

**THE STUDY OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION DURING
ONLINE CLASS IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM
MALANG: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION**

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the students' perception towards teaching online reading comprehension which included students' obstacles, class activities, and students' perception towards their reading comprehension during online class. The subjects were four students of English Department of University of Islam Malang who experienced online reading class in 4th semester which had chosen through purposive sampling. Then, to obtain the data, the researcher conducted in-depth-interviews.

The researcher found four main points of student perceptions. First, lecturer managed the class by utilizing WhatsApp feature, Zoom Meeting and Google Classroom apps. For the activity, students read and summarized some reading sources to be collected to the lecturer. Second, students faced the obstacles, such as how to use the technology and how to manage their time. Then, all of participants said that the lecturer way to manage and give the class activity was effective, they felt the improvement on their reading because of the activity. The last, students gave their perception about things that must be implemented in online reading class for getting better reading comprehension.

Based on the findings, this study was conducted in limited scope and has a number of limitations. It will be better to add another instrument and get the lecturer's point of view in the next study. The suggestions were addressed to lecturer to be more sensitive about the students need while doing class activities, such as additional information and feedback. The lecturer needs to add interactive and interesting activities to enhance students' motivation in online reading class.

Keywords: *Teaching reading comprehension; Online reading class; Students' Perception.*

Introduction

English is an international language that is acceptable as a means of communication with other people around the world. It will help people to communicate with foreigners by using English, because it has been learned in many countries.

English is the most spoken language in the world, with nearly 1.13 billion people using English (of which about 379 million are native English speakers), having said that in terms of the number of native speakers, English does not on the first rank, in contrary, it has gained prominence because of its popularity as a foreign language subject. (Caplan, 2020). (p.1).

Sudiran (2015) stated that many countries in the world, including Indonesia, use English as a means of communication. Indonesia is one of the countries that uses English as a foreign language which covers four basic skills, they are reading, listening, writing and speaking. According to Sudiran (2015), Students will find the difficult to understand the subject matter without having the ability to read and write in English. Therefore, it will be easier for people to understand and to be understood by foreigners by owning four basic communication skills in English As one of basic skills in learning English, reading has important role in improving our language abilities, according to Nurhasanah, Sulisty, Agustiani & Ulya (2020) who stated that reading is one of the most important skills for knowledge growth combined with listening, speaking and writing. The more we read the more we get, it means we will get more knowledge through reading activity, especially when we read English text we will get a lot of things about English that can improve our reading comprehension, such as new vocabularies, new information, and new reading experiences. Nurhasanah et al., (2020) stated that reading comprehension is one of the basic language skills, which can help learners improve their academic performance. In addition, teaching reading technique also influence the students reading comprehension, such as dividing materials, choosing suitable strategies, and matching class activities. Frequently, teacher use group discussion among students to increase their ability in reading comprehension also communication, but now, it becomes a little bit difficult because of the pandemic situation.

Referring to Circular Letter from Ministry of Education and Culture number 40 of 2020 concerning "*implementation of educational policies in the emergency period of the spread of the corona virus disease (Covid 19)*", the minister of education, made a number of changes during the pandemic, including; abolition of national exams, changes in the school examination system and new student enrollments, and stipulates learning from home. One of the learning activities that got the impact of the spread of Covid-19 virus was learning activity at university level. The Covid-19 emergency period required lecturers and students to carry out the learning process from home which resulted in many changes such as location and

learning methods. According to Simamora (2020), students and lecturers cannot meet in class, they must deal with changing conditions and develop alternative strategies, such as completing online learning. Susilowati (2020) also stated that During the Covid-19 pandemic, studying at home through online learning has become the safest process because many governments do not want to risk the spread of the Covid-19 virus in schools and universities on a larger scale.

