

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' READING HABIT TOWARDS ACADEMIC TEXT

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Abstract: Reading material in this era of technology can be accessed easily through internet which offer access to information especially for newer generations. The availability of digital reading material in the internet allows the reader to access all kinds of information from around the world, it means that every individual in this world with internet coverage have the same opportunity to gain knowledge. For this reason, the researcher interested in conducting study about the students reading habit in digital setting. This study was implemented using descriptive qualitative method though online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The data for this research were collected from 10 students of the English department from the 7th Semester at University of Islam Malang. The data are analyzed using qualitative analysis that consists of data reduction, grouping, coding, and interpretation to get the data as a conclusion. The results show that the students' reading frequency is mostly determined by academic demands and necessity. All the students also preferred digital text due to its practicality, easy to use and availability of the material on the internet, and the students tend to choose lightweight and shorter reading materials. All the students give positive responses due to the convenience and familiarity of using digital text as well as experience in reading digital academic text. However, there are also difficulties encountered by students like visual problems, eyestrain, tiredness and technical issues like taking too long to open, corrupted file, the gap between lecturer and students in reading method and protection in some downloaded digital text.

Key Words: *Digital reading, habit, English.*

INTRODUCTION

Human life nowadays has changed significantly for the last 200 years due to the advancement of technology and global scale communication. As stated by Demir (2021) in the last two centuries, many changes have been identified in societies mostly due to technological developments, such as Internet and digital tools and devices, affecting all aspects of lives including education.

Regarding EFL and language learning context there are four skill that become the focus of English language learning in Indonesia including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among those skills reading is significantly affected by the growth of technology with the development of global communication through the internet. Nowadays reading material can be accessed easily through internet with a quick access to information where newer generation tend to neglect printed material like books, magazines or newspapers (Male, 2020).

The availability of digital reading material in the internet allows the reader to access all kinds of information from around the world, it means that every individual in this world with internet coverage have the same opportunity to gain knowledge. Moreover, reading is considered as habitual activity that reflects how an individual receive information through written material. As pointed out by King (2006) that reading activity regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly carried out as behaviour that differs from each individual. As reading culture is affected by the growth of technology, reading habit is also affected by it. According to Wibowo (2015), internet have changed reading culture, everyone can do everything online only by clicking or surfing the internet for particular purposes such as for knowledge, information, entertainment and other needs. In EFL context, the change of reading habit also influence language development especially in vocabulary, structure and comprehending written material.

As explained by Bashir and Matto. (2019) reading habit allows students to better understanding with language that they read and enables them acquire both vocabulary and language patterns. Additionally, Applegate (2014) also stated that reading is the most complete, cheapest, easiest and fastest learning resources and source of information especially with the availability of digitalized reading material in the internet.

One of the digital innovations that rapidly change reading culture that have been practiced for centuries is the development of software and internet. According to Loan (2020) the digitalization of reading material has both benefits and drawbacks; digital reading provides easy access and practicality by having digital reading materials such as e books, articles and other reading material in one devices, at the same time, it also endangering traditional reading culture that have been practiced by human for ages. Reading in digital setting refers to the body or composition of texts and other multimedia resources within an electronic context. According to Nordquist (2017), Digital reading is the process of interpreting the meaning from a text that exist in a digital format in a virtual space through digital devices such as computers, tablets, mobile phones, and e-readers. Digital reading features multimodal digital texts in addition to written language in the form of embedded images, videos, and other media elements, (Buccellati, 2008). Additionally, Roswell and Burke (2009) stated that digital text enables the reader to link other texts, so the cycle of accessing and reading continues as readers share texts within a connected network. However, Male (2020) stated that despite of all its benefits, digitalization is not necessarily deciding factors that enhance reading habit. Therefore, further study on reading habit in digitalized reading material is necessary.

There are many studies aimed to analyze the influence of digital reading material towards reading habit in a society, for instace, the studies by (Tanjung, 2017; Parmis, Fernandez and Barro (2020) found that students' interest and habit in reading shifted from printed to digital version, this is shown in both studies that they prefer using gadgets to read instead using books. Moreover, Marasol and Kim (2019) shows that the students have more positive attitude with academic and recreational reading through digital material than reading in the print setting, but female students shows positive attitude towards both digital and printed setting. Additionally, a study conducted by Akidi, Agbase and Chukwueke (2021) showed that the majority of the students are active in using internet to study, prepare for exams, assignments, and chatting with friends, but neglecting the use of printed media such as books and printed articles.

From these previous studies, found the gap that most of the studies discusses about the influence of digital media towards reading but did not describe how the students read in digital setting, therefore, the researcher interested in conducting study about the students reading habit in digital setting.

