



The Implementation Of Wattpad Application On Improving Student Reading Comprehension Skill At SMAN 6 Bengkulu Tengah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the process of implementing the Wattpad application as an English learning medium for reading comprehension among students at SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah, to analyze students' perceptions of the use of Wattpad as a learning medium for reading comprehension, and to identify and analyze English teachers' perceptions regarding the challenges and opportunities during the implementation of Wattpad in reading comprehension instruction. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation involving one English teacher and eight eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The results indicate that Wattpad is used as a learning medium that supports reading activities through the selection of reading texts tailored to students' proficiency levels and interests, followed by discussion activities and reading comprehension tasks. Students showed positive perceptions toward the use of Wattpad because the reading texts were considered more engaging, contextual, and easier to understand compared to those found in textbooks, thereby enhancing students' engagement and motivation in reading. From the teachers' perspective, the use of Wattpad provides more opportunities than challenges, particularly in supporting digital literacy and helping students comprehend reading texts in a more natural way through various instructional activities such as identifying main ideas, discussing vocabulary and moral values, and creating summaries. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified during the implementation, including limited internet access, differences in students' language proficiency levels, and the need for careful selection of reading materials. Overall, with appropriate teacher guidance and suitable selection of reading materials, the Wattpad application can be used as a relevant learning medium to support English reading comprehension skills at the secondary school level.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; Students' Perceptions, Teacher's Perceptions; Wattpad Application

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important receptive skills for language acquisition is reading. Reading plays a crucial role in language acquisition, according to Harmer (2007). How much and how often a person reads greatly affects their language comprehension. The more frequently students are exposed to reading texts, the better they understand structure, vocabulary, and meaning in various contexts. Brown (2001) also states that, along with listening, speaking, and writing, reading is one of the four essential skills required for language learning. Reading is considered one of the most important skills because it helps individuals understand written information, both within and beyond the academic world.



Students are not only required to recognize letters and words in the reading process, but they are also expected to understand the overall meaning of what they read. Eskey and Dubin (1986) stated that reading is a receptive process in which readers extract information from a text. Alyousef (2006) reinforced this idea by stating that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text, and when practiced regularly, it can lead to reading fluency, or the ability to read smoothly. Oakhill et al. (2015) emphasized that reading ability is not limited to word recognition alone; deep comprehension of the text is also essential. Readers must be able to predict what they are going to read, ensure they understand what they are reading, clarify ambiguous parts, and connect new information with what they already know. Therefore, reading skills, particularly reading comprehension, are crucial for students' success across various subjects.

Nevertheless, students' reading ability in Indonesia is still considered low. According to the 2019 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, Indonesian students ranked 62nd out of 70 countries in reading literacy. The data revealed that most students in Indonesia struggle to comprehend texts, particularly in identifying implicit meanings, drawing conclusions, and connecting information to the appropriate context. This issue is mirrored in English language learning at schools such as SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah, where grade XI students often struggle with understanding extended texts, rely heavily on word-for-word translation, and demonstrate limited overall comprehension.

In response to these empirical and theoretical challenges, digital platforms have emerged as potential tools to revitalize reading instruction. Among them, Wattpad, a social storytelling application launched in 2006, offers vast access to user-generated stories in English across multiple genres (Wattpad, 2023). Its interactive features, contextual language, and alignment with teenage interests present a compelling alternative to conventional textbooks, which students often find rigid and unengaging. The integration of such technology-based media is supported by the need for innovative pedagogical strategies that can enhance student motivation and provide differentiated learning experiences tailored to varying proficiency levels. At SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah, the English teacher has initiated the use of Wattpad as a supplementary medium for reading comprehension, selecting stories based on student interests and conducting follow-up activities such as discussions, vocabulary tasks, and summarization. This practice suggests Wattpad's potential to address the documented gaps in reading engagement and comprehension.

