



The Students' Perception of Using Webtoon Application at The Sixth Semester of The English Department

Masitoh Rahmadani*¹, Fitri Rayani Siregar²,
Shokira Linda Vinde Rambe³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary
Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

e-mail: *1masitohrahmadani02@gmail.com, 2fitrirayani@uinsyahada.ac.id,
3sokhira@uinsyahada.ac.id

Abstract This research investigates students' perceptions of using the Webtoon application in the sixth semester of the English Department at State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan. A descriptive quantitative approach was used, with 30 students participating. The results showed that students perceived Webtoon positively for improving reading literacy, with 46.82% agreeing and 15.32% strongly agreeing. Students responded favorably to indicators of absorption, understanding, and evaluation. Webtoon was recognized as an engaging medium that helped solve reading difficulties.

Keywords: Perception; Webtoon Application; Reading Literasi; Understanding; Evaluation.

Abstrak Penelitian ini menyelidiki persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan aplikasi Webtoon di semester enam Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan. Pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif digunakan, dengan partisipasi 30 mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mempersepsikan Webtoon secara positif untuk meningkatkan literasi membaca, dengan 46,82% setuju dan 15,32% sangat setuju. Mahasiswa merespons dengan baik terhadap indikator absorpsi, pemahaman, dan evaluasi. Webtoon diakui sebagai media yang menarik yang membantu mengatasi kesulitan membaca.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi; Aplikasi Webtoon; Literasi Membaca; Pemahaman; Evaluasi.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves understanding symbols to build and derive meaning. Mada Ali said, "reading is a complicated interaction between text, experiences, attitudes, and language communities, all of which are culturally and socially situated." (Mada Ali 2022) Alyousef added the statement that reading also involves ongoing practice, development, and improvement (Alyousef 2006). Therefore, it facilitates language acquisition, communication, and knowledge exchange.

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Reading is an ability that has an essential role for students (Erya and Pustika 2021). As stated "Reading is an essential part of daily life and is very important for an individual's academic, personal, and social well-being" (Rizal 2018). Furthermore, reading is a social and cognitive process that involves text, learning, and social contexts. Therefore, it is not surprising that many organizations prioritize improving learning skills as a crucial part of human life.

In modern human life, especially for Indonesian students, smartphones have become an inseparable part of daily activities. In recent years, the integration of digital media into education has significantly transformed traditional reading practices (Tarigan 2021). As noted by Pitri and Sofia in the 2016 survey of the Most Littered Nation in the World, "Indonesians exhibit poor reading interest compared to other countries, ranking 60 out of 61 nations" (Pitri and Sofia 2022). From that statement, the concerning statistic underscores the urgent need for innovative educational strategies to foster a love for reading among students. Utilizing technology, such as incorporating interactive and engaging digital content, could bridge the gap and improve students' reading habits (Alexander 1975). By integrating reading apps and e-books into the curriculum, educators can create a more stimulating learning environment that aligns with the digital tendencies of modern students.

One such digital media that has gained popularity among students is the Webtoon application. Webtoon is more commonly used than "webcomic" due to notable differences between countries, such as North America and Europe's

comics preserving their heritage (Hyeon-Kim and Yu 2019). As pointed out by Batubara, "Comics are visual media that have word balloons that have relaxed language and contain characterization and plot in the story" (Batubara 2021). Same as traditional comic, Webtoon also have interesting visuals and language as well as storylines. However, webtoons are different from traditional comics. The interactive and multimedia aspects of Webtoons, such as animations, sound effects, and the ability to comment and share, provide a rich and immersive reading experience that traditional comic cannot offer.

Technology has been integrated into language learning at all levels of education to enhance teaching and learning quality and empower learners. As mentioned by Kusumawati, "Utilizing technology in education can aid students with reading by boosting their interest" (Kusumawati 2019). Furthermore, technology allows students to engage in self-assessment. Technology enables students to independently explore learning materials (Gürleyik and Akdemir 2018). Consequently, EFL students can discover platforms that encourage a love for reading through stories, such as Webtoon and Wattpad (Novianti and Suprayogi 2021). Therefore, these platform, especially Webtoon, are highly popular among teenagers. It provide widespread access and dramatically increase pupils' motivation to read.

