

Applying Wattpad Platform as an Instruction Medium to Improve Reading Skills Viewed from Reading Strategies

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Abstract

The use of Wattpad platform as an instructional medium can be a vital tool for teachers to facilitate students' reading comprehension skills. By employing effective reading strategies, students can comprehend texts more efficiently. This study aims to enhance students' reading proficiency in narrative texts by utilizing Wattpad platform as a medium, and to evaluate the students' perception of the platform's effectiveness in teaching narrative texts. This research followed a classroom action research (CAR) design, which involved the researcher, collaborators, and tenth-grade students from senior high schools. The CAR process consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research data were both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data was gathered from the post-test, while qualitative data was obtained through observation. The researcher employed SPSS software to analyze the quantitative data. The results showed that the mean score of the post-test was 84, indicating that the Wattpad platform application method can enhance students' reading proficiency in narrative texts. This was further confirmed by field notes and observation sheets of the teaching process, indicating that the students enjoyed the reading class and their reading abilities had improved. Moreover, the students perceived the use of Wattpad platform as very effective, with a response rate of 48 students answering (A) very good. The students' focus, drive, earnestness, and responses were deemed satisfactory, with continuous improvement in their self-assurance and reading proficiency. The educational activities were found to be interesting, suggesting that the use of Wattpad platform as an instructional medium can be beneficial for enhancing students' reading skills.

Keywords: Wattpad Platform Application; Reading skills; Reading Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in education, as it is essential for students to have good reading abilities to access and comprehend the contents of reading texts. Albiladi (2018) argues that the significance of reading goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge, as it is also linked to the development of human thinking ability. In this regard, reading can be considered as a means to enhance linguistic (Allen & Hancock, 2008), moral (Anwar & Sailuddin, 2022), and emotional intelligence (Alfatihah & Tyas, 2022), which consequently shapes the overall personality development of individuals. As students improve their reading proficiency, they become more equipped to engage with different

kinds of texts, which, in turn, enhances their critical thinking abilities (Asyari et al., 2016), and overall cognitive development. Through reading, students can also develop empathy, as they gain access to different perspectives and experiences (Bai & Wang, 2020). Therefore, the importance of reading as a skill cannot be overemphasized, as it plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Reading is an indispensable component of the learning process, and it serves as a necessary educational tool (Alquraishi et al., 2020; Brevik, 2019). Education is a fundamental need in people's lives, and it can be acquired formally, starting from elementary school to college. English is one of the most crucial subjects in language education, especially in Indonesia where English is taught as a foreign language from elementary schools to universities (Jupri et al., 2022; Kazemian et al., 2021). The teaching of English is aimed at expanding students' knowledge in science, technology, and communication with people from diverse cultures. Learning English entails the acquisition of all four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Assauri et al., 2022). In this context, the researcher's focus is on the development of reading skills. By emphasizing reading skills in English language education, students can effectively access and comprehend different kinds of texts, including academic and scientific literature (Irawan et al., 2022; Karya et al., 2022). This is especially important for students who plan to pursue further studies or work in an international context, where reading proficiency is essential for success. Thus, the development of reading skills in English language education is a crucial aspect of the learning process.

The focus of this study is on the development of reading skills in language education. Reading refers an activity that entails the comprehension of written texts through the processes of perception and thought (Dolba et al., 2022). In language courses, reading is considered a crucial skill to be learned, as it requires the translation of text word for word. In the middle schools, reading is an extraordinary power, requiring a high level of mastery and ability to execute effectively (Habibi et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of reading skills in language education, as it enables students to effectively access, comprehend, and analyze different kinds of texts, including academic and scientific literature. The ability to read effectively also enhances students' critical thinking abilities and contributes to their overall cognitive development (Allen & Hancock, 2008; D.-W. Chen & Catrambone, 2015). By emphasizing the importance of reading skills in language education, students can acquire the necessary skills to be successful in their academic pursuits and future careers. Therefore, the development of reading skills is an essential aspect of language education that should be given priority.