Online class is teaching-learning process which is conducted by using technology such as laptop, computer, and smartphone which is occurred through online. Thus, teacher and students do not need to meet physically. It is in line with Susilowati (2020) who stated that online learning is a learning set where teachers or lecturers provide materials and there is interaction between teachers and students or students and lecturer by accessing the internet using specific technology devices or applications. Students can use some applications to conduct the class activities, such as WhatsApp Group, Google Classroom, and Edmodo to share the information and collect the assignment, also online meeting applications such as Zoom and Google meet to fill our meeting class. It is in line with Simamora (2020) by using numerous applications as learning media, such as Youtube, Zoom, Google Meet and many available applications, online learning knowledge has been used in the higher education of students.

Nowadays, online class has important role in learning process during pandemic because it has several benefits such as, it is easy to monitor, it has good ability to connect with people in many places, and it is effective from time and places aspects.

University of Islam Malang has carried out online learning for two weeks in the beginning of March 2020, then due to worsening conditions and the increasing number of Covid-19 patients in Malang City, the campus must comply with government regulations to extend online learning until an indefinite time. Although learning activities were conducted through online class, students must be able to master the materials as good as when learning through offline class. In this condition, sometimes students do some class activities individually, especially in reading class activities, the activities involved students' comprehension and skills to understand what students have been read. Meanwhile, in recent online classes, students have to read and summarize the materials without getting the explanation towards the materials first. Students have a duty to understand the materials by reading the texts, articles, and other reading sources. Possibly, students faced the difficulties while doing the online reading class activities. Thus, it made the researcher interested to explore the student's perception toward the teaching reading comprehension in online class.

Meanwhile, the previous study, which has been conducted by Untari (2020) showed the majority of students agreed that online learning benefits their reading. The previous researcher used questionnaire as the research instrument and only focused on student's perception of online reading comprehension in general. Therefore, the present researcher wanted to deeply analyzed whether the students feel

this online learning is beneficial for them, while others complained about the decline in the quality of learning. Then, related to those reasons, the researcher determined to conduct the research study that focused on student's perception in detail, which included students' obstacles, online reading class activities, and students' perception towards their reading comprehension during online class.

Methods

The researcher used descriptive qualitative approach design. Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh (2010) explained that the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon, process or particular point of view from the perspective of those involved. However, qualitative research is more comprehensive and usually involves the collection of large amounts of data from various sources so that they have a deeper understanding of participants, including their views, opinions and attitudes (Nassaji, 2015). The researcher uses descriptive method design which is qualitative to describe students' perception on teaching reading comprehension during online class in English Department of University of Islam Malang.

This research was conducted at English Education Department in University of Islam Malang which is located on Jl. Mayjen Hariyono 193 Malang. The researcher chose this university because it is an educational institution which provide English major that has a lot of students. The subjects of this research were four students at academic year 2019/2020 in UNISMA who experienced online reading class at fourth semester. The researcher chose the participants depend on their achievements. There were two students who got higher achievements, the first participant got A (86.50), the second participant also got A (86.50), then two students who got lower achievements, the third participant got C (64.00), and the last participant got C (64.00). It expected for exploring the various students' point of view and analyzed whether the students also have the high or low perception on teaching reading comprehension during online class.

The instrument of this research was structured interview with 8 questions adopted from Zoghi, Mustapha, Riza, and Maasum (2010),

- a) Could you describe your experiences in online reading class? Did you encounter any problems while online reading class and how did you try to overcome those problems?
- b) How your lecturer managed the online reading class?
- c) How about your opinion towards the lecturer's strategies/class management in online reading class?
- d) What kind of reading activities that lecturer gave during online class?
- e) How is your opinion about the activities? Did you feel those activities were effective? Why?

- f) Did you ever get the distractions that make you did not focus during reading activities in online class?
- g) What does online reading class mean to you? Did you feel your reading comprehension was increased or decreased during online class? why?
- h) How about your perception towards your reading comprehension during online class?

The interview questions were related to students' obstacles, online reading class activities, and students' perception towards their reading comprehension during online class. The result data of interview transcribed by recording of interview session.

The procedure of data collection of this study was, the researcher conducted in-depth interview using interview guide approach, the questions that given to the participants always be a line with the data that is needed. The interviews' questions answered by four English students who experienced online reading class at fourth semester in English department of University of Islam Malang. However, the questions were open-ended questions so the interviewees could expand their answers.