Recent studies have begun to explore the pedagogical use of Wattpad in EFL contexts. Research by Fadillah and Amin (2022) demonstrated that Wattpad media significantly improved the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students in a private high school, with post-test scores showing marked increases after two cycles of classroom action research. Similarly, Rizal, Anugrahwati, and Burhanuddin (2023) found a positive effect of Wattpad on the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students using a quasi-experimental design. Other studies, such as those by Ganie, Miranda, and Yusuf (2021) and Azzahra, Francsey, and Subadar (2024), have examined student attitudes and usage patterns, revealing that Wattpad can enhance vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, and engagement with narrative texts. These studies collectively establish Wattpad as a relevant and effective digital medium for supporting reading literacy. However, existing research has primarily focused on learning outcomes, student perceptions, and quantitative measures of improvement, often within controlled or experimental settings. Few studies have provided detailed qualitative descriptions of the actual implementation process in natural classroom environments or explored in depth the teacher's reflective perceptions regarding the challenges and opportunities of integrating Wattpad into daily pedagogy.



This study addresses a noticeable gap between what existing research suggests and what happens when digital tools like Wattpad are used in real classrooms. Previous studies show that Wattpad can improve students' reading scores and motivation. However, they often miss detailed, real-life insights into how teachers actually use it in their lessons, how students view it as a formal learning tool rather than just for fun, and what practical and instructional challenges teachers face. A clear understanding of these everyday realities is essential to use Wattpad effectively and sustainably in teaching. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the on-the-ground application of Wattpad in a public high school setting, focusing on the nuances of implementation, the lived experiences of students, and the professional perspective of the teacher.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. According to Sugiyono (2021), this approach is used to understand, examine, and interpret social processes by drawing on the experiences and viewpoints of participants in a natural setting. The design was selected to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, how the Wattpad application is implemented and perceived in a real classroom context, rather than to measure numerical outcomes. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, directly collecting descriptive data through observed behavior and spoken words (Moleong, 2014).

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah. The population was all eleventh-grade students and English teachers at the school. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling, a technique where participants are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research questions. The sample consisted of one English teacher who implemented Wattpad in her lessons and eight eleventh-grade students who had experience using the application for reading comprehension learning. This sample size is considered adequate for a qualitative study aiming for depth of understanding. Data collection was carried out through triangulation of three main techniques: non-participant classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with the teacher and students, and documentation analysis (e.g., lesson plans, student assignments, and screenshots of Wattpad activities). The interview and observation instruments were developed based on the research objectives and questions, then used to guide the systematic gathering of information in the field.

For data analysis, this study applied the interactive model by Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2014), which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The collected data from observations, interviews, and documents were first reduced by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw information. The reduced data was then organized and displayed in the form of narratives and tables to identify patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified against the evidence to ensure their validity and reliability, forming the basis for the research findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analysis of the Implementation of the Wattpad Application in Reading Comprehension Learning

The implementation of the Wattpad application at SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah was conducted in a structured and pedagogically deliberate manner. The English teacher initiated the process by carefully selecting stories that aligned with the students' proficiency levels and personal interests, moving away from generic textbook materials. This preparatory stage was crucial to ensure the chosen narratives were both accessible and engaging for the learners, providing a relevant alternative to conventional reading sources. The selection focused on



genres like romance, slice-of-life, and teen fiction, which resonated with the students' daily experiences and contained more contextual, communicative language.

During classroom activities, the use of Wattpad was integrated into comprehensive reading tasks rather than being a standalone leisure activity. Students were assigned specific chapters to read individually or in groups, both inside and outside the classroom hours. Following the reading, the teacher facilitated guided discussions where students identified main ideas, explored new vocabulary within the story's context, and extracted moral values from the narrative. This interactive process transformed passive reading into an active comprehension exercise, encouraging deeper engagement with the text.

The instructional cycle was completed with assessment tasks designed to evaluate and reinforce understanding. Students were often asked to answer comprehension questions, create summaries, or deliver short presentations based on the stories they read. These activities served to consolidate their grasp of plot details, character development, and thematic elements. The teacher's role evolved from a mere distributor of material to a facilitator who guided analysis, clarified ambiguities, and connected the story content to broader language learning objectives.

