



EFL Learners Perception Toward Digital Texts Reading

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Abstrak

Membaca teks digital adalah topik minat yang meningkat pesat di perpustakaan digital, terutama dalam hal meningkatkan pengalaman membaca. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pandangan mahasiswa terhadap sikap membaca mereka ketika menggunakan teks digital. Dua belas mahasiswa program studi bahasa Inggris dari Universitas di Karawang terdaftar sebagai subjek penelitian. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Kuesioner Skala Likert digunakan sebagai instrumen yang terdiri dari sepuluh pernyataan mengenai pandangan dan pengalaman dalam membaca teks digital. Temuan diklasifikasikan ke dalam empat dimensi: minat, efektivitas, kesulitan, dan preferensi. Berdasarkan temuan, ditemukan bahwa peserta memiliki sikap positif. Membaca dalam Teks Digital sangat membantu siswa karena mendorong mereka untuk membaca serta teks digital sudah tersedia, nyaman, dan dapat diakses. Namun, agar lebih aman untuk digeneralisasi, disarankan agar penelitian selanjutnya mencakup mahasiswa dari program studi lain.

Kata Kunci: *Teks Digital, Pengalaman Membaca, Persepsi Siswa.*

Abstract

Digital texts reading is a rapidly increasing topic of interest in digital libraries, particularly when it comes to improving the reading experience. This study aimed to revealed college students' view of their reading attitudes when they use digital texts. Twelve students of English study program from University in Karawang enrolled as research subjects. The research method used a qualitative descriptive study. A Likert Scale questionnaire was used as an instrument which consist of ten statements regarding views and experiences in digital texts reading. The findings were classified into four dimensions: interests, effectiveness, difficulties, and preferences. Based on the findings, it was discovered that participants have positive attitudes. Reading in Digital Texts were a huge help to students because it encouraged them to read as well as digital text is readily available, convenient, and accessible. However, to make it safer for generalization, it is advised that future research should encompass students from other study programs.

Keywords: *Digital Text, Reading Experience, Students' Perception.*

INTRODUCTION

People now live in a society where internet connectivity is always available, whether through computers or mobile devices, as the result of rapid advancement and expansion of computer technology. This digital era has brought many advantages, such as quick and broad access to information capture and limitless network capabilities. Particularly in education, where technological advancements also have an impact. Paper and books were the primary means of reading in the past.

However, as technology advances, there is an increasing trend toward replacing printed books with electronic books. It is critical to understand how screen reading differs from paper reading and the way brain reacts to text displayed on a screen given the increased prevalence of text mediated by technology. Digital reading devices used in academic setting around the world has encouraged them to transition to paperless classrooms (Giebelhausen, 2016). The majority of educational institutions are increasingly using digital texts as a teaching and learning medium to support their blended, online, and physical learning strategies (Wu & Chen, 2017). The reader could interact with digital texts by clicking a button to resize text, highlight key passages, and perform an outside-the-text search in this paperless classroom.

In language learning, there are two types of language skills that learners must examine in order to demonstrate their proficiency in mastering the language: input and output skills. In order to perform the output, input skills are required. Reading is one of the input skills, and because it affects a variety of other skills, it plays a crucial role in students' language learning development. Reading is an important skill that all EFL (English for Foreign Language) students must master. Printed texts have long been a significant component of EFL classrooms in order to facilitate this (Pardede, 2019). However, the widespread use of digital texts has also crept into many educational endeavors, such as EFL teaching. Today, blended learning and online learning are made possible by the use of digital texts. Even in conventional face-to-face classes, digital text was utilized. Furthermore, English is the predominant language in digital resources, which can benefit EFL education. Because of the important role reading plays, inculcating this skill has long been a priority in EFL teaching and learning. Without texts, it is impossible to consider that learning will occur. Texts are a key component of traditional education as they serve as important sources of knowledge, instruction, and guidance. Texts are an important source of language input when learning a foreign language. They offer resources for receptive skill development as well as exercises that encourage productive skill development, like role-playing and discussion.

Students these days seem to prefer to read texts on their computer; thus, it is critical to comprehend their perceptions and perspectives in reading digital texts. There have been lot of discussion which focused on digital text reading behavior and attitudes in previous research. Several researchers have revealed some of the findings from their studies on the use of digital text in ELT for EFL learners. Bikowski & Casal (2018) discovered that all participants were extremely satisfied with digital textbooks and strongly encouraged students to learn English. Huang as cited in (Chou et al., 2019) investigated the iPad users about their reading habits on the iPad, and it was found that they were favorable to digital reading. The Taiwan Digital Reading Survey was carried out in 2010 by Commonwealth Publishing Group as cited in (Chou et al., 2019). The sample consists of Taiwanese adults over the age of 18. It was found that when both e-books and paper books were available, nearly 25% of respondents preferred to read e-books. Pilar et. al., (2007) claims that digital texts can motivate students in learning, which can be concluded that digital texts are useful in an educational environment. It claim that digital texts can inspire students to learn is that they are valuable in a classroom setting.