The development of reading skills in students is crucial for effective comprehension of written texts (Firman et al., 2021; Rafi et al., 2021). However, many students often encounter various challenges while learning to read. One major challenge is the difficulty in identifying the main idea of a given text, as well as finding the correct answer when answering questions related to the text. This can be attributed to the lack of vocabulary (Arndt & Woore, 2018; Baiq Sumarni et al., 2022). Another challenge is the lack of interest in reading, often due to the perception that English is a difficult language to learn, with complicated grammar rules (Andika et al., 2023; Anthonissen, 2020). In addition, students may feel bored when asked to read, especially when they have to constantly refer to a dictionary for unfamiliar words or translations. Third, students may lack interest in learning as a result of using only books (Aziz et al., 2019), and often have difficulty identifying different types of text genres. Moreover, the lack of student motivation contributes to minimal reading interest (S. Chen et al., 2022). These problems were identified through observation and direct communication with senior high school students during the teaching practice process.

To address the reading challenges faced by students, teachers must adopt creative approaches that inspire them to read English literature. To this end, teachers need to create a conducive and fun environment in the classroom that can motivate students (Bai & Wang, 2020; Cho et al., 2019). Teachers have been using various reading and skimming strategies to improve students' reading abilities (Brevik, 2019; Bruen, 2020). However, improving reading abilities is not sufficient, as students must be able to connect with the text and recall the information they have learned (Cirino et al., 2017; Crosson & Lesaux, 2010). In this regard, the use of innovative teaching tools can be beneficial. The Wattpad platform, an online platform for sharing stories, could be a useful teaching tool to engage students and help them improve their reading skills. By incorporating the Wattpad platform in their teaching practices, teachers can encourage students to read more and make connections between texts and their own experiences. Therefore, the researcher proposes conducting a study using the Wattpad platform to explore its effectiveness as a teaching tool for enhancing students' reading abilities.

The utilization of digital technology in education is increasing rapidly (Almekhlafy, 2020; Al-Rawahi & Al-Mekhlafi, 2015). One of the digital platforms that has recently gained popularity among educators is Wattpad. Wattpad is a digital storytelling platform that offers a diverse range of literary genres such as fan fiction, teen fiction, romance, action, and many more (Rebora & Pianzola, 2018). Wattpad's unique feature is the genre classification that allows readers to select the appropriate genre that caters to their interests and needs. Wattpad enables students to access digital stories without the need for a physical book, making it a convenient tool for students to improve their reading skills (Coelho et al., 2019). The use of Wattpad in education provides opportunities for teachers to incorporate digital technologies into their teaching and motivate students to read more (Coelho et al., 2019; Rebora & Pianzola, 2018). Therefore, the integration of the Wattpad platform into the learning process can contribute significantly to the development of students' reading abilities.

The use of the Wattpad platform as a medium in the study of reading skills was chosen based on its potential to allow students to access various genres of books and find something interesting to read. In addition, Wattpad is a free application that can be downloaded and used on a cell phone, which is accessible to most high school students. The research was conducted with a specific theme in mind, which is the use of Wattpad as an instructional medium to improve reading skills in high schools. Based on this theme, the researcher formulated the research question, which aims to determine the effectiveness of using Wattpad as a learning medium in improving the reading skills of high school students in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The study aims to provide insights on whether or not Wattpad can be an effective tool in enhancing the reading abilities of students in the Indonesian context.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) to find out the effectiveness of Wattpad platform to improve students' reading skills. This study is carried out by teachers to identify the learning problem they want to address, and then develop a plan of action based on theory, practical experience, or a hypothesis. Rather than contributing to the body of knowledge, the objective of the action research project is to improve and modify the current practice. This implies that teachers can use classroom action research to determine what works best in their unique environment and to inform their lesson planning (Cohen et al., 2018). The teachers aim to increase the students' achievement levels by addressing the learning challenges faced by the pupils. By focusing on the specific

needs of their students, teachers can tailor their teaching methods to better suit their students' learning abilities and styles.

