

THE ENGLISH STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE READING COMPREHENSION CLASS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore students' perceptions of online reading comprehension class in eighth-grade students at SMP Islam Soerjo Alam. The research design utilized in this study is descriptive qualitative. The participants in this research are 35 students from classes VIII A and VIII B. A questionnaire consisting of 30 statements was used as the data collection instrument. Google Form was employed to gather the data, and the results were used for data analysis. The findings of this study indicate that students hold favorable views towards online reading comprehension learning due to the utilization of advanced technology, which generates satisfaction and novel experiences in online reading. Moreover, online reading comprehension offers benefits, such as the opportunity to enhance skills through the utilization of translation tools. By leveraging the various features of these tools, students can improve their reading comprehension. However, the study also identifies some drawbacks of online reading comprehension learning that students perceive, such as interference from digital platform tools and unstable internet connectivity.

Key words: Perception, Online Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four necessary elements of English learning ability for students to gain to learn something. Students can easily get information by reading. Reading is indispensable when shopping, eating out, and engaging in educational activities such as reading books and newspapers. Students read more than just writing when they read. Reading comprehension is required for students to be capable to extract information from the text they read. Reading comprehension is the ability of a person to understand, interpret, and interpret the content of the text being read. According to McGeown et al., (2015), learners will continue to achieve significant progress in other language skills after improving their reading skills. If students improve their reading comprehension, they will be capable of comprehending more effortlessly.

COVID-19 has disrupted the traditional education system, leading to the postponement of all activities involving large gatherings. The World Health Organization (WHO) has advised against crowded gatherings, prompting people to stay at home. Consequently, teaching and learning activities have shifted from classrooms to homes. Online learning has become the primary method of delivering education during the pandemic, as stated in Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 issued by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim. This move aims to provide relevant learning experiences despite the challenging circumstances.

Online learning has existed since the invention of technology and the internet, which were created by humans alongside the passage of time. According to (Singh & Thurman, 2019), the term "online learning" was first used in 1995, during the development of the Learning Management System (LMS). As a result, all teaching and learning activities, including reading comprehension, are conducted online. In the digital era, good reading skills become a key factor in effectively and efficiently accessing information (Ashari & Hamiddin, 2020). Reading comprehension is crucial to ensure that the information read reaches the reader. A reader with online reading comprehension understands text that is available in digital form, which sometimes requires access to an internet network. One of the online platforms that is often used in spreading readings during online learning is Google Classroom.

Google Classroom is an online learning platform developed by Google that allows teachers to create, manage, and distribute educational materials to their students. It is designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and the organization of coursework in a virtual classroom setting. According to Nurbaidah (2021), Google Classroom features are designed to be as simple as possible for teachers and students of varying ages to use. Chehayeb (2015 in Basilaia 2020) stated that Google Classroom was created to save teachers' time by providing several assessment features, such as Google Sheets, which can be used to export grades and update grade scales, keyboard navigation, which can be used to input grades, sort assessment pages by name, and so on. Google Classroom has been widely adopted in educational institutions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when remote and online learning became more prevalent. It offers a convenient and efficient solution for both teachers and students to continue the learning process in a virtual environment.

Teachers need students' perceptions of online reading comprehension to help them and their students develop online learning, especially in reading classes. Chen & Hoshower (2003) revealed that the effectiveness of teaching and learning can be evaluated by knowing students' perceptions first. Students' perceptions of online reading comprehension refer to their views, attitudes, and evaluations of the process of digital or online reading learning. This includes how students perceive the use of technology in reading education, how comfortable and skilled they feel in reading texts online, and their opinions on the effectiveness and benefits of reading instruction in a digital environment.

Students' perceptions of online reading comprehension can vary, depending on various factors. Everyone typically has a unique perspective on the same object, as mentioned by Walgito (2001:103), who lists internal and external factors as potential influences on these variations. Some students may feel enthusiastic and positive about online reading learning due to their interest in interactive features and easy access to various sources of information through digital devices. However, there are also students who may face challenges or feel uncomfortable with online reading instruction. They may encounter difficulties in handling technical disruptions or struggle to concentrate and focus while reading digital texts. When considered from a personal perspective following perception, Irwanto in Handayani (2020) claims that the outcomes of perception can be separated into two categories, namely positive and negative perceptions.