Due to the fact that there is a dearth of research on how Indonesian students perceive digital texts, despite the fact that many studies have found that they have a positive effect and are perceived as interesting and helpful by students, this study sought to determine whether this generalization holds true for this study's participants, Indonesian EFL college students. With the following research question: 'how do students view digital texts in their reading process?', this present study seeks to ascertain Indonesian students perspective of digital text in EFL context.

METHOD

This study was conducted with qualitative descriptive research aiming to find out students' perception towards reading in digital texts. Descriptive research tries to clarify phenomena and their characteristics, focusing on what occurred instead of how or why it occurred (Nassaji, 2015).

The subject of this study encompassed the English Education Department from Singaperbangsa Karawang University which was selected randomly among twelve students in sixth semester only. The instrument used a Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in the form of a Google Form.

The questionnaire constructed was adapted from (Manalu, 2019) which composed of 10 statements cover up four dimensions: interest in digital texts, effectiveness of digital texts, difficulties, and students' preference between digital or printed texts. Participants will respond to this statement by choosing one of four options: 4 (strongly disagree), 3 (disagree), 2 (agree), 1 (strongly agree). The result of questionnaire will be described descriptively.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This present study is to examine students' view of digital texts reading. The findings are presented based on each dimension that elaborates some statements.

Interest in digital text

Table 1. Result of Statements toward "Students' Interest in Digital Text" dimension

Items/Number of responses	Reading digital text motivates me	Feel comfortable when studying or reading using digital texts	I love searching the internet for relevant additional texts to study	Believe that learning with digital text is effective
Strongly Disagree	0	1	0	1
Disagree	2	3	0	2
Agree	10	7	5	9
Strongly Agree	0	1	7	0

Based on table 1, participants agree that digital text motivates them in reading activities, as evidenced by the number of people who choose to agree with this. In addition, they also feel comfortable when studying or reading with digital text, although not all the participants agree on this, but the number who choose to agree is much more than those who disagree. Furthermore, participants also strongly agree with the availability of learning resources/references on the internet because it makes it very easy for them to find data, as evidenced by the absence of participants who chose to disagree. Moreover, they also assumed that learning with digital text is efficacious, this is evidenced by the participants who chose to agree is much more than those who chose to disagree. This all confirms that the participants really have a great interest in digital text reading.

The effectiveness of digital text

Table 2. Result of Statements toward “The Effectiveness of Digital Text” dimension

Items/Number er of responses	I like to keep necessary digital texts in my device so that I can read them whenever and wherever I want	Digital reading makes it simple for me to improve my comprehension
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	1
Agree	9	10
Strongly Agree	3	1

Moving on to the second dimension, according to table 2, participants strongly agree about the effectiveness of digital text, namely by making it easier for them to access digital text anywhere and anytime, as evidenced by all participants who choose to agree with this. Another thing that is considered effective for readers is how digital text is also considered to improve their comprehension of the reading material, as evidenced by the participants who choose to agree with this. However, there was one participant who felt it was not by choosing disagree.

Difficulties of digital texts reading

Table 3. Result of Statements toward “Difficulties of Digital Text” dimension

Items/Number of responses	When I read digital media, I have difficulty obtaining information	While reading digital text, the light from the screen quickly irritates my eyes
Strongly Disagree	1	3
Disagree	10	1
Agree	1	5
Strongly Agree	0	3

Next to the third dimension, as seen in table 3, regarding the difficulties experienced by readers. Based on the results of the questionnaire, participants did not find it difficult when reading through digital text, as evidenced by the number of participants who chose not to agree with this, but there was one participant who chose to agree with this. On the other hand, the problem faced by students is that the light from the screen will hurt their eyes over time, as evidenced by the number of participants who chose to agree more than those who chose to disagree. This is likely to be true for those who tend to consume digital text at night, or in low light, because there were four participants who chose to disagree in the sense that they did not experience it.

