interview was semi-structured interview for leading the use of Wattpad to help in reading comprehension to the students as the instrument to get the data. The interview also can be conducted in person by online media, the researcher chose Google Meet as a medium to interview the participants. The process of the interview was recorded by the researcher. The Interview questions were from Smith (1972) and adapted from Erya & Pustika (2021) because the instrument could be applied to this research. The researcher gave 8 questions to the students about how does Wattpad can help them in reading comprehension. In addition, the interview used Indonesian in order to avoid misunderstandings between the participants. The result of the interview was transcribed by the researcher to highlight the statement that focuses on the research question of the study.

The data collected from the interview has been analyzed by using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting thematic patterns of data. Braun and Clarke (2006) also added that this analysis can describe detailed data and can interpret various aspects of the research topic.

Result and Discussion

From the result of the data analysis in chapter 3, the researcher found two emergent themes namely: (1) Wattpad Facilitates users for Reading Easily, (2) Achievement of Reading Comprehension Level.

Moreover, each participant has their own experience in Reading using Wattpad application. In the following sections, the perceptions of each participant were presented.

1. Wattpad Facilitates users for Reading Easily

This theme discussed about students' perception on the use of Wattpad facilitates users for reading easily. An example of good application to be used is programs that quickly comprehend and learn the information by users. Romney (2004) stated that the format of the information must be easy to comprehend. This theme refers to the benefit and easiness of the use of Wattpad based on Students' perception. Those are discussed as follows

Excerpt 1 #

"Wattpad has many varied stories and free for reading. There is a feature to choose the genre that makes it easier for me to read the stories I like and makes me like reading on Wattpad" (Interview, P2, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

One of the benefits of the Wattpad application is the various types of recommended stories. P2 revealed there is a feature that can choose story genres, making it easier to search. She also revealed that it was also what made her preferred to read on Wattpad.

Search feature is helping reader to find some story. According to one of the author of Wattpad, named yyu_er (2021) explanation, this feature has varied of story genres will be appeared. After choosing the preferred genre, several recommended stories will be appeared, according to the genre.

Excerpt 2 #

"There are a lot of features that make me easy to find story in Wattpad, such as, the story categories. Then, there is a library feature that can be saved our story to read." (Interview, P3, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

According to excerpt above, the data showed P2 and P3 shared the same perceptions toward the genres (see excerpt 2 # and 3 #). P3 expressed that she got easier to find story from Search feature. In addition, P3 stated that there was Library feature to save a story to read. Ulfa (2018) explained that Wattpad has many features to be used easily. Those excerpts were in line with Ulfa (2018) Library, is using for save story, so we can read the story without look for the story anymore.

Based on yyu_er (2021), there are several features in this Library feature. (1) Current reads, is containing the stories which you are reading, currently; (2) Archive, is containing archived stories; (3) Reading List, is containing stories that are included in the list which will be appeared on the profile homepage. Reading List can also be used for story recommendations to people who visit someone's profile.

Excerpt 3 #

"Wattpad is also free; we don't have to pay it. Umm... even there is some story which paid by Wattpad Coin, but as long as I read; I usually find a free story" (Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

Excerpt 4 #

"Wattpad has many stories with a lot of genres and it is free." (Interview, P2, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

According to P1 and P2, they stated that Wattpad is free to read. It makes them like to read in Wattpad. In addition to Wattpad has many genres of story, it is also free to access.

However, free stories are limited; the stories that have been entered into the Library feature (see excerpt 4 #), that are divided into two, namely online and offline Story. Offline stories can be downloaded, but offline stories are also limited only on 25 stories to be saved. There is no significant difference in online and offline stories. Samana (2021) explained that stories that are read using the internet will appear several advertisements while being read.

It can be concluded that the use of the Wattpad application from the perceptions of EFL students have the benefit and the easiness. Among the features in the application, that can make it easier for them to access it. Likewise, as the stories those are available for free, making EFL students like Wattpad. With these advantages, it can prove the popularity of the Wattpad application. From the results of the data, it is found that EFL students know Wattpad from people who have used it. These advantages make the Wattpad application recommended for used.

2. Achievement of Reading Comprehension Level

In the previous, the researcher had discussed about Wattpad facilitates the users for reading easily. Thus, the researcher discussed the level of reading comprehension of EFL students toward the use of Wattpad, which are discussed as follows.

Excerpt 5 #

"If we log in the Wattpad, we can choose the story. There are many stories that make me like reading" (Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

The excerpt above showed, that P1 enjoyed reading in Wattpad because there are a lot of story which can be chosen. It is in line with Tanjung (2016) stated that the choice of the varied genres have chosen by many students.