The interviews conducted by using WhatsApp feature because of the physical distancing condition caused by the global pandemic Covid-19. After doing all interviews session, the researcher did oral interviews with the participants for ensuring their statements based on the interview's session. Then, the result data of interview transcribed from recording of interview session in details.

After the data have been collected, the researcher then organized and familiarized the data, combined the data, coded and reduced, and then interpreted and presented the data. It done by the researcher to make easy to understand, interpret, and make sense out of the collected data.

Firstly, the researcher organized and familiarized all the data collected. Moreover, the researcher organized the interview recording by transcript them and translate the interview result, after that the researcher familiarized it by retelling them. The second, the researcher combined all the data. After organizing and familiarizing them, the researcher combined all the data to complete each other. The researcher found the main data that was the students' perception. The next, the researcher coded and reduced the data. In this case, the data that have combined based on the problems were coded and reduced. The researcher deleted unimportant data and concluded the data to make the researcher feel easier to present and interpret them. The last, presented and interpreted all the data. After all data analysed by conducting all steps before, the researcher will be easy to present and interpret the data that have found.

Findings and Discussions

After doing the interviews session, the researcher found the four main point which described below:

- **Class management and activity**

For supporting the teaching and learning process, class management and activity were extremely needed. The researcher asked the participants about the strategies that used by lecturer to manage the online reading class, all of the participants mentioned WhatsApp group as the main media for teaching learning activities in online reading class. P3 said *“the lecturer was not too active in google meet and another meeting apps, we just accept the materials and instructions through WhatsApp group”*. P1, P2, and P4 mentioned that google classroom was frequently used for submitting the assignment.

Then, the researcher also asked about the useful of live meeting application in their online reading class. P1 and P2 said that their lecturer never used zoom meeting app, but only used WhatsApp group and Google classroom. Meanwhile, P4 stated that his lecturer conducted zoom meeting application before midterm test and final test for checking up student’s preparation and understanding.

After that, the researcher asked about the activities that given by lecturer during online reading class. Majority, the activities were similar, students were asked to read and summarize several reading sources (articles, journals, etc.) and mention the infamous words, then students submitted the summaries to lecturer in the form of Ms word files. P2 stated *“Our lecturer delivered the course outline on the first week. Then for the next weeks, we instructed to look for the articles based on our title or topic to write down the objectives, methods, benefits, and conclusions of the articles.”*

In conclusion, the lecturer used WhatsApp feature, google classroom app, and zoom meeting app for managing the reading class during online learning. Then, for the activity, students have to read and summarize a lot of reading sources.

- **Obstacles and distractions**

All of the participants have their own obstacles and distractions during online reading class, P1 and P4 stated that they felt a culture shock and unfamiliar at the beginning. P1 said *“Actually, I feel cannot fit with this kind of learning method, because it was the first time, we did the learning process through online”*. P4 also said that he and his friends were got the difficulty at the beginning of online reading class, they did not know how to use the RPPS UNISMA. *“Finally, we have to overcome those problems by familiarizing ourselves to do the online learning in this situation”* said P4.

Then, about the unstable signal, P2 and P4 experienced the distraction while online reading class activities. P4 stated that he could not download the assignments in large file, and suddenly leaved from zoom meeting because of the bad internet connection.

Meanwhile, P3 said that the problem was from the clashing of his class schedules. P3 and P2 also stated that they felt difficult to manage the time to finish their assignments.

From the participants statements, can be concluded that the student's obstacles and distractions were from unstable signal, clashing class schedules, time management, and also culture shock at the beginning of online class.

- **Students' perception on the effectiveness of the class management and activity, and about their reading comprehension**

1. The effectiveness of class activity and class management

In general, all of participants told that the strategies used by lecturer to manage the online reading class were effective, however, P1 stated that actually, she does not really like that kind of activities, although she said that activity was effective because she got new words and knowledges while reading, but she did not get any feedback and explanation from the lecturer towards the assignments that she did.