Students' preferences

Table 4. Result of Statements toward "Students' Preferences" dimension

Items/Number of responses	I always print digital texts before reading them	I prefer to read digital texts over printed ones
Strongly Disagree	4	0
Disagree	6	0
Agree	2	7
Strongly Agree	0	5

The last dimension, talking about preferences, as viewed in table 4, participants who always have a printed copy of the digital texts they will read only consist of two, the rest of them disagree on this. Furthermore, participants read digital texts more often than printed texts, as evidenced by the absence of participants who chose to disagree with this. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this study, participants preferred digital text rather than printed text.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the finding of this study, the results are divided into four dimensions; students' interest in digital text, the effectiveness of digital text, difficulties in digital text, and students' preferences toward digital text. The first dimension concerns the interest that students have in digital text. Participants have a positive perception of digital texts because of the ease with which they can find references on the internet and the flexibility with which they can access them, as well as their familiarity with online platforms; digital texts motivate them to read and make them feel comfortable while doing so; and they believe that learning with digital texts is effective. This is consistent with studies by Satin et. al (2018) that examine students' attitudes and motivations toward digital text in reading classrooms. According to the findings, 83,3% of students believe that reading digital texts can spark their interest in learning. It can encourage people to read English stories. Additionally, they claimed that using digital texts for learning provided a unique method of learning.

Second dimension measures the effectiveness of digital text. It is flexible that it can be carried anywhere. Digital texts have numerous advantages over traditional printed textbooks. They are more environmentally friendly; attractive to the generation that has grown up with electronic devices; could be reworked and submitted more quickly; and more portable than printed text. Also, they are regularly cheaper, need less space for storage, and don't result in inventory obsolescence. Gunter (2005) discovered in a huge online study conducted in the United Kingdom that the foremost perceived benefits of digital text are they are frequently less expensive than print versions and are easier to obtain than books in a bookstore. The main advantage of digital text over printed books is that it is more accessible. Wherever and whenever needed, they are accessible around-the-clock.

Third dimension explores difficulties in digital text. The only problem experienced by the students turned out to be only about the availability of free reading materials and the screen light that hurts the eyes. The majority of students in a study at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) preferred print, with 63% saying they could not tolerate reading documents for more than an hour on a computer screen (Leyva, 2003). Smaller screens, however, can limit information transmission, and using a mobile device to read in the dark place before going to sleep may result in health issues and sleep issues that interfere with users' daily lives (Chen and Lin 2016). But it can be prevented by adjusting the font size and reading in an exceedingly bright place whether or not it's to be at high brightness. This is in line with research by (Larson, 2012) which revealed that changing the

colour of the page from pale white to sepia tones and adjusting the sunshine level can increase the reading period for extended and setting fonts larger helps to remain focused, especially when late night reading. Participants in study by (Larson, 2010) also said the identical thing that reading are going to be faster when the text is large.

Fourth dimension pertains to the preferences of students. Participants in this study preferred digital text over printed text. They never printed out the digital text before reading it and frequently preferred reading the digital version to the printed version. In contrast to previous studies, Liu (2006) discovered that college-educated users of university libraries prefer to access electronic resources online but prefer to print and read electronic documents. In addition, a recent survey of university students in China revealed an intriguing gender disparity in the preferences for paper versus electronic, with 73% of female students favoring printing and only 51% of male students favoring printing (Liu & Huang, 2008).

The use of digital texts can help with a variety of learning activities. Apart from printed texts, digital texts have a unique viewpoint, color, feature, font, and so on, which draws readers in. With the help of these features, digital texts encourage students to pursue their education on their own initiative rather than relying solely on the lectures of their professors. Due to its extensive exposure to engaging tasks, digital reading aids in reading comprehension (Hashimoto & Okazaki, 2012). For instance, it demonstrated the effectiveness of using digital reading to teaching EFL/ESL students in reading. In recent research, some reading comprehension models with a central role for digital reading are proposed. Although both digital and print reading methods have some similarities in the reading process, digital product transform the complex relation among readers, texts, and factors that influence the reading process and, thus, comprehension. As a result, digital reading can be beneficial in the teaching or learning of literacy, language, and literature. It has also been demonstrated that digital reading has a significant impact on language and literature EFL/ESL learners. It has been demonstrated that digital reading aids language and literature learning by encouraging more active pleasure reading.

SIMPULAN

As stated by the findings and discussions in this study, it is possible to conclude that this study's participants had a positive perception in digital text reading. Beginning with their interest, which can motivate them to learn and assist them in searching the internet for relevant sources, it is simple to improve their comprehension and flexible because it can be accessed anywhere and at any time. Digital text can provide much needed support for students and teachers in increasing demands as well as a large and powerful focus on individual student support systems. The use of digital texts in the classroom is beneficial for students because it will motivate them to read and give them pleasure, even though there are still many different points of view. Reading digitally can improve the reading experience overall and encourage more ability to think critically.

Since the participants in this study came from a single educational institution, the findings cannot be generalized to other populations from outside study program. Further researchers are recommended to implicate more participants from another educational institutions or from teachers' perception so that it is safer to make generalization.

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