STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL READING TEXTS: A CASE STUDY AT THE ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF STKIP PGRI BANGKALAN

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Abstract
This study investigated what students' perceptions of reading digital texts and students' preferences for digital text reading. Data was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation to accomplish this purpose. The interview aims to gather qualitative information about the participants' motivation and interests, the effectiveness of reading digital texts, any difficulties they may have had reading them, and whether they preferred reading print or digital texts. Four students enrolled in five semesters of the English Language Education Department at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan during the academic year 2023/2024 participated in this study. The results showed that the participants had a favorable opinion of reading digital materials because digital texts are more engaging and inspiring, and follow the standard reading format. The main obstacle for students in using digital texts is the less text displayed at once due to the limitations of smartphone screens.

Keywords: digital text, reading, student's perception

Introduction

Reading is one of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing that students should be able to master in the English language. Reading simply can be defined as the process of comprehending and extracting information from a text. Reading is a fundamental skill for academic success because students need to comprehend an extensive amount of information in a short time to achieve students' academic goals (Klimova & Zamborova, 2020). English reading is important for students' careers as well as for academic objectives. Students can improve language acquisition by reading.

Besides, perception is the cognitive process by which every individual chooses, arranges, translates, and interprets information and sensory input obtained through sight, hearing, smell, touch, feeling, and enjoyment to create a meaningful full image of the outside world (Purnomo, Ismiyati, & Munawwaroh, 2021). Effective teaching and learning are supported by perception as one of the most crucial components. Students' perception of education is also important to

the learning process because it can be very helpful to identify strategies, methods, and learning styles that address issues that students encounter in learning, particularly in digital reading text.

In English education, reading texts in electronic or digital text such as e-books, online articles, web pages, or other digital resources is referred to as digital text reading. In the late first decade of the twenty-first century, the proliferation of mobile reader devices that enabled digital book reading marked the beginning of the growing popularity of eBooks (Santoso et al., 2018). Digital texts involve not only conventional textual resources on paper, but also other semiotic modes such as images, music, video, and computer games (Park, Kim, & Vorobel, 2020). With eBooks, students can easily search for available materials because they convert traditional books into digital format (Kumbhar, 2012). E-books are superior to current printed books in many ways (Koh & Herring, 2016).

Nonetheless, conflicting findings were found in research examining the impact of reading printed versus digital texts on reading comprehension. According to certain research, printed text reading is superior to digital reading, while other studies found no discernible difference in understanding between the two modes (Pardede, 2019a). Despite this contradiction, digital text literacy cannot be avoided given the pervasiveness of technology in all spheres of life (Pardede, 2019). Therefore, the ideal option is to use them in addition to or instead of materials that teachers currently have. In most cases, students will use the internet to access advanced textbooks rather than going to the library to go through paper books (Sun & Gao, 2020).

Based on the researchers' observation at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan, the researcher found many courses that required students to read digitally. Utilizing various digital and e-learning platforms, students have witnessed an evolution in the way access, read manage course material. Starting from using the campus digital library and reading academic journals through online portals such as Google Scholar, the use of this technology has made accessibility and mobility easier in the learning process. Moreover, the digital reading ability has allowed students to be more organized and efficient in processing information.

Based on the explanation, the researchers conclude that reading texts using digital media is different from reading using printed texts in terms of learning materials, the way the material is delivered, and the media used. With these references and difficulties, there are many perceptions regarding digital media for English reading material. Students may or may not be interested in going digital. Therefore, it is important to know what students' perceptions of digital English reading materials are.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how STKIP PGRI Bangkalan students' perception of reading printed or digital materials and factors influence students' preferences and attitudes toward digital text reading. More precisely, the goal of this study was to describe how students' perception of their ability to read both printed and digital texts for comprehension in the classroom. The following is the formulation of the research question "What is students' perception of using digital and printed texts in their academic life?"

Digital text

Digital texts can be found on the internet as web pages, text messages, or online posts such as blogs. They can also be stored on a PC, handheld device, screen reader software, or online posting tool. They are multimodal (combining text with audio, video, images, and hypertext) and generated electronically. This characteristic allows readers to explore nonlinearly and makes it more interactive than printed text. For example, hypertext connects digital documents to many other texts, giving readers a variety of orienting options based on their interests. Therefore, a single book may offer multiple entry points and, consequently, multiple reading alternatives.