The present study employs both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to gather comprehensive information regarding the research topic. Quantitative data are obtained through testing and are analyzed by determining how well students perform based on the present criteria. Cohen (2018) states quantitative data is numerical data that can be precisely measured and subjected to basic mathematical operations using arithmetic. On the other hand, qualitative data is any non-numerical information that can be documented in a study. Qualitative data cannot be quantified using mathematical relationships, and it is often represented by words, pictures, or other visual signals (Richey & Klein, 2005). The combination of these two methods provide a deeper understanding of the research topic, which eventually lead to effective solutions to classroom learning issues that can enhance the learning experience of students.

The focus of this study is the reading skills of tenth-grade students in senior high schools. The researcher identified a class of 20 students who demonstrated a lack of interest in English lessons, specifically in reading English texts. The purpose of the study is to explore how reading techniques using the Wattpad platform can improve students' reading abilities. To select the participants for the study, the researcher employed a judgment sampling method, also known as purposive sampling. This technique involves selecting participants based on their qualities and is not dependent on any underlying theories or a predetermined number of participants. The researcher chose to include 20 students from the identified class in the tenth grade at senior high schools as the sample. To ensure a representative sample, the researcher used simple random sampling, selecting the participants at random without considering the population's strata. This approach allowed the researcher to gather data from a diverse group of students, enhancing the study's validity.

Data Analysis Technique

In this study, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive description of the scenario during the teaching and learning process. Qualitative data analysis is characterized by inductive analysis, which is based on the data obtained. Fahmi el Sabaa et al. (2017) argue the analysis consists of three concurrent activity lines, namely data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation is a type of analysis that aims to clarify, group, concentrate, discard, and arrange data to facilitate the production of "final" conclusions that can be confirmed. It is important to note that the term "data condensation" does not necessarily imply quantification. The researchers utilize various methods, such as coding and categorization, to analyze the qualitative data. On the other hand, the quantitative data are produced through tests, and the results are analyzed using statistical methods. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis provides a more robust and accurate understanding of the teaching and learning process, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed recommendations.

In the phase of data condensation, researchers clarify, concentrate, toss out, and arrange data in final form. Due to this, conclusions can be made and confirmed. This technique does not always involve quantification. However, the analyst may decide that the program under consideration has a "high" or "low" degree of effectiveness. The second main stream of analysis activity is data display. A display is a condensed, structured arrangement of information that enables analytical contemplation and action. Observing displays enables us to make sense of what is happening and to act - either by conducting additional research or by acting on the basis of that understanding. In the past,

expanded text has been the most popular method of displaying qualitative data. The design and use of displays is an integral aspect of analysis, much like the condensing of data. Analytic activities include designing a presentation, selecting the rows and columns of a matrix for qualitative data, and determining which data, in which form, should be entered in the cells.

The third stream of analysis activity is drawing and verifying conclusions. Researchers evaluate what things mean by recording patterns, statements, propositions, explanations, and causal flows from the beginning of data gathering. As the analyst moves forward, conclusions are additionally validated. Verification may be through an elaborate process involving protracted discussion and review among colleagues to develop "intersubjective consensus," or it may involve extensive efforts to replicate a finding in another data set. By using these three concurrent activity lines, the researcher can analyze both qualitative and quantitative data to draw conclusions about the teaching and learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The use of Wattpad platform as an instructional medium can be a vital tool for teachers to facilitate students' reading comprehension skills. By employing effective reading strategies, students can comprehend texts more efficiently. This study aims to enhance students' reading proficiency in narrative texts by utilizing Wattpad platform as a medium, and to evaluate the students' perception of the platform's effectiveness in teaching narrative texts. The mean scores of students' reading skills in cycle 1 was 67, while the mean score of students' reading skills in cycle 2 was 80. It means that the students reached their passing grade in cycle 2. Students' achievement of reading skills using Wattpad platform in cycle 1 and cycle 2 can be presented in Figure 1 as follows.

