STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS USING DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE THROUGH WHATSAPP

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Abstract

Reading has developed into a critical tool for education, particularly in the teaching and learning processes, and it is now considered as a standard practice. Reading comprehension is the process of constructing the meaning of reading by integrating essential facts that are important in the educational process and students' achievement in school. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of students' perceptions of teaching reading comprehension skills through the use of a conversation strategy provided via WhatsApp. The participants in this study are 35 students in the ninth grade at SMP Unggulan Al - Amin Cimahi. Depending on the results of the student questionnaire, the researcher concludes that students' reactions to the implementation of teaching reading comprehension of narrative texts using WhatsApp data are favorable, with a total of 78 percent of positive responses and 22 percent of negative responses to the questionnaire.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, WhatsApp

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the humans' most complicated and distinctive cognitive processes (Chen, Kong, Gao, & Mo, 2018). As a result, the teacher must focus on reading skills and reading comprehension to grasp what is being read. That comment was made by author Harmer (1998:70), who was mentioned in Parmawati & Yugafiati (2017), who noted that reading might help students grasp something. It is impossible to separate reading from comprehension; Hillerich (1983:125), as referenced in Antoni (2010), asserts that comprehension is the objective of every reading activity. There are several methods and approaches for teaching and developing reading comprehension, one of which is group WhatsApp conversation. According to researchers Johnson and Smith (1998) (Sakila & Kunaepi, 2018), learning occurs when a learner works together, typically in groups WhatsApp. According to Abidin (2012), reading is a reading action used to get knowledge from reading material. Reading products are the end outcome of the reading process, namely the comprehension of the reading information. Reading may assist readers in understanding suggested and expressed meanings and seeing the concepts inherent in written words. The conclusion that may be taken is that reading is the knowledge of linguistic patterns from a picture of the writing. According to Tarigan (1990:7), reading is a process carried and employed by readers who desire to obtain the message supplied by the author through the medium of words or written language. In terms of distinctions in scope, author Oka (1983:15) in (Jaenal, 2010) distinguishes three types of meaning to read: Understanding the first is a limited understanding, precisely the view that considers reading as a process of recognizing written symbols. This procedure required the meticulous, wide-ranging, and rapid identification of words. "Reading is not an invariant talent," writes David Nunan (1989:33), "that there are numerous sorts of reading abilities that match to the many

different reading objectives we have." So, in the classroom, during students' reading activities, the researchers are confident that they have various goals, among which are to graduate from high school and to give themselves the information to continue their studies, whatever their goals may be. In order to attain the aim, reading comprehension is required. According to Atwell (1998), free reading content significantly influences learners' fluency, reading rate, and understanding. According to the description above, the researcher is interested in implementing the alternative method of teaching reading skills. Another option is to use the Whatsapp program.

WhatsApp, the fastest growing social networking platform, was launched in 2009 by former YAHOO! workers Brain Acton and Jan Koum. WhatsApp is a handy instrument in the sphere of academics for exchanging information about research and academic activities. Another feature of WhatsApp that has recently gained popularity in educational settings is WhatsApp groups. Generally, each student has their own WhatsApp group for their batches, classes, departments, and so forth. According to Baishya & Maheshwari (2020), There are several reasons why students nowadays prefer to utilize WhatsApp groups at school/college. Most significantly, students utilize WhatsApp groups to share and receive academic material. They may readily ask teachers and resolve their worries by using an educational WhatsApp group. Students who consistently attend courses and are concerned about their academics have much information they share with their peers and ask questions. Again, the presence of the instructor may have a significant impact on the group discourse. The presence of a teacher in any WhatsApp group formalizes and controls the conversation. Students noted several benefits of WhatsApp communication, including ease of use, the capacity to develop groups, protect personal privacy, and the communication format (written, mediated, personal, or group). They also acknowledged limits (e.g., communication overload) and challenged teachers' abilities to monitor and influence student engagement via social media, even when they are present in these WhatsApp classroom groups (Rosenberg & Asterhan, 2018).

According to Qamar, Riyadi, & Wulandari (2019), The following is how learning with discussion techniques via WhatsApp works.

1. *Participation*
    As the recording follows the debate, the Whatsapp application usage evocative contribution and feedback of every participant is fascinating.
2. *Openness*
    From the recording of photos, every student replied to each other on the notion of other students and replied to a lecturer's statement. As a result, the disclosure of information in online meetings is more significant than in physical meetings.
3. *Conversation*
    Whatsapp logged the participants' chats about friendliness. The signal is that each person has an equal opportunity to comment, resulting in a dialogue among all participants.