METHOD

This study was carried out using descriptive qualitative design as the researcher aims to find out students' reading habit based on their perception and experience as well as uncover the difficulties and benefit of digital reading encountered by students. The data is obtained from the response of participants based on the questionnaire and online interview via WhatsApp voicenote. The researcher managed to get 33 students and selected 10 students with the highest score in reading habit questionnaire. This study is implemented using two research instruments including questionnaire and interview guidelines. The questionnaire used in this study is the questionnaire of digital reading habit adapted from Anugrah (2019) consisted of 12 question items with 5 questions about reading frequency, 4 questions about preference and 3 questions about utilization of digital feature. Meanwhile, the interview guidelines adapted from Lestari (2020) are used to uncover difficulties and benefits when reading digital reading material that allows the researcher to get detailed data about difficulties or benefits that are subjective for each individual consisted of 15 questions which the researcher addapted to focus more on reading academic text.

The data collected by distributing the questionnaire to 7th semester students using google form and from WhatsApp application to share the link to the participants. Meanwhile the interview question distributed via WhatsApp to the selected interviewees to study and prepare the answers. Then the interview session is done via WhatsApp voice note to get the data. The interview was conducted twice to make sure the interview data have sufficient information to answer the research question.

The interview session was conducted in 15 minutes and recorded using phone recorder. The data analysis for the questionnaire of Digital Reading Habit is carried out using excel by measuring the total score of Likert scale questionnaire. For interview data, the researcher used qualitative analysis by Creswell (2006) that involves data selection, organization, and interpretation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The finding from the research questionnaire shows that the score of 33 students ranging from 56 to 82 with the mean of 67.8 and the researcher selected 10 students with the highest score in digital reading habit questionnaire with the score ranging from 72 to 82 with the mean of 76.4. The 10 students with the highest score was chosen as the interviewee for digital academic reading habit interview. In analyzing the frequency of reading academic text in digital setting, the data from the questionnaire shows that most of the students read digital academic text around 1-2 hours with average of 2 hours for all the students. For the consistency, 21 students confirmed to read every day. Another study by, Khongtim (2021) indicated that the students have their own unique way to read that depends on reading purposes, and level of education. These results are in line with Thompson, et al (2018) that each student has different reading time, habit and size.

It is also found that students at higher level of education read more frequently compared to school level students. The result regarding the preference in reading digital academic text, the result of the questionnaire shows that 19 students read from internet articles, 9 students read digital text and 3 students read printed text. Other than that, the students preferred reading lighter academic text that are usually easier to understand, the students also preferred the journal articles more because those kinds of reading materials are shorter compared to books. Another study by Kumara and Kumar (2018) shows that for academic purposes, the students tend to read journal articles and web-based articles that contain briefer information compared to longer and detailed textbook.

Moreover, the media that are frequently used by students are PDF and internet articles. In terms of using features, the students mostly use scrolls, search engine and translation features. In this regard, Nordquist (2017) stated that digital reading is the process of extracting information through computer or mobile devices that have a wide array of features supporting the students to read.

For the findings from the interview, the researcher focused to answer the research question. The first thing analyzed is the way the students use digital academic text before or outside the class. The result shows that the students do read academic text at home independently, there are two things that determine the tendency of the students to read academic text, those are academic demands such as assignments and upcoming tests, and the necessity to gain information. These findings have similarities with the study conducted by Thompson, Graham and Marsham (2018) who studied reading practice by undergraduate students. It is revealed that undergraduate students spent most of their reading time for academic activities and 80% of it through online resources. In terms of academic demands, Skenderi and Ejupi (2019) stated that the majority of university develops good reading habit for non-academic text such as romantic and historic books, but not with academic books and the availability of online reading material in the internet are proven to enhance their reading habit.

In answering the second research question, the researcher studied students' perception in several themes in terms of the use of digital academic text including perception, advantage and disadvantage of digital text, as well as the benefits and difficulties in the implementation of digital academic text. The researcher found that most of the participants gives positive responses towards the use of academic text in digital setting. Pardede's (2017) also found that Indonesian university students majoring in EFL who were familiar with online learning platform shows more fondness in digital text and online material because it enabled them to access and study the digital learning materials anywhere and anytime.

The next considerable perception of the students towards reading digital text is its support, based on the responses, it is found that digital text is helpful to the reader by having several features and accessibility in the internet. This is in line with Lim (2020) who stated that the availability of open access documents in the internet that gives legal access to everyone who read gradually replaces the need to go to the library or acquire printed copy of text.

In regards to students' experience, there are several notable themes and the most notable one is the features, followed by easy use of digital format and convenience. Pardede (2019) also shows that nowadays students' familiarity with the tool and digital text is one of the major factors contributing to the students' satisfaction when using digital text to read. The result also shows that some students also compared the use of digital format with printed document. The data shows that in printed format, the student might encounter difficulties in finding specific information as they have to flip the pages, but digital format where the student can scroll and search solve that problem. According to Seatter (2019), it is more convenient and faster for students to access digital materials and look for specific information.