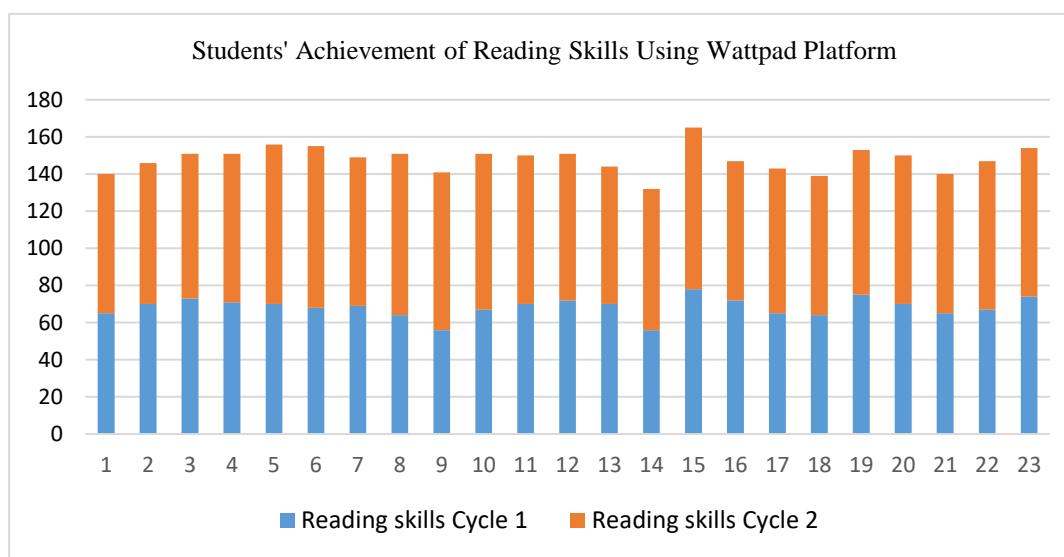


Figure 1. Students' Achievement of Reading Skills in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Another factor which is affecting students' reading skills is reading strategies while they carry out reading activities. Reading strategies play a significant role in the development of students' reading skills. The ability to apply effective reading strategies can positively impact students' comprehension and overall reading performance. Reading strategies refer to the techniques or methods used by readers to enhance their reading abilities. These strategies include predicting, summarizing, questioning, and visualizing,

among others. When students use these strategies while reading, they can better understand the text and retain the information presented. Research has shown that students who use effective reading strategies can improve their reading skills and academic performance. Furthermore, teachers can also help students develop their reading strategies by providing explicit instruction on how to use them and giving opportunities for guided practice. Therefore, understanding the importance of reading strategies and incorporating them into teaching practices can significantly benefit students' reading skills. The mean score of students' reading strategies can be presented in Figure 2 as follows.