4. *Community*
    Each participant can directly communicate in private discussions with the formation of a community with the reciprocal of each participant. If such a student believes that the input from participants has been better comprehended, they will have a face-to-face dialogue to settle the issue.
5. *Connectivity*
    Whatsapp may create learning resources that incorporate connections to other resources and show the source of connectivity for each participant, which can be shared with other participants.

The purpose of this study, based on the information provided above, is to determine students' perceptions of learning reading comprehension skills through the use of the WhatsApp apCetinkaya (2017) researched the effects of using WhatsApp for education. The study was designed using a mixed research paradigm that included both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative portion of the study revealed that both learning settings have distinct effects on student progress. Supporting the conventional environment with WhatsApp is more beneficial for increasing success. The analysis of the qualitative part of the study revealed that students formed good attitudes regarding the usage of WhatsApp in their classes. They required the same practice in all of their classes. They indicated that learning might occur subconsciously and that visuals in messages were more beneficial for their learning. However, a few students reported dissatisfaction with the timeliness of some messages and the repetitive posts inside the group. Finally, it is advised that WhatsApp usage as a supporting tool be encouraged in the educational process. Igbafe & Anyanwu (2018) did a study to evaluate how WhatsApp effects or improves students' academic performance. This study employed a qualitative method to analyze WhatsApp as an academic disruptor and an academic performance enhancer in tertiary education institutions. Participants were drawn from two types of universities: public and state. Snowball's purposive sampling enabled twenty students to offer in-depth knowledge on WhatsApp and education while obtaining informed consent. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data. The findings demonstrated that WhatsApp might create academic disruption through addiction to non-educational groups, but it can also improve academic performance by developing and improving students' learning communities. According to the findings of the study, institutions, lecturers, and literate friends and family members could improve students' academic performance through WhatsApp functions by expanding the learning community to enable them to acquire and share knowledge. Thus, the study calls for more widespread use of WhatsApp to improve academic performance and students by focusing on a community of learning.

Napratilora, Lisa, & Bangsawan (2020) conducts research using WhatsApp chat as a learning tool for teaching reading comprehension. The discovery demonstrates that WhatsApp Messenger can be utilized as a learning media in addition to being a communication tool. It allows the teacher and students to easily interact and review reading material prior to class to increase students' reading comprehension. Because the kids are already familiar with WhatsApp, it is straightforward and inexpensive to teach reading comprehension. They were setting the rules, generating a unique name for the WhatsApp group, commencing the reading comprehension exercise, and providing feedback are utilizing WhatsApp to teach reading comprehension. Ahmed (2019) conducted a study to investigate the efficacy of utilizing WhatsApp, one of the mobile-assisted language learning applications, in improving learners' English reading and writing skills. For two months, twenty EFL undergraduate students from Aden University engaged in a WhatsApp, English medium group with the researcher. They chatted, shared news items, and commented on news stories. The results of the students' pre-test and post-test and the researcher's observations of their improvement and replies to the questionnaire suggested that WhatsApp was beneficial in increasing their reading and writing abilities. According to the report, WhatsApp English medium groups give space for students to use natural language, particularly in written communication, retain students learning and practicing English outside of the classroom, and push them to learn from one another. According to the study's findings, EFL teachers should use WhatsApp in their English teaching and encourage their students to create and join WhatsApp English medium groups. This will help them develop students' language proficiency through natural interaction and contextualized language use, which the classroom cannot provide.

Wahyuni, Nurpahmi, & Awaliah (2020) researched how students perceive Whatsapp usage as a medium for reading learning. The research approach employed is quantitative. They are using interview guidelines and questionnaires to acquire data. Forty-two persons responded. The research is being conducted at the faculty of tarbiyah and taught at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. According to the findings of this study, students in the second semester of English instruction understand social media as a place for convenience, learning, and communication.
plication.

METHOD

This study aims to learn about students' perspectives of teaching reading comprehension skills using a conversation strategy via WhatsApp. The researchers employ a qualitative approach in performing this research. According to Cresswell (2012), qualitative research is most suited to handle research issues where the variables are unknown, and you need to study and gather knowledge about the research phenomena. Furthermore, according to Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2012), qualitative research involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting extensive narrative and visual data to understand intriguing occurrences. To the academic community, qualitative research is defined as a process in which substantial new distinctions are produced; making distinctions is an important element of acquiring new information (Aspers & Corte, 2019). According to the preceding description, the qualitative approach collects information based on theory and explains it verbally or in writing. The researchers did this investigation at Cimahi Junior High School in West Java. This study focused on 35 students in the IX grade at SMP Unggulan Al - Amin Cimahi. In this study, a questionnaire is utilized to evaluate the participants' reading comprehension skills using discussion techniques through WhatsApp. To make it simpler for participants to grasp the claims, the researcher provided the questionnaire in Indonesian. Data acquired from the survey was analyzed based on the final result after calculating the percentage of each indicator to determine the number of students who have negative and positive responses to teaching reading. There is a statement in the scale column that students must fill out with the checklist, and students must fill it out with open-ended questions to determine students' challenges during the learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Students' questionnaire replies include both positive and negative possibilities, with the positive answer being *Ya* (Yes) and the negative one being *Tidak* (No). The questionnaire's findings are shown below.