Furthermore, without having to print the document, a student finds that having only digital format is cheaper and time saving. This is in line with Kumara and Kumar (2018) that utilizing digital text are more affordable and conservative compared to printed text. The data also indicated that in reading digital academic text, the students feel convenient digital soft file and its features. The most prominent features used by students are scrolls, and search engine which are considered as navigation tools for digital files. Moreover, the soft file formats allow the students to share information without the need to lend or borrow and makes the students preferred digital format compared to printed text. The functioning features in many digital reading platforms helps the students to self-regulate their reading, choose texts that match their reading abilities and level up progressively (Lim, 2020).

Regarding to the students' interest in using digital format for the following class and learning in the future, all students agreed the same way that they are interested in learning using digital material. The reason is mostly due to the development of digital implementation in learning. However as digital text will be used more and more, thus, the students have to adapt. The result indicated that the students who have better plan in using digital format in the future such as sorting files and organizing storages, utilize more features, using audio support when tired of reading and select and read shorter articles. As explained by Pardede (2017) that the familiarity and knowledge of digital media determines how the students read and what application they use for reading.

For the advantages of using digital text, there are several advantages stated by the students such as easier and more convenient to read, the ability to own many articles, easy to share, faster to read, mostly available and easy to access on the internet. Similarly, Nordquist (2017) also found particular advantages of digital tools for reading as digitalization offers multimodal reading practices in many platforms such as computer and mobile phones which have its own advantages and features developed for better reading experience. Related to this, Thompson (2018) also explains that the internet provides plentiful reading resources that are accessible to everyone anywhere anytime. Other than that, digital texts are always plentiful in the internet, allowing the students to own good articles in cheaper way. Moreover, the digital format is also easier and faster to read with better accuracy by utilizing the search engine and scroll features. Kumara and Kumar (2018) stated that digital text allows the students to read faster and effectively by utilizing full potential of digital reading platforms. In addition, digital texts are easier to copy, this copy and paste features removes the necessity for having to retype the text that the students willing to use.

Meanwhile the disadvantages confirmed by the students are the size of text being too small that makes the students more tired and sleepy, technical issues such as difficulties in using some of the features, lack of digital storage, and takes too long to open.

Similarly, McLaughlin and Kamei-Hannan (2018) also found some issues of digital text that causes eyestrain such as the size of the text, and lack of management for visual exposure to the screen, in this case, learning how to adjust the view and managing support to suit visual needs is highly important. Furthermore, in terms of technical difficulties, Laeli (2020) explains that in all implementation of technology including digital text, there are always some potential for technical issues. Therefore, the users' technical knowledge is essential to utilize digital text effectively. As for the difficulties, the study indicated difficulties related to corrupt data files, dealing with the type of files that can be copied, reading too much digital text makes eyes dry and little interest in academic text. This result is in line with Laeli (2020) that there are a chance of error occurs when transferring files resulting in corrupted documents that can't be opened.

In terms of the suggestion, there are many suggestions from the **students/** For the lecturer, it is suggested to not ask the students to print the file if the students already have digital copy of it especially in online learning. Moreover, it is also suggested to give more specific direction if asking the students to find articles because the students often asked to find another article if the articles, they have searched did not meet the lecturer's expectation. This suggestion is related to the study by Rowsell and Burke (2009) where in online learning the students mostly use digital material while teachers teach using traditional reading, and it should come into consideration that bridging this gap between teachers and students' reading method is important. For the other students it is suggested to learn more features in digital reading to make reading easier and more effective and make sure that the device is compatible as the applications to read digital text are updated on a regular basis. Furthermore, for the lecturer or the students sharing files, it is suggested to avoid sharing files that can't be copied or have too much protections. These suggestions is related with Laeli (2020) who stated that it is important for the students to always adapt and stays competitive in learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The result concluded that the students' reading frequency is mostly determined by academic demands and necessity. There are two notable reading patterns of students such as read less but consistent and read more but not in regular basis. All the students also preferred digital text due to its practicality, easy to use and availability of the material on the internet, and the students tend to choose lightweight and shorter material like journal articles. The result also shows that all the students give positive responses and experience in reading digital academic text. The study also indicated some advantages and benefits of digital text such as the convenience, availability and easy to access, the use of features in digital text, and faster to read and the ability to copy and paste and own many articles in one device. There are also difficulties encountered by students like visual problems, eyestrain, tiredness and technical issues like taking too long to open, corrupted file, and protection in some downloaded digital text. This study suggests the next researcher to further study about digital texts by focusing on the disadvantages and difficulties of reading using texts, and also how to minimize disadvantages and difficulties and optimize the benefits of digital texts, so that digital texts can be used effectively especially for English teaching and learning.

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