

Implementation of Wattpad in Understanding Popular Literature as an Effort for Improving Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the implementation of using Wattpad in understanding popular literature as an effort to train reading comprehension for English Education students at UNU Purwokerto. Researchers applied Wattpad as an alternative medium for learning to read popular literature. The research method used descriptive qualitative. Data collection used purposive sampling by taking a sample of 21 students. Data collection techniques used tests, interviews, observation and documentation. Through this research, several findings were found. First, by using Wattpad, it increases reading comprehension of popular literary works. It is seen from 76% of students having a "good and very good" category in the score range of 76-93. This improvement is most visible in understanding the intrinsic elements of theme, characterizations, plot, setting, point of view and moral values. Second, the perception of students stated that Wattpad is effective learning media in reading because it is a free application that is easily accessible anytime and anywhere. Third, the use of Wattpad increases an interest in reading because there is variety of interesting stories that stimulates curiosity, need, and pleasure to continue reading activities.

Keywords: *learning media, Wattpad, reading comprehension, popular literature*

Introduction

Wattpad is an online reading application and can be accessed freely by anyone, anytime and anywhere. It is created by Allan Lau and Ivan Yuen and has been used many people around the world. The main target market is the people who has age range of 15-35. There are many story genres provided on Wattpad such as romance, thriller, mystery, fanfiction, fantasy. According to Syaharani (2017) in Global Communications Journal¹, Wattpad supports more than 50 languages in the world but 77% of the content is in English. Wattpad has great potential to develop interest in reading. Based on the research of Most Littered Nation in The World, Indonesia has a very low interest in reading by being ranked 60th out of 61 countries. It has to be concern in the education matter. Wattpad can be used as a solution to this literacy problem. The low interest of reading is also experienced by the students of English Education UNU Purwokerto. The students overcame difficulty in reading comprehension, mainly in popular literature reading. Reading comprehension is one type of reading that has a higher level than other types of reading. Someone is required to understand the contents of the information read thoroughly. Reading popular literature is part of reading comprehension skills that must be possessed by the students of English

Language Teaching Department at UNU Purwokerto. According to Adi (2011) popular literature is the literature product that accepted by the wide society. The term "accepted" here means that it is consumed by many people which refer to the number of the sale. It can be fiction, short stories, prose, novels, poetry and drama. When someone reads popular literature, he is required to have the skills to understand the content in the story.

In Reading and Introduction to Literature class at English Language Teaching Department of UNU Purwokerto, the variety of learning media is still very limited. Mostly they use text or book. It caused the lack of interest in reading. Students often felt bored to participate in the reading class activity. Therefore, the innovation of learning media and strategies are needed. One of them is using Wattpad as alternative media for reading. Wattpad is expected to be a new media to improve students' interest and reading comprehension especially in comprehending popular literature.

This research implemented Wattpad as a media to understand the contents of popular literature as an effort to improve reading comprehension. It aimed to analyze the reading comprehension of English Language Teaching's students through the practice of reading popular literature on Wattpad. In addition, it aimed to find out the students' perceptions of Wattpad as a media to improve the reading comprehension of popular literature. This research is needed as an innovation of blended learning strategies that require digital learning media that are more varied and closer to the students. This research can be a solution to overcome monotonous and conventional classroom activities.

Method

In this study, data collection was conducted by test and non-test. The test was carried out by giving essay test about intrinsic elements of the given story to 21 students. The essay test is asked students to explain, elaborate, compare and give reasons for the fiction story (Amirono and Daryanto, 2016). Based on the result of essay test, the researcher measured the reading comprehension of students by using Burhan Nurgiantoro's theory (Burhan, 2011).

The non-test technique used observation, interview and documentation. Observation was used to observe reading activities, the atmosphere in the classroom and students' comprehension of reading activity. Documentation was used to record the photos of learning process, data of essay test results and interview transcripts. Interview was used to find out how the students' perception on the implementation of Wattpad to improve reading skill of popular literature.