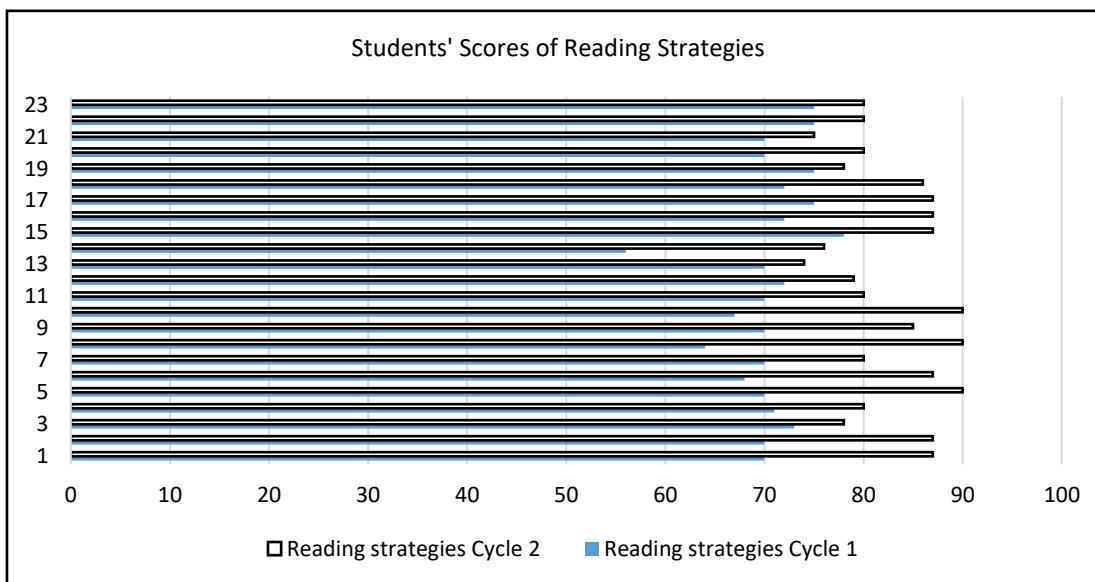


Figure 2. Students' Mean Score of Reading Strategies

Discussion

The integration of reading strategies with the use of the Wattpad platform application has demonstrated an improvement in students' reading skills. The platform provides a plethora of texts that can be used by teachers to facilitate reading activities and enhance students' engagement with the reading material. The application's perceived effectiveness lies in its ability to cultivate students' interest in reading, which has a positive impact on their motivation to learn. The improvement in reading skills can also be attributed to the diverse range of texts available on the platform, which enable students to read beyond the typical academic texts and explore a variety of genres (Coelho et al., 2019; Rebora & Pianzola, 2018). This fosters an environment of active engagement, allowing students to develop reading strategies that are appropriate for different types of texts. Thus, the use of the Wattpad platform application is an effective tool for teachers to enhance students' reading skills and foster their love for reading.

Motivation is a critical factor that can influence students' willingness to engage in reading activities, which, in turn, plays a crucial part in their success in comprehending various reading texts (S. Chen et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2019). Firmansyah (2023) posited that motivated students are more likely to read and learn more quickly than those who lack motivation. Conversely, students who lack motivation are more likely to lose focus, misbehave, and generate discipline issues in particular reading activities (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Wang & Littlewood, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to create a conducive environment that fosters motivation and encourages students to engage actively in reading activities. A motivated student is more likely to be an engaged and active reader, who can

comprehend and analyze reading texts more effectively. Consequently, a positive correlation exists between students' motivation and their reading skills. Therefore, teachers must prioritize strategies that encourage motivation in students to read and incorporate these into their reading programs to enhance students' overall reading skills.

The present study finds out the relationship between students' reading skills and the application of reading strategies. Reading strategies are a set of cognitive processes and behaviors that enable readers to comprehend texts efficiently and effectively (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010; Haerazi et al., 2021). In this context, students who possess a wide range of reading strategies tend to perform better in reading tasks than those who do not. Consistent with the findings of Haerazi and Irawan (2020), reading skills are considered essential for obtaining global information through the application of various reading strategies. The importance of reading strategies is supported by the idea that proficient readers utilize a variety of strategies to comprehend texts. Therefore, it can be inferred that the use of effective reading strategies is a significant factor in the development of students' reading skills.

The results of the study indicated that the Wattpad platform application was an effective tool in enhancing the reading skills of tenth grade students in middle schools. Specifically, the students' mean score increased from 64 in cycle 1 to 80 in cycle 2, which exceeded the passing grade. The classroom activities during the implementation of the Wattpad platform were filled with excitement and engagement, with students demonstrating a newfound interest, enjoyment, and confidence in reading short and simple texts. This improvement in reading skills can be attributed to the use of the Wattpad platform application as a media tool, allowing students to apply various reading strategies effectively. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on the importance of utilizing technology (Almekhlafy, 2020; Hoi & Le Hang, 2021) in the classroom to promote students' reading skills and engagement.