Overall, the implementation demonstrated a functional blend of technology and pedagogy. While the core activity was digital reading, it was systematically enveloped by pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies familiar in language teaching. This approach ensured that Wattpad was not merely an entertaining diversion but a central component of a scaffolded learning process aimed explicitly at improving reading comprehension skills through relevant and interest-driven content.

Students' Perceptions of the Use of the Wattpad Application as a Learning Medium to Improve Reading Comprehension

Students expressed overwhelmingly positive perceptions regarding the use of Wattpad as an educational medium. A predominant view was that the stories on Wattpad were significantly more interesting and engaging than the texts found in their standard English textbooks. They described the materials as lighter, more relatable, and easier to follow because the language used was less formal and more reflective of everyday communication. This increased appeal directly boosted their motivation to read, with many reporting greater enthusiasm and willingness to participate in reading activities during English lessons.

The students highlighted that the platform aided their comprehension process in several tangible ways. They found that the narrative structure, often presented in short chapters with clear plots, helped them follow storylines and understand complex sentences more easily than in denser academic texts. Features such as the comment sections and story summaries were specifically mentioned as useful tools that provided contextual clues and peer insights, which assisted in deciphering meaning without over-reliance on dictionaries. This supportive ecosystem within the app made the daunting task of reading in a foreign language feel more manageable and less intimidating.

Furthermore, students perceived a positive impact on their broader language skills through sustained use of Wattpad. Many reported incidental improvements in their vocabulary, noting they became familiar with common words and expressions used in daily life through repeated exposure in different stories. Some also felt their understanding of grammatical structures and sentence patterns improved indirectly by observing their usage in authentic narrative contexts. The immersive reading experience allowed for natural language acquisition, complementing their formal studies.

However, a few practical challenges were noted from the student perspective. Some mentioned occasional distractions due to the vast array of other interesting stories available on the platform, potentially diverting focus from the assigned reading. Others pointed to technical issues, such as unstable internet connectivity, which could hinder access during class time.



Despite these minor drawbacks, the consensus among students was that the benefits far outweighed the difficulties, and most expressed a strong desire for Wattpad to continue being used in their English language instruction.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating the Wattpad Application as a Learning Medium for Reading Comprehension

From the teacher's perspective, the integration of Wattpad presented substantially more opportunities than challenges. She viewed the application as a powerful tool for promoting digital literacy and aligning education with the technological habits of modern students. The primary opportunity identified was the significant increase in student motivation and engagement; learners who were previously disinterested in reading became more enthusiastic and participatory when materials were delivered through this familiar and enjoyable medium. This shift in attitude was considered a fundamental step toward improving learning outcomes.

The teacher also recognized Wattpad's potential for facilitating natural and contextual language acquisition. She observed that students were better able to infer vocabulary meaning and understand grammatical structures when encountered within compelling storylines rather than in isolated textbook exercises. The platform supported differentiated learning by allowing her to recommend stories of varying complexity to match individual student proficiency levels. Furthermore, it provided authentic cultural and situational contexts that made the language learning experience more meaningful and holistic.

Nevertheless, the teacher acknowledged several challenges that required careful management. A primary concern was the need for meticulous content curation, as not all stories on the public platform were suitable for an educational setting in terms of language, theme, or moral values. Technical constraints, particularly unreliable internet access at the school, sometimes disrupted lesson flow. Additionally, varying levels of digital competency and English proficiency among students meant that some required more guidance than others to use the app effectively for learning, rather than just for entertainment.