The data analysis technique was carried out by processing the results of essay tests and interview transcripts through descriptive qualitative method. The researcher analyzed the data using data analysis steps by Mckernan (Zheng and Chen, 2014). The steps were: collecting data, coding the data, comparing the data, constructing interpretations, and reporting the results.

Results

Prior to data collection, researchers conducted FGD with students to provide information about the planned research activities to be carried out. The researcher gave an explanation about the use of Wattpad in reading popular literature such as fiction story. The researcher

explained the technique of the activities to be carried out. In addition, there was discussion to find out intrinsic elements that usually exist in fiction story. Students gave opinion about the types of literary works they are interested in. Then the collecting data from test and interview were conducted. There is the result of data that displayed in analysis below.

Result of Test

The essay test that was used is an adaptation of Burhan Nurgiantoro and consisted 6 questions about intrinsic elements. This essay test is a form of a description test that asks students to explain, describe, compare and give reasons for what is given (Amirono and Daryanto, 2016). The researcher gave a fiction story on Wattpad entitled "Their Little Princess" by Isabella which has 8 chapters and has theme about family and abused. Students were given a Wattpad link and directly accessed it by their mobile phone. Test data collection was carried out to 21 students as sample from Class A and B. The following are the questions of the test instrument.

Tabel 1. *Instrument of Essay Test*

No.	Question Items
1	What is the theme of the story? Describe the reason why you think the theme is appropriate.
2	Explain each character in the story! Give a complete description of the character and also the evidence.
3	Explain the plot of the story and give the reason.
4.	Mention and explain the setting of the story!
5.	What is the point of view used in the story? Explain the reason in detail.
6.	What are the moral values that can be taken from the story?

From the answers to the essay test, the research obtained the total score by calculating from each item including themes, characters, plots, settings, points of view and moral values. This data is presented in the following table.

Tabel 2. Students Score of Essay Test

No.	Name	Score	Category	No.	Name	Score	Category
1.	Student 1	83,3	Good	12.	Student 12	70	Quite Good
2.	Student 2	76,6	Good	13.	Student 13	86,7	Very Good
3.	Student 3	73,3	Quite Good	14.	Student 14	83,3	Good
4.	Student 4	93,3	Very Good	15.	Student15	83,3	Good
5.	Student 5	70	Quite Good	16.	Student16	86,7	Very Good
6.	Student 6	83,3	Good	17.	Student 17	83,3	Good
7.	Student 7	70	Quite Good	18.	Student 18	70	Quite Good
8.	Student 8	83,3	Good	19.	Student 19	83,3	Good
9.	Student 9	83,3	Good	20.	Student 20	83,3	Good
10.	Student 10	93,3	Very Good	21.	Student 21	83,3	Good
11.	Student 11	93,3	Very Good				

Based on the findings of the test in the table above, it can be explained that most students are able to comprehend the story well. there were 11 students getting score in the range of 76-85 and categorized as "Good" category. Even 5 students obtained "Very Good"

category based on their test results with a range of 86-93 scores. However, there were still 5 students who scored between 56-75 so they were only categorized the "Quite Good".

Meanwhile the result of understanding intrinsic element in literature work, most of students have good comprehension to analyze theme, characterization, point of view and moral value because the students gained a "Very Good" category by obtaining a maximum score of 5. It means that students have been able to meet the criteria by mentioning and giving proper reasons for questions about the theme, character/character, point of view and mandate. However, most of the students were only able to mention the plot and setting but could not explain the detail reasons for the item.

Result of Interview

Non-test data collection was interview and used to find out students' perceptions of the implementation of Wattpad in understanding popular literature. Basically, the interview is a process of proving the information or information that has been obtained previously (Raharjo, 2011). Interview was conducted online via Zoom and divided into 8 sessions. The number of questions asked in the interview was 20 questions and used an open-ended interview. The interview question items were adopted from Rahman (2021).

Based on the results of interview, several perceptions were obtained regarding the implementation of Wattpad as an effort to improve reading comprehension, especially popular literature. These 21 students are 5th semester students who have studied reading courses from Survival Reading to Academic Reading, besides that they have also studied Introduction to Literature course. The first item is regarding to subject interest, 14 students said they liked Reading and also the Introduction to Literature class. Meanwhile, there were 3 students who did not like them and 4 students said they were neutral. Students who like reading and introduction to literature prefer fiction, compared to non-fiction. In terms of English main skills, there are 13 people like reading, 5 people like listening and 3 people like writing.