The use of media such as the Wattpad platform application can be an effective method for enhancing students' reading skills (Rebora & Pianzola, 2018). In this study, the application of reading sub-skills such as scanning, skimming, and sub-reading were encouraged to improve students' reading performance. The students perceived the Wattpad platform application as a beneficial tool to support their learning. The scanning sub-skill involves identifying and locating specific information within a text quickly, whereas sub-reading is a strategy that enables the reader to understand the general content of a text without necessarily going into details (Haerazi et al., 2021; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Additionally, the skimming sub-skill helps the reader to gain an overall understanding of a text by focusing on the most significant or relevant information (Firdaus & Mayasari, 2022; Pebriantika & Aristia, 2021). Combining scanning and skimming can enhance the reader's ability to comprehend the main ideas and themes of a text, thus improving their overall reading proficiency. Overall, the use of these sub-skills in combination with the Wattpad platform application can provide an effective means of improving students' reading skills.

Habibi et al. (2022) highlights the importance of reading materials that are both easy and interesting for promoting high-volume consumption, which in turn enhances reading pleasure and comprehension. The joy of reading is attributed to the satisfaction of discovering and learning from the text (Khonamri et al., 2021). Extensive reading has the potential to increase the automaticity of low-level processes because of the repeated exposure to language (Cirino et al., 2017; Cuticelli et al., 2016). Furthermore, the use of reading strategies enhances the reading experience by reinforcing reading pleasure and comprehension. This demonstrates the importance of using both extensive reading and reading strategies as a means of promoting reading skills and pleasure among readers.

Intensive reading and extensive reading are two distinct reading practices with different objectives. Intensive reading is a type of reading where the reader's focus is on scrutinizing the text and analyzing it in detail to extract specific linguistic elements, such as grammatical patterns and concrete lexical items. In contrast, extensive reading is a practice where the reader is exposed to a large volume of reading material with the aim of enhancing their reading speed, comprehension, and overall linguistic knowledge. As opposed to extensive reading, the goal of intensive reading is not to develop fluency, but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of the text.

CONCLUSION

The integration of reading strategies with the use of the Wattpad platform application has been found to be an effective tool for enhancing students' reading skills and fostering their love for reading. The study also emphasizes the importance of motivation in promoting active engagement and enhancing students' overall reading skills. The use of effective reading strategies, such as scanning, skimming, and sub-reading, along with the Wattpad platform application, has been shown to be an effective method for improving students' reading proficiency. Additionally, the importance of using both extensive and intensive reading practices as a means of promoting reading skills and pleasure among readers has been highlighted. The results of this study contribute to the existing literature on the significance of utilizing technology in the classroom to promote students' reading skills and engagement.

RECOMMENDATION

The use of Wattpad platform as an instructional medium to improve students' reading skills integrated with reading strategies are far from perfect one. Researchers recommend some issues to be conducted in further studies. For instances, teachers can use the Wattpad platform application to enhance their students' reading skills by providing a variety of texts that cater to different reading levels and genres. The platform can also cultivate students' interest in reading, thereby increasing their motivation to learn. Teachers must prioritize strategies that encourage motivation in students to read and incorporate these into their reading programs to enhance students' overall reading skills. Motivated students are more likely to be engaged and active readers, who can comprehend and analyze reading texts more effectively.

The use of effective reading strategies is a significant factor in the development of students' reading skills. Teachers must incorporate these strategies into their reading programs to improve students' comprehension and performance. The Wattpad platform application, when used as a media tool, can provide an effective means of improving students' reading skills. Students can apply various reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, and sub-reading to improve their reading performance. Teachers can promote reading pleasure and comprehension among their students by using both extensive reading and reading strategies as a means of promoting reading skills and pleasure among readers. Extensive reading has the potential to increase the automaticity of low-level processes, while intensive reading is an effective tool for improving the language learning process.

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