



The Role of Teachers in Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through the Implementation of Webtoon Application

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Abstract This thesis is entitled "The Role of Teachers In Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through The Implementation of Webtoon Application". In order to enhance students' comprehension and learning capacities, teachers play a critical role in education. The function that instructors play as mediators and facilitators is explored in this study. In order to improve students' reading comprehension, this study attempts to ascertain how teachers can function as mediators and facilitators when using webtoon applications. The approach employed in this study is a qualitative case study. A combination of semi-structured interviews, documentation, and semi-participant observation is the employed methodology. Data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion/verification constitute data analysis in this study. The findings of this study suggest that teachers can act as mediators and facilitators, piqueing students' interest in reading by utilizing engaging teaching resources like webtoon applications, particularly when it comes to reading instruction. In order to achieve this, technology is used to support learning together with other strategies like setting up supplies, computers, Infocus, the internet, and letting children select or read books that are age- and genre-appropriate. This study comes to the conclusion that using webcomics has been successful in raising pupils' reading interest. As their interest in the material increases, students become more driven and curious to study more. In the end, this improves their capacity to comprehend what they read. Learning improves as a result of students' increased comprehension of webtoon content. delightful for learners.

Keyword: *The role of teacher, facilitator, mediator, reading comprehension, webtoon*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehension and flexible activity that requires a lot of time and resources to develop. There are many different reasons why people read, including study, knowledge, and entertainment. One of the most crucial aspects of being a proficient reader is reading for inspiration. Reading is an interactive activity, meaning that the reader applies information from the written page to what they already know. Additionally, reading is interactive, requiring the simultaneous use of several different talents. Readers typically go into a book expecting to comprehend what they read. In order to read well, readers employ a variety of techniques. Because they won't become fluent right once, readers will likewise acquire reading skills gradually. The most crucial talent that people need is the ability to read. (Bojovic, 2010)

Speaking and interpreting written stuff through speech is what reading involves. Analyzing and arranging several sophisticated abilities, including learning, reasoning, integrating, and problem-solving, are part of this process. To explain things to the reader, all of these abilities are applied. Reading comprehension, reception, and understanding of written concepts or ideas are prioritized in classroom reading instruction. Student comprehension of

words, phrases, sentences, and texts as a whole are necessary for this to be accomplished. School-based reading programs are designed to help students think critically and express their feelings while addressing a particular theme or genre of literature. (Erwin Harianto, 2020)

The passive environment of theoretical learning approaches is gradually taking shape in today's technological age. Particularly in language classes—English being one of them. Many teachers still do not adapt their English learning strategies to the needs of their pupils, which causes the students to feel burdened, believe that English sessions are extremely hard, and become fearful of learning the language. One of the factors is a lack of self-assurance. Many students find it difficult to follow this lesson because of the extensive vocabulary and sentence structures that differ from Indonesian, and they often feel ashamed when reading because they are afraid they would read something incorrectly. The majority of schools tend to focus on reading and writing, they neglect listening and speaking. Whereas listening, speaking, reading and writing are the most important parts of English that must be mastered. When students are taught to read at school, they only read the assigned text but they do not understand what they read. Without reading comprehension, students will not be able to understand the meaning of the text they read. Therefore, reading comprehension is an important skill that students should have. Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text, the purpose of which is to gain an understanding of the text rather than deriving it from individual words or sentences. This shows that reading ability continues to play an important role in broadening students' perspectives.

Based on the researcher's experience during field experience practice (PPL) in one junior high school and the experience of some of the author's close friends in other schools, there are still many students who lack interest in reading, especially English. The causes of students' low interest in reading are reading materials that are less interesting and monotonous, limited vocabulary, and limited libraries at school or in the neighborhood. These things cause many students to have difficulty in understanding the meaning of written text even though they know how to read it. To overcome these problems, teachers as mediators and facilitators must be able to provide teaching by using techniques or media as teaching aids to facilitate learning. There are many types of media such as pictures, apps, diagrams, graphs, maps, flashcards, and others. Teachers can use applications as media in learning, especially learning to read to students. The use of applications as learning media will help learning to be more interesting and not boring. One of the innovative and relevant media for the current generation is the Webtoon application. Webtoon uses pictures and illustrations to present the story. Many webtoons feature stories that are socially and culturally relevant to students' daily lives, trends, and interests, thus increasing

students' reading interest. The format of attractive images and little text can help students who are not used to reading or have difficulty understanding text become more comfortable and engaged. By using webtoon apps, students can add new vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures that appear in stories on webtoon.