Table 1. Students Responses

No.	Jenis Kendala	Ya	Tidak
1.	Is there a problem with the internet connection?	71%	29%
2.	Do students understand the given material?	91%	9%
3.	Is there interaction between teacher and students?	69%	31%

4.	*Does a teaching improve students' motivation?*	57%	43%
5.	*Is parents' role important in online learning?*	86%	14%
6.	*Can learning improve students' critical thinking skills?*	80%	20%
7.	Is the media used effective in improving students' understanding?	89%	11%
8.	Are the assessments and evaluations going well?	83%	17%
9.	*Are there difficulties when coordinating students' performance and students' attendance?*	86%	14%
10.	Are students active, enthusiastic and participative in learning?	71%	29%
	Total	78%	22%

Discussion

When a pandemic occurs, the WhatApp application is used to assist students in their learning process. Although students encountered numerous obstacles throughout the activity, including a limited quota that made it difficult to keep up with the lessons, a lack of understanding of the teacher's instructions, and other difficulties, they came to the conclusion that using WhatsApp in English lessons was less exciting and that the teaching and learning process was less advantageous. In this specific case, the researcher conducted a study through a questionnaire that given to the students in order to gain an understanding of their perceptions in the use of the WhatsApp application in the context of language learning. When students participated in a teaching-learning activity, the perceptions of students about WhatsApp were summarized in the table above. Firstly, it establishes unequivocally that up to 71 percent of 35 students face network difficulties during instructional and learning activities as a result of a variety of factors, including low signal strength and the absence of a credit quota, which limit their ability to interact with one another. In comparison, 91 percent of 35 students stated that they understood the materials delivered during the teaching-learning process.

Based on the findings of this study, students were experiencing difficulty participating in online teaching-learning. While students use WhatsApp to learn, as many as 14 percent of students believe there is almost no interaction between teachers and students, according to the research. This argument is supported by Daheri, Juliana, Deriwanto, and Amda (2020), who argue that WhatsApp as an online learning medium is less effective in terms of achieving learning objectives than other online learning mediums. The reasons for this include a variety of factors such as a teacher's inability to provide a comprehensive and simple explanation, low affective and psychomotor aspects of learning, weak internet signals, overworked parents, and the educational background of the parents. Additionally, according to the students' questionnaire, 13 percent of students do not feel engaged, passionate, or involved in their studies, as a result of their experiences, and as many as 86 percent of students agree that having a parent present during the online teaching-learning process can help them learn more effectively.

In addition to the unfavorable reaction, 20 percent of those who participated in reading comprehension learning activities via WhatsApp chats claimed that the activities did not increase their critical thinking to get engaged with the teaching-learning process. As Motaung

& Dube's (2020) discovered, students were having difficulties engaging in online tutorials through WhatsApp due to a variety of factors, including a lack of access to technological devices, a lack of skills and competencies in using technological tools, network connectivity issues, and a variety of other factors. Related to the statement about WhatsApp as a media that can elevate their comprehension in teaching-learning process, as much as 86 percent of students agree that it can boost their understanding toward the materials delivered. The assessment and evaluation process are also running well within 17 percent unfavorable responses from the students. There are some challenges that both the teacher and students face when it comes to coordinating the students' performance and attendance. It is indicated above as a 14 percent negative response rate in the students' questionnaire results. Nonetheless, up to 29 percent of students believe that they are unable to participate actively and enthusiastically in the teaching-learning process due to a variety of obstacles. However, the students' reactions to the implementation of teaching reading comprehension using WhatsApp data are generally positive, with a total of 78 percent of the students responding positively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, the researchers concluded that the use of discussion techniques through WhatsApp in teaching and learning reading comprehension activity has favorable feedback from the students. Even though most of the feedback is favorable, some feedback shows negative responses such as internet connectivity problems and other technical problems. WhatsApp could be an excellent medium for teaching and learning activities, but firstly, it is essential to check for technical issues before utilizing it.

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