Building on this, the interactive nature of these platforms allows students to not only read but also engage with the content in a more dynamic way (Kristiani, n.d.). For instance, Webtoon offers visual storytelling that combines text with illustrations, making the reading experience more engaging and enjoyable. This multimodal approach caters to different learning styles, thereby accommodating a wider range of students. Additionally, the comment sections and community features on these platforms foster a sense of belonging and allow students to discuss and share their thoughts about the stories they read, further enhancing their comprehension and critical thinking skills (Indah Susanti, Widiyani, and Vendityaningtyas 2023). As students become more invested in the narratives, their motivation to read and write improves, leading to better literacy outcomes. Reading literacy for college students using webtoons have possitive research because the students' interest was increased (Indah and

Wibowo 2021). Moreover, this increased interest in reading can lead to a lifelong love for literature and continuous self-improvement in language skills.

Despite the theoretical benefits and positive effects of using Webtoon to enhance reading literacy, observations from the research indicate that students' reading literacy remains low. Although Webtoon has been integrated into reading lessons to boost engagement and interest, the anticipated improvements have not been fully realized. This discrepancy suggests that while Webtoon and similar platforms have the potential to increase motivation and interest in reading, other factors such as the quality of implementation, individual student differences, and additional support mechanisms may play crucial roles in achieving the desired literacy outcomes (Jin 2019). Further investigation is needed to understand the underlying reasons for this gap and to identify strategies that can effectively leverage the benefits of Webtoon in improving students' reading literacy.

This research attempts to fill this gap by finding personal things and students' perceptions of using Webtoon applications in reading literacy, specifically at the sixth semester of the English Department at the State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan. It aims to explore how these students perceive the effectiveness of Webtoons in enhancing their reading skills and literacy.

The research focuses on three main aspects of perception: absorption of external stimuli or objects, understanding objects, and individual assessment or evaluation. These aspects will help in assessing how Webtoons influence the students' ability to engage with, comprehend, and evaluate reading material. By examining these aspects, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Webtoons in enhancing students' reading literacy and overall learning experience.

Perception is the cognitive process by which individuals interpret and organize sensory information received from their environment, allowing them to understand and respond to their surroundings (Walgito 2004). This process involves the recognition, integration, and interpretation of sensory stimuli, influenced by past experiences, expectations, and individual differences. Simply we can understand how is the process of perception happen uses this picture.

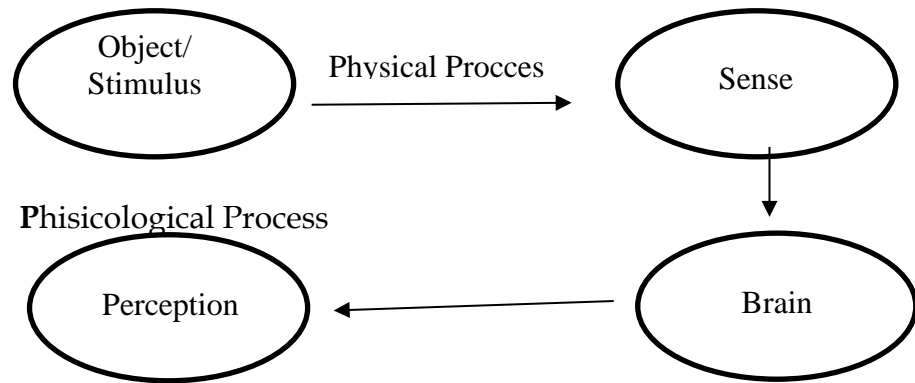


Figure 1. Scheme of perception Process(Walgito 2004)

The researcher must be aware of the signs that indicate perception in order to determine perception. Walgito said that markers of perception are:

a. Absorption of the external stimuli or object

During this stage, the nervous system, nerves, and sense organs will all receive the inputs. It may differ in terms of appearance, flavor, or even scent and emotion. The item would be recognized in order to provide any images or impressions.

b. Understanding object

After being chosen, arranged, and given significance or concept formation, the images that emerge in a person's brain are next processed. This phase is characterized by rapidity. Comprehending the object or stimulus can help them distinguish it from their existing background knowledge.

c. Individual Assessment or evaluation

After the thing has been formed and understood, individual assessment takes place. Even when the object is the same, each evaluation can be unique. As a result, perception is determined by what each person thinks about (Walgito 2004).

Webtoon is a South Korean online digital comics platform that is easily accessible via a laptop or smartphone anywhere in the world. Despite having its roots in South Korea, the platform has spread throughout Asia and Western nations including the United States, the United Kingdom, other English-speaking nations, Taiwan, China, and Thailand, including Indonesia (Ali and

Emirati 2021). According to Oxford Dictionary, Webtoon is animated cartoon or series of comic strips published online(Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). In essence, Webtoon is an animated comic strip or cartoon character that is published online.