In contrast, P2 said *"I feel quite interested with the activities that involved students to make the summaries at the educational platform such as google classroom"*, from the statement, P2 showed her interest in the online reading class management. She also said that sometimes she and other students were lazy to do the assignment, however, they submitted the assignment on time and properly.

Then, P3 and P4 mentioned that the strategies and the activities which implemented by the lecturer were extremely effective. P4 said *"In my opinion, my lecturer strategies were good enough, because the assignments that given by my lecturer were in a line with the learning objective of Reading 4 class"*. but, P3 and P4 also stated that sometimes they felt bored caused by the monotonous activity at every meeting.

2. Students' reading comprehension during online class

Each participant has their own perception towards their reading comprehension during online class. Based on the participants statements, they showed the positive results, they stated that online reading class gave the good impacts on their reading comprehension. In general, all of them also declared that their reading comprehension during online class were increased. It because, most of their activities during online reading class were read a lot of reading sources. They also mentioned several things that they got from online reading class in fourth semester.

For the first participant (P1), she confessed that her reading comprehension was increased during online reading class, she added a statement *"I believe, whatever we do and we learn, it will give us the good impacts that will influence our other skills"*. Although she felt she learnt individually, but she got new sentences, words or vocabularies through the reading activities.

Then, P2 said that her reading comprehension actually increased since she was in Reading 3 class, because in that semester she also did the same assignments for reading activities. However, she also stated that she met

several new infamous words and vocabularies through the reading activities which made her reading comprehension increased during online class. She completed her statements by saying *“So, InsyaaAllah my reading comprehension seems increased in this semester by getting a good score as before”*

P4 also gave the same statements, that during online learning, their reading comprehension were increased. While read the texts, they got a lot of information, knowledge, and unfamiliar words. P4 stated *“I felt my reading comprehension was increased, remember that my lecturer sent us a lot of reading sources like several articles that I must read, because the assignments were collecting the summaries or conclusions of the articles in every meeting”*, he also added a statement that his reading comprehension was highly improved than before he turned 4th semester, he explained that he got the difficulties while understanding the articles, and after accepted some suggestion and input from his lecturer, he read the articles properly.

In contrast, P3 said that his reading comprehension still the same. According to him, he did not have a good motivation in reading comprehension class, it is proven from his statement *“I rarely submit the assignments in every meeting”*. Therefore, he got a low score in that class.

From the participants’ statements, their perception towards their reading comprehension during online class mostly showed the good results.

- **Things that should be improved in online reading class**

After going through difficulties and developments, participants also delivered their opinion toward online reading class. From the participants’ statements, there were several things that have to be developed from themselves and also from the lecturer’s strategies.

Based on the P1 opinions, she told that if the lecturer gives some explanation and feedback, it will give students the better impacts. Then she also added *“For getting the better reading comprehension, actually we have to love the activities first, so that we can make it easier to do”*, it means she have to improve her comprehension by loving the reading activities first.

Similar with the P1 statements, P2 presumed that reading become one of complicated subject, and some students maybe couldn’t understand the materials in a fast time and need some explanation from lecturer clearly, therefore, she stated that maybe the lecturer can give more explanation via zoom meeting.

Then, P3 and P4 hoped that lecturer could give another strategy for the activities in online reading class. So, the students will not get bored while do the activities. P3 completed his statements *“Maybe we can be asked to write down our life story, so we can implement what we got from our reading comprehension. I think it will be good for our skills and insights”*.

Lecturer utilized WhatsApp feature, Google Classroom, and Zoom Meeting Application for the learning media during online reading class. Febrianto, Mas’udah

& Megasari (2020) stated that even if students and lecturers do not meet face to face, they can engage in interactive learning by maximizing the use of technology. Then, for the reading class activities, students read and summarized several reading sources based on the instruction that given by lecturer in the beginning of the class. According to Atmojo & Nugroho (2020), Teachers should give simple, obvious and correct instructions on what to do, how to do it and where students have to submit their work.