There is a difference between digital and traditional reading, and digital reading is changing the reading landscape (Präkel, 2021). According to her, light and short texts that do not need to be checked or re-read carefully are suitable for reading digitally. In low-income households, digital books either totally or partially replace traditional reading materials due to their affordability and ease of use (Furenes et al., 2021). However, the interactive elements of digital texts tend to distract readers from the content, and e-reading is less suitable for long essays that require careful consideration or in-depth study. Most digital texts on screens, tablets, and smartphones are not as likely to offer the reader the same intuitive mapping and navigation of texts as printed books, despite being lighter and easier to carry than thick volumes.

Reading

Reading is a definite process that involves the distinct and sequential perception of words, letters, spelling patterns, pictures, and large chunks of dialect, as well as the recognizable confirmation of these elements (P & K, 2020). Not only reading every word in the text but also gaining an understanding of what has been read from the text. At the language learning level, reading is crucial to the educational process since it makes teaching and learning easier (Chakravarthy, 2020). Furthermore, reading can increase a lot of students' knowledge, apart from that, reading can also increase students' intelligence and creativity along with the knowledge gained (Pratami et al., 2024). Because of this, reading is crucial for learning English as a second language.

Moreover, reading is described as an active process in which the reader deciphers a writer's meaning and applies analysis, reasoning, thinking, imagination, and judgment (Baba & Affendi, 2020). As can be seen from the definition above, reading is often a complex activity that involves understanding the meaning of writing through various tasks such as identifying words by connecting their meanings and making inferences to analyze the author's intended meaning.

Types of reading

According to Patel and Jain (2008, pp. 117–123), the types of reading that are highlighted by Raskova and Asrifan (2019) are as follows:

Intensive reading

Intensive reading is a process that is carried out carefully and thoroughly on the text being read. reading can increase knowledge of vocabulary and idioms

while gaining a foundation for understanding structural challenges. Additionally, it will offer content to improve control of speech and written language. people can read texts or parts of texts intensively. Students read this literature to gain understanding or carry out analysis. This reading assignment is to read shorter material. The purpose of reading this material is to learn specifics. To learn, students read literature.

Extensive reading

Extensive reading is a technique used to gain a general understanding of a topic and involves reading long discourse texts for enjoyment.

Reading techniques

Two-speed reading techniques can help readers read more efficiently, namely skimming and scanning (Mambua, 2020).

Skimming

According to (Brown, 2004) as cited in (Mambua, 2020), skimming is the practice of quickly scanning a text to ascertain its essential points or core ideas. In short, to put it briefly, skimming is a method for rapidly recognizing a text's main ideas.

Scanning

The scanning technique is defined as "quick reading", with a focus on searching for specific information. In other words, scanning is a reading strategy used to find certain information or details depending on the reader's goal, such as identifying or searching for a particular piece of information (name, time, date, place, and initial).

The stages of reading

Elkonin (2010), referenced in (Grigoryan, 2020), states that reading is a multifaceted process with three main phases, including:

Word identification

Reading is the process of seeing letters, identifying, and understanding a word or words composed of similar letters that have been studied previously. readers not only need to use their visual senses to identify letters as symbolic representations of text, but also their mental abilities, memory, and imagination. Words must be spelled correctly, but also be inferred from just one or two letters.

Comprehension of reading material

Every word read needs to be understood mentally; in some situations, the word may seem like a well-known topic or event, while in others, it may simply be a repetition of the word itself.

Assessment

Early childhood students frequently don't fully understand the content of reading materials. The goal of learning to read was to become proficient in the phonetic structure of words. Once students have advanced through the adult

process, or as learners who have completed this phase, they are motivated to clarify the meaning of the words they read in the text. By reading, evaluating important ideas, providing explanations for occurrences and phenomena, and frequently cultivating a critical mindset as their reading abilities advance, students accomplish their goal of learning more.