The use of Webtoon, a digital comic platform, can significantly impact reading by providing visually engaging and narrative-rich content that captivates readers(Koesno 2021). Webtoons combine visual and textual elements, making reading more interactive and appealing, especially for younger audiences(Raulan and Fatimah 2018). This blend of images and text can enhance reading comprehension, foster a love for reading, and improve literacy skills by making the reading experience more enjoyable and immersive. By presenting stories in a serialized format, Webtoons encourage regular reading habits and can help readers develop a deeper understanding of narrative structures and character development(Ali and Emirati 2021). Additionally, the diverse genres and themes available in Webtoons cater to various interests, making it easier for readers to find content that resonates with them, thereby further promoting reading as a pleasurable and valuable activity.



Figure 2. Webtoon with Strip-Free Text and Vertical Reading
(Meona, n.d.)

This research will focus on students' perceptions of using the Webtoon application in reading literacy, specifically at the sixth semester of the English Department at State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan. The study will refer to perception indicators such as the absorption of external stimuli or objects, understanding objects, and individual assessment or evaluation. It will explore how the Webtoon application is related to reading literacy in the classroom.

METHOD

This research used descriptive quantitative research. It was applied to answer the formulation of the research about the students' Perception of Using Webtoon Application. Based on Punch, quantitative research method is empirical research in which the data is in form of something that can be counted or numbered (Punch 1998). The quantitative research is concerned with collecting and analyzing data in numerical form. The quantitative research method has the characteristic of dealing with numerical data and is objective (Sugiyono 2013). This research started from January 2024 until finished. The location of the research is in State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, it was located at T. Rizal Nurdin Street, No. Km 4.5 Sihitang, Southeast Padangsidempuan, Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatera.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research had a finding result based on the formulation about students' perceptions of using Webtoon application at English Department State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan after using descriptive quantitative design, the result of the research is from questionnaire:

Table 1. Questionnaire Students' Perception

No	Indicators of Questionnaire	Question	Frequency of scale				
			SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Absorption of External Stimuli or Object	1. I find the Webtoon application's visuals to be engaging and appealing.					
		2. The use of colors in					

No	Indicators of Questionnaire	Question	Frequency of scale				
			SA	A	N	D	SD
		Webtoon enhances my reading experience.					
		3. The interactive elements in Webtoon keep me interested in the story.					
		4. I am able to immerse myself in the narrative due to the multimedia aspects of Webtoon.					
		5. The animations in Webtoon help me understand the plot better vocabulary meaning					
		6. The layout of Webtoon makes it easy for me to follow the story.					
		7. The sound effects in Webtoon add to the overall experience.					
		8. The character designs in Webtoon are attractive and hold my attention.					
		9. I find myself more focused when reading stories on Webtoon compared to traditional texts.					
		10. Webtoon assists me in interpreting the context of the narrative					
2.	Understanding Object	1. The storyline in Webtoon is easy to follow and understand.					
		2. The dialogues in Webtoon are clear and comprehensible					
		3. Webtoon helps me to understand complex narratives through visual aids.					
		4. The structure of Webtoon stories aids my comprehension.					
		5. Webtoon allows me to grasp character					

No	Indicators of Questionnaire	Question	Frequency of scale				
			SA	A	N	D	SD
		emotions more effectively.					
		6. The pacing of the story in Webtoon enhances my understanding.					
		7. The combination of text and images in Webtoon makes it easier to understand the plot.					
		8. Webtoon helps me to remember details about the story better.					
		9. I feel that Webtoon improves my ability to understand different genres of stories					
		10. The visual storytelling in Webtoon helps me retain information better.					
3.	Individual Assessment or Evaluation	1. I believe th using Webtoon has improved my reading skills.					
		2. Reading Webtoon motivates me to read more frequently.					
		3. I feel that my vocabulary has expanded through reading Webtoon.					
		4. I find that Webtoon makes reading more enjoyable compared to traditional books.					
		5. I perceive Webtoon as an effective tool for enhancing my reading literacy.					

Table 2. The Data Result

No.	The Data Result	Score
1.	The highest score	116
2.	The lowest score	71
3.	Mean score	92,23
4.	Median	90,5
5.	Modus	93

Based on the table, it known that the highest score is 116, the lowest score is 71. While mean score is 92.23, and median in 90.5. Then modus 93.

Table 3. Frequenncy Distribution

Interval	Mid point	Frequency	percentage
71-78	74,5	2	6.67%
79-86	82,5	6	20%
87-94	90,5	7	23.33%
95-102	98,5	11	36.67%
103-110	106,5	3	10%
111-118	114,5	1	3.33%
Total		30	100%

Based on the table, the interval it can be concluded the mean score came from interval 95-102 which the highest frequently with total 11 students (36,67%). The lowest interval had 2 students (6,67%) and the highest interval had 1 students (3,33%).