Webtoon is a web-based comic that has five accessible languages. Webtoon can also be considered as a tool to spread modern humor (Rahman et al., 2022), or as a collection of story images posted online (Dian Bagus Harmoko, 2017). This app is very popular in South Korea and around the world. The app contains various comic titles categorized into several genres, such as drama, comedy, horror, fantasy, and slice of life. (Sabrina Ghina Fauziyyah, Maya Dewi Kurnia, 2022). In addition, the enthusiasm of Webtoon readers continues to increase, encouraging the production of better comics. The platform often holds competitions for budding comic artists, and many types of comics are available for free. (Viqri Khaikal hidayatulloh, 2021)

In addition to interesting webtoons, there is an Indonesian writer who managed to attract the world's attention through his writing in an article published on CNN Indonesia (Putra, n.d.). With 88 local webtunis featuring their local works, webtoons can also attract students' interest in writing. Webtoon is a type of comic that contains a light story with a quick ending, making readers feel comfortable. Webtoon can also be used as a medium to support school literacy programs. Literacy is a person's language ability that includes speaking, writing, reading, and listening to journals. However, literacy here is centered on reading culture. This is due to the lack of student interest in reading. If seen now, there is a correlation between traditional and digital comics, webtoon is one of the trends that is becoming a hype and trend among the younger generation. One of the most related phenomena to this is the declining number of book publications. This clearly has an impact on traditional comics as well. When traditional comic books could not compete with other media content such as videos, webtoons grew in popularity. The comic industry made a comeback with the rise of the internet as a new medium. Because it can be accessed easily, many readers turn to digital media such as webtoon. Beginning with curiosity about what a webtoon is, readers then enthusiastically look forward to chapter after chapter. (Darmawati, 2022)

Teachers can use this learning model to make English learning interesting so that students can remember newly learned English vocabulary from webtoon stories. This gives students a real experience that has special meaning. By using this learning model, students' interest in reading can increase. This will help them to develop thinking ability, problem-solving skills and become independent learners. In addition, this learning model encourages students to work

in groups to help each other solve complex problems. This learning model can also help students complete academic tasks, help them understand difficult concepts, and improve critical thinking skills (Amin Khudlori, Achmad Bahtiar Efendi, 2022). However, the use of Webtoon apps in education is still relatively new, and further research is needed. It is important to understand how teachers can act as facilitators and mediators in using Webtoon to improve students' reading skills. As facilitators, teachers are expected to direct and support students in exploring Webtoon content, as well as applying effective reading strategies. As mediators, teachers are expected to help students connect the content they read to their experiences and knowledge, and talk about what they know about the topic.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the role of teachers as facilitators and mediators in the use of Webtoon applications to improve students' reading skills with the research title "The Role of Teachers in Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through The Implementation of Webtoon Application"

2. METHOD

This research is a type of qualitative research. These data can be obtained from data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews, semi participant observations, and documentation. Data and data sources are important components in qualitative research. This research was conducted at MAN 1 Medan where the primary sources or subject of this research is one of English teacher of MAN 1 Medan. The primary data or object of this research is the role of teachers in developing students' reading comprehension skills by using webtoon applications.

Researchers conducted data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data trustworthiness checking is carried out by researchers to produce data that can be accounted for and trusted scientifically with a high level of credibility. Data trustworthiness in qualitative research includes tests, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Teacher as A Facilitator in Developing Students' Reading Comprehension by Using The Webtoon Application

The role of teachers as facilitators is to help students find the resources and strategies they need for independent learning. As stated by Jeremy Harmer (2003) as a learning facilitator, teachers must provide all the resources needed by students, such as teaching materials, reading

materials, digital sources, and an adequate learning environment. This is in accordance with the statement from the results of the interviews conducted.

“sekarang ini kan sudah semakin canggih ya, terus siswa-siswa saya juga sehari-hari nya memakai teknologi seperti gadget gitu ya baik untuk hiburan ataupun belajar. Nah jadi saya sebagai mediator dan fasilitator berinisiatif mencoba menggunakan aplikasi untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris, sebagai media nya gitu, terutama membaca, pemahaman membaca gitu ya.”

From the findings above, the learning media used is the webtoon application and as a facilitator, to increase students' interest in reading in the learning process and utilize technology positively to help them understand lessons, especially reading, the first thing to do is introduce webtoon to students. Researchers also found that as facilitators, teachers use structured and inclusive strategies in an effort to improve students' reading comprehension through the use of webtoon.

“ya tentu saya menggunakan strategi atau metode itu tadi ya salah satunya itu untuk memastikan siswa memahami cerita di dalam webtoon, pasti yang pertama saya kasih penjelasan tentang latar belakang cerita, karakter utamanya terus saya meminta siswa membaca bagian tertentu gitu ya terus saya juga eee..apa buat catatan singkat lah gitu, apa kayak macam summary selama membaca terus nanti mereka bikin pertanyaan mengajukan pertanyaan tentang pemahaman mereka gitu terus mengadakan sesi diskusi dikelas supaya bisa mereka sharing gitu ya berbagai tentang cerita dan karakter yang mereka baca, terus mereka bisa juga menanyakan hal-hal yang belum mereka pahami di teks itu gitu.”

This strategy includes several important aspects that support each other and contribute to the success of learning. It is said that in improving students' reading comprehension, the strategy implemented by teachers as facilitators is to involve students in the process of selecting reading materials and encourage students to learn actively by asking them to ask questions about the texts they read. That way, students have the opportunity to share opinions and help overcome their difficulties in understanding the text through this strategy. This is in accordance with the opinion of Harden & Crosby (2000) that knowledge is built in students' minds and involves students continuously.