In the beginning of online class, students got some obstacles and distractions. Students got a culture shock, especially in using technology for conducting the learning process. This statement was similar with Febrianto et al., (2020) who stated that students are unfamiliar with how to use online learning media, and they believe that online learning is increasingly overwhelming them with numerous activities. However, technology advances mostly used in facilitating teaching learning process nowadays. It is in line with the statement from Cakrawati (2017), excepting the classroom, technological devices can be used by teachers and students to facilitate language learning. Most of students also distracted with the unstable signal while doing the learning process. Good pedagogy will be nonsense if there are problems in technology access (Burstion, 2014). One of the participants mentioned that he ever got a clashing time between two classes in a day. Another one also stated that he got the difficulty for managing his time in the beginning of online learning. According to Flórez et al., (2012), Web-based courses take time and help students learn time management skills and create a strong sense of responsibility. Finally, they familiarized themselves with the situation of online class.

This study explored the students' perceptions about the class management and activity. They said that the lecturer ways in managing the class and activities were exceedingly effective, one of the participants mentioned that the lecturer gave students some sources in form of links, video or article to help students in understanding articles. It showed that the lecturer gave very well facilitation for the students. It is in line with Susilowati (2020) who stated that lecturers must be a good facilitator for the student for learning English in all aspects of its skills. The students also gave perception towards their reading comprehension during online reading class. mostly, participants felt their reading comprehension were increased during online class, it showed that online reading class gave the positive impacts for their reading comprehension. The previous study conducted by Untari (2020) showed the majority of students confirmed that online learning benefits their reading.

After giving their perception, students also gave some suggestion for getting better reading comprehension. One of the participants mentioned that students have to love the activities first, so students can enjoy and understand the materials easier. Enjoyment or satisfaction is also important in increasing the motivation of students (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Then, some students also gave the input for teaching reading comprehension, some of them said that additional explanation and feedback by lecturer were extremely necessary for ensuring students understanding. Muñoz & González (2010) stated that teaching in web-based environments represents new roles

for teachers; they have to become technical knowledge experts, immediate feedback providers, interlocutors between teachers and students, they have to advise how to manage time and become constant motivators. Students also stated that they need other strategies or activities, so the students will not easy to get bored with the monotonous activity. The students' statement was similar with Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) who stated that teachers must also be creative and innovative in providing activities for students in an online learning environment.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Related to the findings and the discussions, the researcher gave some conclusions regarding to this study as follows. After doing interview that consist of eight questions, the result showed four main points of student perceptions. First, it was about the online reading class management and activity, technology and educational platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting application, and WhatsApp were very useful for supporting the online reading class. For student's activity in online reading class, they were asked to read and summarize several reading sources. Frequently, they were also asked to look for the unfamiliar words from the text they read. Secondly, the researcher found students' obstacles and distractions while doing the online reading class activity, they got some obstacles in the beginning of online class such as how to use the technology and how to manage their time. it because they were still unfamiliar with the online learning situation. Then, about students' perception towards the effectiveness of teacher's strategies, class activities and also their reading comprehension during online class, all of participants said that the lecturer strategy to manage and give the class activity was effective, most of them also felt the improvement on their reading comprehension because of the reading activity. The last, students also delivered their perception about the things that must be implemented in next online reading class for getting better reading comprehension. From themselves, they should love the class activities so they can enjoy and understand the materials easily. Then for the lecturer, students stated that they need additional explanation and feedback, so students can deeply understand towards the materials. They also stated that another innovative activity will be better to be implemented, because sometimes students easily felt bored.

In conclude, most of participants have high perception towards the teaching reading comprehension during online class. It showed from their statements that their reading comprehension was increased because of the reading activities.

From the study that had done by the researcher, it will be better for future researcher to add another research instrument and have the teacher's perception based on teaching reading comprehension in online class.

For the lecturer, it was suggested to be more sensitive about what the students need while doing the online reading class activities, such as additional information and feedback. The lecturer could use another strategy on giving the class activity and be more detail in asking what was happening in the process of doing the assignment in order to minimize cheating among students.

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