Based on data description, students' perception of using Webtoon application at the third semester of the English department indicated that the implemented media was beneficial for their reading literacy. The using of Webtoon application in reading literacy give a positive effect. Based on the result shown from the questionnaire 15.32% were strongly agree using Webtoon application in reading literacy. There were 46.82% students agree using Webtoon application in reading literacy. There were 31.29% stuentns neutral using Webtoon application in reading literacy. There were 6.56% students disagree using Webtoon application in reading literacy and there was no students strongly disagre using Webtoon application in reading literacy.

From the data researcher also find the result 39.06% students respond in indicator absorpsion, 40.03% students respond in indicator undersatnding and 20.90% students respond in indicator evaluation. In indicator absorbsion, 22% students respond strongly agree. There was 46% students agree and 28% students neutral. Then, there was 4% students disagree. After that in indicator understanding, 11.54% students respond strongly agree. There was 52.69% students agree and 31.54% students neutral. Then, there was 4.23% students disagree. Last in indicator evaluation, 16.67% students respond strongly agree.

There was 57.33% students agree and 23.33% students neutral. Then, there was 2.67% students disagree.

Related to previous findings from Indah and Wibowo about an analysis of reading literacy for college students through Webtoon as interactive learning that had result of this research that Webtoon application can be interactive learning and increase the reading literacy of students(Indah and Wibowo 2021). It was also happened in this reseach. A Webtoon application can serve as an interactive learning tool and enhance students' reading literacy. The main difference between the two studies is that Indah and Wibowo's research focused on the general effectiveness of Webtoon as an interactive learning tool to improve reading literacy, while this study examines students' perceptions of using the Webtoon application in reading literacy. In conclusion, similar to the findings by Indah and Wibowo on using Webtoon for improving college students' reading literacy, this research confirms that Webtoon applications can be an effective interactive learning tool to enhance students' reading literacy.

The next study done by Angelica and Catemba it was applied to get EFL students' perception on Webtoon as a reading activity. As a result, Webtoon is an excellent reading aid for students(Angelica and Katemba 2023). Students can use Webtoon as a reading tool to make reading more enjoyable. Furthermore, teachers can use Webtoon as a reading tool in the classroom because Webtoon increases students' interest in reading.¹ Same as this research, students can utilize Webtoon application as a reading resource to enhance their reading experience and make it more enjoyable. The main difference in their content is that Angelica and Catemba's study explores how Webtoon can make reading more enjoyable for EFL students in general, while this research examines how sixth-semester students specifically perceive the use of Webtoon to improve their reading literacy skills. In conclusion, the studies by Angelica and Catemba, as well as this research, show that Webtoon is an excellent reading aid that makes reading more enjoyable and boosts students' interest in reading, making it a valuable tool for both students and teachers.

Another research discovered by Kiflaini. The research proved that Webtoon application has positive perception to improve students' reading comprehension skills(Kiflaini 2021). Similar to this study, Webtoon application is perceived positively for enhancing students' reading comprehension skills, which is closely related to improving their reading literacy. The primary difference in their content is that Kiflaini's research focuses on the positive perception of the Webtoon application for improving students' reading comprehension skills, while this research specifically examines sixth-semester students' perceptions of using Webtoon to enhance their reading literacy. In summary, research by Kiflaini and this study indicate that the Webtoon application is viewed favorably for improving students' reading comprehension skills, thereby enhancing their overall reading literacy.

Researcher found that the using Webtoon application in reading literacy has gotten positive responds. Students who gave the information from questionnaire showed that they were agree with using Webtoon application as a media to reading literacy. Now students have known what was the fuction of Webtoon application and the fuction of using this media. The difficulties that students got in reading literacy can be solve with using Webtoon application where lecturer and students do it in clasroom. Evaluation also one of the way to explain their reading litracy. Baseo on the questionnaire, generally there was no statements that had disagree and strongly disagree score above 10%. The researcher analyzed that using project based learning was good for studets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the perception of using the Webtoon application for reading literacy among English department students at State Islamic University Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan, it was concluded that students generally agree that Webtoon is appropriate and effective for improving reading literacy. Most students felt comfortable and enjoyed using this media, which also increased their motivation and interest in reading. Specifically, 46.82% of students agreed, and 15.32% strongly agreed that Webtoon is beneficial for reading literacy, while 31.29% remained neutral, and

only 6.56% disagreed. Additionally, students felt that Webtoon helped them better understand reading literacy, with the support of explanations from lecturers to clarify any misunderstandings.

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