Students were asked how much they liked reading literary works in the range of 1-10. There were 5 students answered that their preference for reading literature reached 9 and 6 students gave 8 points. While 8 students gave 7 points and 2 students gave 6 points. It can be concluded that most students considered having big interest in reading, especially popular literature such as novels, series or short stories. There are only about 5 students who like poetry and drama. Most students like genre romance, fantasy, action and mystery. Approximately, 15 students stated that every week they read stories from popular literature, either physical books or by digital platforms such as Wattpad.

According to interview that has been conducted, the most common problem found in reading is about vocabulary. Most of the students said that they feel that the vocabulary they know is still limited so that they often have difficulty in reading comprehension because there are many unfamiliar vocabularies. Moreover, the use of vocabulary in literature is often more complex and also uses metaphorical vocabulary or figurative language that must be understood deeper. To deal with these difficulties, students usually looked for difficult vocabulary either by digital or physical dictionaries. Then they also browsed on Google and took notes.

Regarding to Wattpad story that had been given to students, 15 students said they had no significant difficulties to understand the story because the vocabularies they found are quite

familiar and easy to understand. Meanwhile, the other 7 students still had difficulty in understanding the text because of limited vocabulary. Therefore, they must continue to open the dictionary to find the meaning of the difficult word. When they were answering the questions, several students found it a bit difficult to answer the intrinsic elements of characterization, plot and moral value. To analyze the characterizations, it took a long time to understand each character because there are so many characters in the story that you have to read it over and over again. In terms of determining the message, students had bit difficulty in drawing conclusions from the implied moral value in the story. As for the plot, deep accuracy is needed and you have to read it repeatedly because the plot conveyed by the author is more than one plot.

To find out students' perceptions about how the use of Wattpad can be an effort to understand popular literature, the researcher also asked several questions related to it. There are 10 students said they often read stories on Wattpad to spend their spare time. Even it was not learning activities. It is because after they had reading activity by using Wattpad in the class, they were interested to read more. They looked for new stories on Wattpad if they did not have a physical book to read. The frequency of their personal reading activity is 45% of students stated that they read Wattpad story every week. They spend 2-3 stories in each week. Meanwhile, 30% of students said that every month they spend 2-3 stories. While the other 25% students rarely read books or Wattpad. In the term of Wattpad's feature access, students also found it easy to operate. They did not experience any difficulties because Wattpad is a familiar media to use. The only problem they had is internet connection for several students because they live in quite remote place.

Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Wattpad in learning media for reading or literature showed that based on the range 1-10 show points, 7 and 8 that were chosen by students. It can be concluded that students agree that Wattpad is effective enough to be used as a reading media, especially popular literature. A total of 18 students also thought that the use of Wattpad for reading is more interesting to participate because the access was easy and not complicated. They only need to use their own cellphones freely, no need to pay unless they had to buy a book. In addition, the types of stories on Wattpad greatly have various genres. Therefore, students can choose the genre based on their preferences.

In terms of improving a reading interest, 17 students agreed that reading activities on Wattpad increased reading interest because when they were given an assignment to read and the story was interesting, it improved their interest to continue reading and look for other similar stories. Meanwhile, in terms of improving reading skills, 16 students thought that they had improved reading skills, especially in terms of vocabulary. Through this activity their vocabulary increases and then some become familiar to them. Students also thought that if this activity is carried out regularly, it will help their reading habit faster. These things made students want to continue reading Wattpad even when they are not in class. They thought it can be a way to spend their free time because they find many stories interesting to read.

Discussion

Improving The Reading Comprehension of Popular Literature

Based on the data found in this study, it can be seen that there is an improvement in students' reading comprehension. In the result of test, most of the students gained satisfactory results with 76% of students got the score of 76-9. It is indicated as "good and very good" categories. It is also supported by the interview result, students mentioned that they had gained improvement in reading comprehension, especially vocabulary.