Conclusively, the teacher's appraisal was highly favourable regarding future use. She expressed a clear intention to continue and potentially expand the use of Wattpad in her curriculum, as well as to recommend it to colleagues. She emphasized that with proper guidance, clear learning objectives, and careful material selection, Wattpad could transcend being a mere novelty and become a sustainable, effective pedagogical tool. The key to success, in her view, lay in the teacher's active role in structuring the activities and bridging the gap between informal reading and formal learning goals.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm and contextualize the positive role of digital platforms like Wattpad in enhancing reading comprehension. Consistent with the research of Fadillah and Amin (2022), the implementation at SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah demonstrated that Wattpad can significantly improve students' engagement and their ability to identify main ideas and textual details. This alignment suggests that the platform's strength lies in its capacity to present language within compelling narratives, which facilitates a more intuitive grasp of structure and meaning compared to traditional textbook excerpts. The observed increase in student focus and participation in this study directly mirrors the motivational benefits highlighted in earlier literature, reinforcing Wattpad's utility as a pedagogical tool.

Furthermore, the structured implementation observed, where the teacher guided students from reading to discussion and summarization, extends the findings of Rizal, Anugrahwati, and Burhanudin (2023). Their study noted Wattpad's effectiveness in improving comprehension scores, and the current research provides a qualitative blueprint of *how* that improvement can be orchestrated in the classroom. The teacher's methodology of integrating pre-selected stories with specific comprehension tasks and collaborative analysis illustrates a



practical model for moving beyond superficial engagement to achieve deeper cognitive processing of English texts. This bridges a gap in the literature by detailing the pedagogical mechanics behind successful integration.

Regarding student perceptions, the results strongly correlate with the works of Azzahra, Francsey, and Subadar (2024) and Ganie, Miranda, and Yusuf (2021). Students reported a preference for Wattpad due to its relatable, everyday language and engaging story formats, which directly enhanced their reading motivation and self-perceived comprehension. This study adds nuance by highlighting how features like comments and chapter summaries were actively used by students as cognitive scaffolds, a specific behavioural insight that enriches the understanding of how digital platforms support autonomous learning strategies. The positive shift in attitude from viewing reading as a chore to an enjoyable activity underscores the platform's role in affective domain development.

However, this study also surfaces challenges that qualify the overwhelmingly positive picture, introducing a layer of practical consideration sometimes less emphasized in prior studies. Issues such as inconsistent internet connectivity, the need for vigilant content curation, and varying student proficiency levels highlight that the successful use of Wattpad is contingent on teacher mediation and institutional support. These findings suggest that the platform's integration is not a panacea but a pedagogical approach that requires careful planning, digital literacy, and adaptive teaching strategies to mitigate its limitations while harnessing its opportunities.

In conclusion, this discussion synthesizes the evidence to position Wattpad as a highly effective and relevant medium for teaching reading comprehension at the secondary school level. The study confirms previous quantitative findings on its efficacy while providing a rich, descriptive account of its implementation dynamics. By elucidating the teacher's strategic role, the students' positive reception, and the attendant logistical challenges, the research offers a balanced and practically valuable contribution for educators seeking to leverage digital storytelling platforms in their own contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of the Wattpad application in teaching reading comprehension to eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 6 Bengkulu Tengah was implemented in a structured manner and in accordance with the learning objectives. Wattpad was used as a learning medium that supports reading activities through the selection of texts appropriate to students' proficiency levels and interests, followed by discussion activities and comprehension tasks. Students showed positive perceptions toward the use of Wattpad, as the reading texts were considered more interesting, contextual, and easier to understand compared to those in textbooks, which increased students' engagement and motivation in reading. From the teacher's perspective, the use of Wattpad provided more opportunities than challenges, particularly in supporting digital literacy and helping students understand reading texts in a more natural way, although there were still some technical constraints such as limited internet access and the need for careful material selection. With proper teacher guidance and appropriate reading material selection, the Wattpad application can function as a relevant and effective learning medium in supporting students' English reading comprehension skills. Based on the research findings and conclusions presented, it is recommended that future researchers further investigate the use of the Wattpad application or other digital reading platforms using different research designs, educational levels, or language skills. This study is expected to serve as a reference for the development of further research on digital literacy and



technology-based language learning.

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