Student's perception

Perception is knowledge about an object, event, or relationship obtained through the readjustment of data and interpretation of messages. The stimulus-response system, which includes memory, motivation, expectations, and attention, is given meaning through this (Lindawati et al., 2022). Students' perceptions can be influenced by personal experiences, social interactions, cultural factors, and other factors that influence their perceptions of the learning process and school environment. In short, the definition of perception is the conscious manipulation of one's surroundings through physical experiences.

The teacher's understanding of the student's perception is very important since it enables to evaluation of the educational system based on the student's performance. Teachers need to consider their students' opinions, to evaluate their teaching effectiveness (Nabilah et al., 2023). According to the above description, one of the most crucial aspects of enhancing the quality of learning using digital text technology that might affect learning outcomes is understanding and knowing students' perceptions of English language learning, particularly when it comes to reading activities utilizing digital texts.

Method

Setting and participants

This research was conducted in January 2024 at the STKIP PGRI Bangkalan English education department. The participants in this research were four students in the 5th semester.

Research design

The researcher employed a qualitative research design in this study. With the use of a variety of specialized research techniques, including in-depth interviews, focus groups, observation, content analysis, visual aids, life histories, and biographies, qualitative research is a strategy that enables you to thoroughly analyze people's experiences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). In contrast, the researcher's focus in this study is on how pupils perceive and react when using digital text reading.

Instruments

Three research devices are used in this study to collect data. Observation comes first. Humans can obtain data or information through observation, which involves using all five senses (Novianti, 2012). This implies that after making notes and observing, researchers will analyze the data they have collected. The second is an interview which is the most generally used data-gathering approach because it allows researchers to collect diverse data from respondents in various scenarios and unique contexts.

The goal of the interview technique is to genuinely gather more detailed information from respondents by asking them questions concerning the study object (Pujaastwa, 2016). Additionally, the researchers employed structured interviews, which included creating identical questions for each respondent. It is not possible to amend these pre-prepared questions during the interview. Documentation serves as the final tool. The success of qualitative research greatly depends on how comprehensive the researcher's field notes are. For this investigation, the research team used recorders, notebooks, and cameras (Nilamsari, 2014). While gathering as much verbal and nonverbal information as possible is the aim of this technology, it must be used carefully to prevent offending the response. Therefore, it is hoped that by using this method, the collected data will precisely reflect the actual situation.

Data analysis

The approach of qualitative data analysis used by the researcher is taken from (Miles et al., 2014). This approach of qualitative data analysis consists of three steps, which are as follows:

Data collection

Data collection is collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Researchers made observations to determine the situation and conditions of students in reading using digital text. Then, the researcher obtained data by conducting observations through the 5th semester English Education Department. the researcher found students' perceptions of digital text and the factors that influence students' acceptance, use, and involvement in the use of digital text reading.

Data display

To identify data trends, the qualitative data from earlier data reduction is displayed using the data display. Data visualizations make important results easier for others to understand. Researchers organize data and determine the students' perception of reading printed or digital text and the factors that influence students' preferences and attitudes towards digital text reading.

Conclusion

The final step of Miles et al.'s data analysis technique is concluding and verification. The researcher made an initial conclusion about students' perception of reading printed or digital text and the factors that influence students' preferences and attitudes towards digital text reading. The initial conclusions can answer research questions based on qualitative data taken from observations and interviews.

Findings and Discussion

How data is obtained for the study is covered in this section. Three instruments are used in this research: documentation, observation, and interviews for data analysis. Interviews and observations shed light on students' attitudes and preferences regarding reading digital texts as well as how they perceive reading printed or digital materials. Documentation, on the other hand, records, and

documents each action carried out during the research to establish the validity of the findings.

Motivation and interest

Table 1. A sample of interview script for students

Q4	Are you interested in reading using digital text?
R1	I am interested in reading material that is formatted digitally. Because digital materials are more accessible and convenient, I read them more often than printed texts. I just need to use my smartphone to read it anywhere. But reading printed materials is just as important.
R2	I still read print literature, but because digital texts are easier to obtain, they are more interesting. They also don't use paper. By using it, we protect the environment.
R4	I only read texts or books that I find interesting. Digital texts make it easier for me to find much of the literature I want to read. So, I am more interested in reading digital materials.

Table 1 shows the participants' good but relatively high levels of motivation and curiosity. This could indicate that even though they are interested in reading digital content, people still consume printed texts. This was explained by three students interviewed.