The previous studies conducted by Untari in 2020 with second-semester English Education students at the University of Islam Malang showed that online reading significantly influenced

students' vocabulary knowledge, and they made great efforts to assess the information they read during the second semester. Another previous study conducted by Purnomo in 2021 with tenth-grade students from SMAN 1 Jambi demonstrated that students focused specifically on evaluating the information they read while taking online courses, and the benefits of online reading had a significant impact on their vocabulary knowledge.

From these two previous studies, it was identified that the subjects' English language knowledge level was higher than that of the researcher's subjects. Therefore, the researcher was interested in knowing the perceptions of students from SMP Islam Soerjo Alam, whose English language knowledge level was lower than that of the subjects in the two previous studies, towards online reading comprehension classes.

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to determine students' perceptions of online reading comprehension class. The researcher used qualitative method. According to Cresswell (2014), qualitative research serves as a method to investigate and gain insight into the significance individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative. According to Moleong (2010), descriptive qualitative research is an investigation that aims to comprehend the entirety of a research subject's phenomenon, encompassing their behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and more. It involves presenting the research findings through descriptive language, utilizing words and sentences to articulate the outcomes.

This study employed a questionnaire as a research tool to gather information on students' perceptions of online reading comprehension. The questionnaire is a closed type, and is scored using a Likert scale. The questionnaire contains 30 statements, each of which has five possible answers: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic when researchers collected data, researchers distributed questionnaires using Google Forms to make it easier for students to check data when making reports.

The questionnaire's results reveal how the students think about online reading comprehension. To begin the research, the researcher will instruct the sample on how to complete the questionnaire. Through WhatsApp chat, samples can enquire about questionnaires they don't understand. Following the sample's completion of the questionnaire, researchers used Google Form to evaluate the data. The percentage in the questionnaire's results was utilized by the researcher to explain how the sample members had answered the questionnaire. After the participants completed the questionnaire, the researcher analysed the data. Researchers analysed data from Google Form responses, a container that displays responses to each item in the questionnaire. The response results in the form of percentages are used by researchers to describe the questionnaire responses of the participants.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to find out students' perceptions of online reading comprehension classes. The study used descriptive analysis to describe the data collected from the

research instruments. The results of the study showed that the majority of students provided similar positive answers to all the questions.

Table 1. The questionnaire and the result of the English students' perceptions of online reading comprehension class

No.	Statement	Percentage				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I am pleased with the technology from online reading that I can use to understand the text I read.	22.9%	60%	14.3%	2.9%	0%
2.	I feel tired when reading on the device screen, it bothers me when I understand the text.	11.4%	45.7%	28.6%	14.3%	2.9%
3.	I attach importance to the size of the font on the online text when I read it	28.6%	54.3%	20%	2.9%	0%
4.	The background color of online text affects the way I read	22.9%	22.9%	45.7%	8.6%	0%
5.	I use simple words to replace difficult ones in online reading comprehension	14.3%	65.7%	22.9%	5.7%	0%
6.	I always pass sentences that are difficult to understand when I read texts online	5.7%	25.7%	42.9%	25.7%	0%
7.	I can interpret the parts I don't understand from the online text	5.7%	40%	45.7%	8.6%	0%
8.	I can read the entire online reading to the end	17.1%	51.4%	34.3%	2.9%	0%
9.	I understand any genre text that available online	5.7%	20%	68.6%	11.4%	0%
10.	I can grasp the main idea of the reading in the online text that has pictures	22.9%	48.6%	28.6%	0%	0%
11.	I get high marks in reading comprehension from reading online	8.6%	34.3%	54.3%	0%	2.9%
12.	I am able to read texts online without my teacher's guidance	17.1%	31.4%	40%	25.7%	0%
13.	I can determine the main ideas and supporting ideas from the online texts that I read	20%	28.6%	57.1%	2.9%	0%
14.	I can explain and summarize texts online after reading them	0%	45.7%	57.1%	2.9%	0%
15.	I can make conclusion during online reading	14.3%	54.3%	34.3%	8.6%	0%
16.	I can finish reading online even if the reading is boring	5.7%	37.1%	40%	20%	2.9%
17.	I can ask question after reading online	14.3%	57.1%	25.7%	2.9%	0%
18.	I can make precise guesses about online texts that I have read	8.6%	34.3%	57.1%	5.7%	0%
19.	The online reading activities are useful to understand text in English	11.4%	54.3%	45.7%	8.6%	0%
20.	The online reading activities helped me to get more interested in reading the text	14.3%	34.3%	57.1%	2.9%	2.9%
21.	I can easily understand the text from online reading activity	11.4%	37.1%	54.3%	2.9%	0%
22.	I feel comfortable with the design/facilities contained in the online text when I understand it	20%	42.9%	37.1%	8.6%	0%