2. The Role of Teacher as A Mediator in Developing Students' Reading Comprehension by Using the Webtoon Application

Teachers play an important role as mediators in encouraging students to interact in various discussion activities by creating an interactive learning environment where students are

invited to interact in class. Students not only gain a better understanding of the material, but this strategy also helps them improve their critical thinking and communication skills.

From the results of this study, it is known that as a mediator, teachers help students learn the themes, characters, and plots of the webtoons they read. Teachers help students improve their analytical and interpretation skills by forming discussion groups and encouraging students to explore the topics they are studying thoroughly.

“saya sebagai mediator biasanya kasih dukungan maksudnya menyediakan dukungan tambahan, misalnya menggunakan metode memberikan penjelasan tambahan kayak tentang kosakata yang sulit, mengarahkan mereka membuat catatan gitu selama membaca jadi supaya mereka ingat yang uda dibaca itu apa gitu, dibuat catatan kecil terus juga menyediakan alat bantu visual gitu ya supaya bisa membantu mereka mengorganisir apa ya mengatur gitu informasi yang mereka dapat.”

This encourages students to talk about what they understand and share their opinions with their classmates, which ultimately increases their involvement and active participation in the learning process.

These findings show how teachers play a role as mediators in overcoming variations in students' reading comprehension during the learning process through webtoons by providing additional support to help students who have difficulty understanding the content. Additional explanations of difficult vocabulary are one form of support provided. Teachers ensure that each student understands the meaning of words that may be an obstacle in reading. This explanation helps students enrich their understanding of the current text and enrich their vocabulary for the next text.

Haywood (2016) explains that teachers as mediators are interpreted as intermediaries in student learning activities, such as mediating or resolving discussions that have reached a dead end. In the research results, as a mediator, the teacher links the webtoon story to the ongoing lesson topic. After that, discussions or other activities are held that allow students to link the ideas they have learned to real-world situations. This method not only makes learning more interesting and relevant to students but also helps them understand how these ideas are applied in everyday life.

Overall, this teacher's efforts to encourage discussion and interaction through webtoon show that a collaborative approach can improve students' understanding and engagement in the learning process. This approach not only helps students in their academic progress but also prepares them to communicate and work together well in the future.

With this method, teachers not only help students who are having difficulties but also create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This shows that teachers can make webtoon an effective learning tool with an active role as a mediator and improve students' overall reading comprehension.

“menerapkan webtoon ini ada efek yang ee, yang besar terhadap kemampuan terhadap minat la yang pertama minat siswa dalam membaca. Kalau sudah minat kan berarti kan siswa itu ee apa namanya, bisa lebih tertarik untuk mendalami materi bacaan dan itu kan bisa meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman mereka untuk mendapatkan konten-konten yang mereka baca memahami apa yang mereka baca di dalam teks itu, jadi selama saya menerapkannya saya kira ini worth it ya, ini bagus, bagus efektif dipakai untuk mengajarkan reading kepada siswa.”

The results of this study are similar to the results of previous research conducted by Alfa Khairani (2020), the results of the study showed that the use of the webtoon application can improve students' reading comprehension.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on the role of teachers as facilitators and mediators in developing students' reading comprehension skills through webtoon applications, it can be concluded that there are two formulations of the problem in this study, namely teachers as facilitators and mediators help students find the sources and strategies needed for independent learning. To develop students' reading comprehension skills, it is necessary to increase their interest in reading, namely by applying interesting techniques, methods, and strategies in learning. One of them is by implementing technology-based learning media, as done by the informants in this study. In this study, the webtoon application was applied as an interesting and interactive learning media. The teacher as a facilitator in this study tried to ensure that students understood how to use webtoon as a fun and useful learning resource and provided several examples of interesting stories related to current learning topics in addition to providing technical instructions. This aims to increase student interest and involvement in the learning process and utilize technology positively to help them understand lessons, especially reading. In addition, involving students in choosing reading materials. So that students are more interested and motivated in learning, and asking for their opinions on the genres or themes they like.

With this strategy, teachers not only improve their reading comprehension, but also increase their involvement in the learning process. And Webtoon can be a useful tool for

literacy development. Seen from the results of interviews and observations that have been carried out, as a mediator, teachers provide additional support to students who have difficulties because they are aware of variations in student understanding. Such as additional explanations of complex vocabulary, encouragement to take small notes while reading, and the use of visual aids to organize information are part of this support. In addition, as a mediator, teachers encourage students to interact and speak actively in collaborative activities by forming discussion groups to talk to each other, and the stories in the webtoon are related to the current lesson material. This strategy can help increase student participation and improve their understanding. Overall, it has succeeded in creating a good and supportive learning environment, where students can overcome their difficulties, interact, and explore learning materials better. Based on the results of the interview, the teacher found that the use of webtoon succeeded in increasing students' interest in reading. Students become more interested and motivated to learn more about what they read with increased interest. Ultimately, this improves their ability to understand what they read. Students become better able to understand webtoon texts, which results in better learning.

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