Digital text efficacy

Table 2. A sample of interview script for students

Q3	What is your view on the use of digital texts compared to printed texts in reading?
R1	In understanding long texts, reading printed text is better. but I prefer using digital texts compared to printed texts because it makes it easier for me to learn. I can access countless journals and texts without spending too much money to get them.
R3	In my opinion, digital texts are more effective for use in learning. because it is easier to carry and read anywhere. I can also access it at any time

Students acknowledged the value of print texts for reading comprehension, but Table 2 shows their views regarding the effectiveness of digital texts. They added that using digital texts for learning is efficient, improves understanding, and increases academic success. Based on these results, participants did not perceive significant differences between print and digital texts in terms of how well they promoted learning objectives and reading comprehension. They both seem to work almost the same. Because of the large number of resources available to assist with information gathering, participants tended to prefer digital texts over printed texts, rather than because digital texts were more effective than printed materials.

Difficulty

Table 3. A Sample of Interview Script for Students

Q9	What obstacles do you face in using digital texts, especially e-books?
R2	When my gadget accidentally restarted and all my important documents were lost, I couldn't access e-books and other digital files. That's the problem I've experienced with digital reading.

Q9	What obstacles do you face in using digital texts, especially e-books?
R3	The problem that I experience quite often is battery life during long reading sessions, sometimes when I haven't finished reading a text, but the battery is low, I am forced to stop my reading activities.
R4	I have difficulty reading long texts such as journals, textbooks, and papers. because less text can be displayed at once in digital text due to the limitations of smartphone screens.

The information obtained from the interviews clarified that some students faced certain problems related to smartphones in handling digital texts. Sometimes they spoil their reading and even lose digital books stored on their smartphone, but most of them can solve the problem.

Preference for reading digital or printed texts

Table 4. A sample of interview script for students

Q1	What is your experience in using digital text especially e-books in the learning process?
R1	After studying here for a few semesters, I started to like digital texts. Because most of the learning resources provided by lecturers are digital e-book texts shared in WhatsApp and e-learning groups, I prefer reading digital texts compared to printed books.
R2	Nowadays I read and save digital texts more often such as e-books and e-journal articles. These texts make it easier for me to find the knowledge I need to complete my projects compared to printed books.
R3	Because most of the references and materials from my lecturers are digital, I read more digital texts than printed ones. I can also get the knowledge I need to complete my assignments by using digital texts.
R4	I have used digital texts, especially E-books, a lot in my learning journey because I find it convenient to access information quickly and easily.

Most respondents prefer reading digital texts over printed materials, as Table 4 shows. They read digital texts more often than printed texts and enjoy looking for additional related texts online to read and save necessary digital texts on their devices so they can access them whenever and wherever they want. Based on the interview data above, the participants do read print and digital literature. However, because many lecturers only provide digital material, they are more accustomed to reading it. This is because digital texts are more affordable, easier to find information, and can be accessed from anywhere and at any time.

The student's perception of reading digital texts

The results show that students have good preferences for reading digital texts by comparing the responses of the four respondents. that they prefer to read texts on digital devices rather than on paper. Because most of their lecturers give assignments in the form of digital texts and because they belong to the sophisticated generation who are quite proficient in using digital texts, these findings indicate that the participants prefer and are interested in using digital texts compared to printed texts. Because this generation usually has expertise and awareness of digital texts, this supports Pardede's (2019b) conclusion that "in

terms of perception, young users who are a technology-savvy generation tend to have a more positive attitude towards digital reading."

Conclusion

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the participants in this study have a positive attitude towards reading digital texts in their academic life. They prefer and are comfortable using digital texts compared to printed texts because most of them are used to using digital texts and because they are the younger generation who are more adept at using digital texts. They are also motivated to read digital texts because of their accessibility, affordability, and ease of use.

The results of this study could not be extrapolated to other groups because the participants were restricted to one educational institution. To generalize safer, it is advised that future research include more individuals from a range of educational institutions. Statements about the broad use of digital reading are also included in the instrument indicators. It is suggested that future studies investigate how students feel about using digital texts to acquire more specialized language subjects, such as grammar, linguistics, and language skills.

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