23.	Reading online is more affordable because it saves printed paper	20%	54.3%	25.7%	2.9%	2.9%
24.	Reading online is more comfortable to read because it is clear without poor print quality	17.1%	51.4%	40%	2.9%	0%
25.	Reading online can improve my online translation	11.4%	65.7%	22.9%	0%	2.9%
26.	Reading online is very helpful to understand information	5.7%	48.6%	37.1%	11.4%	2.9%
27.	Reading online is important to improve my reading skills	17.1%	45.7%	40%	5.7%	2.9%
28.	I can't leave marks and notations on online texts I have read	8.6%	37.1%	57.1%	5.7%	0%
29.	I feel tired when reading online with many sentences on a bright screen	17.1%	48.6%	34.3%	2.9%	0%
30.	I feel distracted by tools and signals when I read online sometimes	25.7%	45.7%	20%	5.7%	5.7%

The results show that students feel online reading comprehension benefits them. The use of advanced technology, for one, can improve students' online reading comprehension. The advanced technology outside the classroom found in online learning makes students feel excited. The new and challenging reading experience can improve their reading comprehension indirectly. Students' contribution to online learning with the use of digital tools such as social media and internet sites makes them familiar with independent online learning (Lee & Draji, 2019). Thus, like the results in this study, students have a positive perception of online reading comprehension. This finding is in line with Zidat et al., (2011) stated that web-based applications help students in improving reading comprehension.

Moreover, a benefit of online reading comprehension that impacts students is the use of technology in translation. Students can improve their translation skills by using translation tools that are now available through apps and the web. Online translators such as Google Translate and U-Dictionary provide definitions, synonyms, and antonyms of the word being translated. With the various facilities contained in online translation tools, students can improve their reading comprehension because they indirectly read new information from a translated word. This is related to Hazaea et al., (2016) who stated that the use of online translation has a significant impact on students' reading ability through mobile phones.

Although there are many benefits that students get by reading online, there are also difficulties in it that students feel. The most difficulty is that students are distracted by the tools on the digital platform and the internet connection. students are required to be able to use the digital platform before understanding online reading (Horton, 2008; as stated by Mudra, 2020). In addition, poor internet connection can also hinder students' online reading comprehension. poor signal means poor internet access. Usually, poor signal occurs in schools in rural areas, which causes them to struggle to improve online reading comprehension due to the poor connection they receive. This finding is in line with Mudra (2020) who stated that online digital material content is difficult for students to access and expensive, and weak signal is a barrier to online learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, students hold favorable views towards online reading comprehension due to advanced technology, which generates satisfaction and novel experiences. Online reading offers benefits, such as enhancing skills through translation tools. However, challenges arise from tool interference and unreliable internet connectivity. Proficiency in navigating the digital platform is crucial for effective comprehension, while remote areas may face difficulties with internet access.

Based on the conclusion, the researcher it is suggested that for the next research. For future researchers, this research can be carried out with some preparation using other better instrument, using other analytical techniques such as observation, interviewing students to find out their perceptions, or using mixed methods to obtain different research results. The next is for teachers, English teachers may be able to use online reading comprehension to assess their students' reading progress while keeping up with the times. To be able to use online reading, teachers should be aware of the availability and affordability of the facilities available to all students for online reading preparation.

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