Excerpt 6 #

"One of my friends recommended me the Wattpad. Since then, I really enjoy to read in Wattpad." (Interview, P2, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

According to the excerpt above, P2 stated that she enjoyed read story in Wattpad. P2 like to read story before she has known Wattpad (see excerpt 2 #). She got recommendation to use Wattpad and she really enjoyed the story.

Excerpt 7 #

"When I knew Wattpad I often read in Wattpad, because I feel comfortable with the story in it." (Interview, P3, April 4th, 2022. Author's Translation)

From the excerpt above, P3 expressed that she often read a story in

Wattpad. She also stated she felt comfortable to read in it. It is proven by Maharsi, et al., 2019) that students who are reading a lot like it feel comfortable, and P3 revealed in excerpt 4, that she enjoyed because a lot of story to be chosen.

From the result of excerpt above, that with so many stories to choose from, those make students like the Wattpad. It is also able to improve comprehension, because with a lot of reading, comprehension skills will also increase. This statement is in line with Sari, et al (2018) which stated that reading comprehension is an ability that refers to the capacity of person to a lot of reading.

Wattpad Application provided useful features for reading comprehension. It benefited the participants by reading a lot of genres that they interested in and it making reading more enjoyable and comfortable since Wattpad application is offered some features.

Excerpt 8 #

"The language and the plot of the story are suitable for my ability. I feel it helps me, because the story is easy to understand." (Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

From excerpt above, P1 expressed that the language and the plot of story were suitable for her ability in English. The language that used in Wattpad makes her easy to understand.

Excerpt 9 #

"...and then, the stories make me get easier to understand in terms of vocabulary" (Additional Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

From the additional excerpt from P1 above, she also stated that apart from easy English, there is also an understanding in terms of vocabulary. This statement is in line with Rahman and Iwan (2022) who claimed that Wattpad does not only help in reading skills, but also helps in vocabulary which makes them excel in learning EFL.

It can be concluded that vocabulary also has a role in reading comprehension. Previous experts Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) stated that the contribution of vocabulary in reading for higher level in the reading process involved understanding the text.

Excerpt 10 #

"Wattpad has many stories, such as novel and short story and the stories use easy English is like daily life language". (Interview, P3, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

Based on the excerpt above, P3 stated the story that she read was the easy English language. Which means an easy language that same as daily conversation. P3 also expressed that a lot of stories in Wattpad were using easy English.

It can be concluded that language played an important role to assist in improving reading comprehension. The participant will understand the meaning of a story, if the language used is also easy to understand.

By reading comprehension participants are able to get information and knowledge written by the author. It is expected that students are also able to understand the intent and idea of the text. Participants will be considered capable, if they can understand information and knowledge from the text. In addition, students can develop other language skills (Husni, 2022).

Excerpt 11 #

"I think my level of comprehension only on Literal and interpretive. I only understand about the easy plot of the story." (Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

The excerpt above explained that level comprehension of P1 was on Literal and Interpretive comprehension. She expressed that she was only understand the easy plot of the story. Rubin (1972) stated that comprehension was only required in low thinking skills compared to other comprehension skills. Therefore, the questions that are appropriate at this level of comprehension are using question words, what; Who; Where; When; Why; and How. These interrogative sentences are used to find basic information from a text.

The excerpt of P1 also expressed that she was also at the level of interpretive comprehension. According to Burns et al. (1996) interpretive reading is reading between lines. In broad outline, interpretive comprehension included making conclusions and reading analysis. The conclusion of the reading for example, is in the form of main ideas and cause-and-effect relationships. Meanwhile reading analysis for example, determines the author's purpose in a text.

The statement of P1 in the excerpt above, which stated that she was also at the level of interpretive comprehension, it is meant that she was also able to determine main ideas, cause-and-effect relationships, and also determine the purpose of the writer.

On the other hand, P1 expressed that critical comprehension was an understanding that is difficult for her to understand. The following was an excerpt of P1 regarding one of the comprehensions.

Excerpt 12 #

"There was a comprehension that kind of difficult, it was critical comprehension... I have read a story, but it felt like I should read it on repeat until I understand, there was an untold message that should I read on repeat." (Interview, P1, April 4th, 2022. Author's translation)

The excerpt above stated that P1 found it was difficult to be at the critical comprehension level. As stated by Burns et al. (1996) that critical comprehension was comparing existing ideas in the material and drawing conclusions about accuracy, suitability, and timeline. Burns also reminded that critical readers must be active readers by asking, reviewing facts, and postponing their judgements until the end of the reading. It can be concluded that the opinion implied responsibility for decisions taken from the contents of

the text.