Improving the reading comprehension of popular literature can be seen through test results where students answered and explained well regarding to intrinsic elements such as themes, characters/characters, plot, setting, point of view and mandate. 76% of students are able to understand every intrinsic element. Students got maximum points (very good) in understanding the theme, characterization, point of view and moral value. This is in accordance with Hikmawati's statement (2016) that students who are given learning using applications produce better performance than those are taught by using common methods. Students' interest in texts are improved because different media helps them to understand reading better and they enjoy the process of reading literary works. Bal (2018) in his research explained that Wattpad is considered as a medium where students can enjoy reading activities outside the classroom without feeling burdened.

Wattpad Effectiveness

The results of the research illustrated the effectiveness of Wattpad as a media for improving reading comprehension in popular literature. There are several reasons found from several student opinions through interviews. First, Wattpad is a substitute for books. Some students stated that the use of books as a medium of reading in every meeting is sometime quite boring and makes them not interested in reading. Texts and physical books are the media most often used in learning reading. The lack of innovation in learning media causes students lazy to read. Therefore, the use of Wattpad can be used as an innovative media for reading instead of books or common paper text. Harmer (1998) said that the important task of a teacher is to make students interested in reading English text. Wattpad can be used as a substitute for books that make students more interested in reading.

Second, Wattpad is an application that is familiar or close to the students' life. Therefore, students feel comfortable and adaptable using this application. Wattpad also provides stories from popular literary works whose topics are familiar with students' interest. When a convenience is obtained, it can increase students' enthusiasm and willingness to read. By providing media and topics that are close to the students' life, it can stimulate students to gain reading comprehension more easily. Azize Kavlu (2015) argued that a teacher should be able to consider and provide a topic that is familiar to students. A teacher must be able to understand the condition of students so that they can use the right media.

Third, Wattpad is a free application and can be accessed anytime anywhere so that students can use the application freely and easily to develop their reading skill. This is because the more often students read, the more they get and the more they get used (Hirain et.al, 2016). Eventually they will like it after becoming a habit. The use of the Wattpad application as a reading medium is needed to adapt in the digital era like now. This

can help students get used to read English text so that they can understand popular literature from various countries.

Increasing the Reading Interest

Through collecting interview data, it was found that the use of Wattpad is able to increase reading interest because the stories are interesting and fun so that it creates more interest and curiosity to continue reading. After the students finished the stories, most of the students were encouraged to continue reading other stories on Wattpad. In accordance with Darmono's statement (2007) that reading interest is a mental tendency that encourages someone to do something about reading. Farida Rahim (2005) added that reading interest is a strong desire accompanied by one's efforts to read. It can be seen from the students' efforts to understand English fiction stories on Wattpad. They tried to understand English narratives because of their interest in the fictional stories on Wattpad. Students' efforts to learn and hone reading skills on their own without any intervention from others is a form of the significant improvement of reading interest.

Burns and Lowe's (1966) ever stated that how to measure the presence of interest in reading personally, students who are the objects of this research included into several categories: 1) students experience the reading need because there is a sense of importance to read and read activity starts to feel more interesting; 2) students take action to find reading material because they are constantly looking for other fiction readings on Wattpad; 3) students feel happy about reading because they feel enthusiastic and curious about what they read; 3) students continue to read. Several students stated that they take the time to do reading activities routinely.

Conclusion

In this research, several findings were found from the results of tests and interviews which can be concluded into several things. First, Wattpad provides a improvement in reading comprehension of popular literature. It was seen from 76% of students having a satisfactory test result, especially in understanding the intrinsic elements mainly in theme, characterization, plot, setting, point of view and moral value. Second, based on the interview result, Wattpad as a learning media for reading is considered quite effective because Wattpad can be used as a substitute for books, quite familiar or close to the students and freely and easily accessible application without limitations of time and place. Third, Wattpad can increase students' reading interest because of the variety of stories that create curiosity, need, and pleasure so that reading activity on Wattpad have continuity even outside of class.

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