From the excerpt above, it can be concluded that P1 still has difficulties in managing ideas and reviewing facts in a text. This was because in terms of stories that used English which is difficult to understand, because P1 revealed that the stories that she read used language that was easy to understand and suitable for her language ability (see excerpt 10 #)

Excerpt 13 #

“From Wattpad application, I master literal comprehension and interpretive comprehension, because I just can understand the plot of the story and the characteristic of the character”. (Interview, P2, April 4th, 2022. Author’s translation)

From excerpt above, P2 claimed that she was only mastered Literal and Interpretive comprehension same as P1 (see excerpt 13 #). In Literal comprehension, she also only understood the easy of plot in the story. She added that she was also understood about the characteristic of the character in the story.

P2 can also be said to be able to determine the main ideas, cause-and-effect and determine the purpose of the author same as the excerpt from P1. From the two statements from P1 and P2, it can be said that the participants should be able to connect written information with something that is not written, but it is still related to connecting goals to form proper understanding.

This is also the same as P3 which has similarities with P1 and P2. The level of comprehension is in literal and interpretive comprehension. The following is an excerpt from P3 below which stated the same comprehension as P1 and P2.

Excerpt 14 #

“Based on level comprehension, I think I am on Literal comprehension, because I only understand the plot of story, also interpretive comprehension, because I like to guess the ending of the story or the next chapter of the story.” (Interview, P3, April 4th, 2022. Author’s translation)

The excerpt above explained that level of comprehension of P3 was on Literal and Interpretive comprehension. In addition, she expressed that she like to guess the next chapter or the ending of the story.

Based on the results of the data, it can be concluded that currently, the participants were only able to be at the level of literal and interpretive comprehension. From the statement of the three of them which stated that the language used in the story was easy to understand like the language in daily life conversations. Therefore, they only have a basic comprehension, for example in a literal comprehension that answers the 5W1H question words and an interpretive comprehension that is able to determine the main ideas, cause-and-effect and determine the author's purpose.

From the four levels of reading comprehension, the participants were only at two levels of comprehension, they are literal and interpretive comprehension. This is because; the three participants were still like to reading stories that easy

for them to understand. The stories that used difficult language make them have to be read repeatedly and they just like the storyline created by the author.

Moreover, by enjoying reading on Wattpad, it becomes easier for participants to understand the reading on the Wattpad application. Likewise, as language used, the easy language makes them like the Wattpad application. Therefore, the more interest in reading, it makes higher the level of reading comprehension. This statement is in line with Estes and Vaughan (1973) which stated that a factor in comprehension is a strong interest in reading.

From these findings, the enjoyment in reading felt by the participants that helps in their comprehension, in terms of its easy use and easy language. In other words, the application can help train the reading comprehension levels, if the participants frequently to read stories on the Wattpad application, which are many types of stories to choose from according to their interests.

In conclusion, students' reading comprehension in the Wattpad application is because the participants have used Wattpad for a long time. They can spend the time by reading the stories which they like. This is proven by the data which stated that the Wattpad application noted that 23 billion users spend time reading each month (Wattpad, 2023)

Conclusion and Suggestion

The aim of this research is to explore students' perception toward the use of Wattpad to help in reading comprehension. This research revealed students' perceptions about the use of Wattpad in their reading comprehension. Based on the research results, the data showed that students have their perceptions about the use of Wattpad for students' reading comprehension. First, they believed that Wattpad is easy to use because it is easier to make them access the application and also there are a lot of stories that can be read for free. The various features on Wattpad make them get easier to use it. Wattpad also has the benefits; it can facilitate them anywhere by using smartphones. Second, the students believed that Wattpad can help them in learning language because the language used is easy to understand, increase their vocabulary, and also their knowledge. In conclusion, the students agreed to use Wattpad as a medium for learning language in reading to get their reading comprehension.

The current study findings provided students' perception toward the use of Wattpad to help in reading comprehension, and the results are based on their experiences in the use of Wattpad. This study focuses on the students' perception toward the use of Wattpad. Following up on the result and discussion, the researcher suggests to EFL Students and other researchers who are interested in conducted the same study. One of the media that popular among others is Wattpad. This shows that the students are using Wattpad as media of reading, because it is easy and enjoy.

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