

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Online Reading Texts and Whatsapp Chats at Grade Eleven of SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau

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Abstract

The use of online reading texts has become an important part of the learning process. This article explains the online reading texts and Whatsapp chats improve the students' reading comprehension of Grade Eleven of SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau. This study is classroom action research (CAR). The procedures of the research consist of four major steps: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The finding shows that the use of online reading texts is effective to improve the students' ability in reading comprehension. The improvement can be seen from the increase of their scores from preliminary test, test of cycle I and cycle II. the percentage of the correct answers of the students was 62.50%, it increased to be 71.32% in cycle I test, and then it became 75.00% in cycle II test. There was also a satisfying improvement for this kind of question. The percentage of the correct answers of the students for making inference questions in preliminary test was 59.56%, it increased to be 69.85% in cycle I test. It also can be seen from the observation sheet and the field notes of the collaborator.

Keywords: *students' reading comprehension, online reading texts, Whatsapp chats*

Introduction

Reading comprehension takes a large portion of learning activities in schools today. The teaching learning process in Indonesia emphasizes on the improvement of students' ability in using English to understand the various kinds of texts. As stated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016), the 2013 Curriculum of Education in Indonesia presents that the purpose of teaching English is to make students able to use the language as the means of communication orally and writtenly by using Genre Based Approached (GBA).

During the researcher's experience in teaching English in the Eleventh Science 1 class (XI MIPA 1) of SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan, he found that most of the students had difficulties to understand almost all kinds of reading texts provided in their text books. It can be seen from the result of their reading tests; most of them got low scores. Based on the experience in the class, researcher found that one of the difficulties in comprehending the texts were caused by the texts provided in the English text books and worksheets used in the class did not support as the teaching learning process sources, and the fact the allocation of the time to have teaching learning process in the class (once a week; 90 minutes) was not sufficient to improve the students' reading ability. Thus, the proper solution needs to be developed to solve these problems.

The internet is a universal tool. Due to the fact that the Internet becomes potentially available to all users, it is also takes a crucial part in language learning. The use of internet has taken an important part of the learning process in and out of the class. According to Bull and Ma (2001), internet provides offers unlimited resources to language learners. This benefit of online resources should be taken by the language teachers as one of the ways in enhancing the students learning. Furthermore, Collins and Moonen (2001) also propose idea of flexibility in teaching reading in terms of location, program, types of interaction, forms of communication, and learning materials and activities. Those are available if the teacher teaches reading in the classroom by using Whatsapp chats and online resources. Due to the benefits offered, using online resources and activities in teaching reading is much recommended.

The availability of electronic books (e-books) is also one important reason why teaching reading should involve online reading texts. As Strickland and Morrow (1989) say in Wright et al. (2013) that e-books give

the opportunity for teachers and students to connect and share knowledge, build relationship through literacy developing activities, and enhance stimulation in literacy enriched. Numerous studies illustrate the benefits of e-book reading as an effective means to improve the literacy skill of students, especially reading comprehension (Korat, 2009; de Jong & Bus, 2002; Grimshaw et al. 2007) in Wright et al. (2011).

The availability of smart phones on every student's hand could be the solution for the limitation of the time for teaching learning English in classrooms. As stated by Cheng (2016: 165) in his journal *Reading Online in Foreign Languages: A Study of Strategy Use* that these days a great deal of time has been spent by students to read, search, or only to communicate through the internet for personal pleasure instead of academic purpose. Yet, instead of wasting time for personal pleasure, the internet can be used by teachers and students to keep connecting out of classrooms through social media.

One of the most common forms of communications through Internet technologies is chatting group. With the help of the Internet it becomes possible to correspond online and to create an authentic dialogical communication. They can make online group in the media. In this case they can have extra time to study English by themselves but they are still connected with their teachers through the social media. Teachers will be able to give some assignments through the group. Using Whatsapp in English classroom should be systematic and practical to achieve the optimal effect on students learning. Speroff (2016) describes the steps that must be followed by the teachers in using Whatsapp in the classroom; creating a Whatsapp group, setting the rules, setting up for class use, and assigning the tasks. These procedures must be followed by the teachers in implementing the Whatsapp application as a mean of their language teaching. Beside the procedure, the teachers should also consider several points in using the online reading texts and Whatsapp chats in teaching.

According to Cheng, in learning in the online environment teachers have to equip the students with the strategies and skills that will determine the effectiveness and outcomes of students' learning (Cheng, 2016: 165). Learning by using social media does not mean that the students learn without the teacher contribution. Whereas, the teachers should guide the students, create an effective way of online learning to gain the improvement. Harmer (2007) emphasized that the teachers should encourage learners to find appropriate activities through using computer technology in order to be successful in language learning. These theories recommended the use of technology and online media in teaching.

Due to the tremendous benefit of the internet, especially the online reading texts and communication that can be applied by the teachers in language teaching, this study is aimed at examining the effectiveness of online reading texts in improving students reading comprehension through a classroom action research. The result of this study is expected to be significant contribution to students in improving their learning, especially in reading comprehension. Then the finding of this research may also be worth to English teachers to find much more sources for teaching reading, and also to find out the solution for the limitation of the for teaching English in the classroom. It can also be useful for other teachers who have similar problem in teaching reading

Method

This research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). This research was carried out in the eleventh grade science one students (XI MIPA1) of SMA 1 Teluk Kuantan. This class was chosen based on researcher's experience in teaching English in this class. Participants of the research were the students in grade XI MIPA1 of SMA 1 Teluk Kuantan in 2019/2020 academic year. They were 34 students; 13 males and 21 females. The researcher was their teacher in teaching and learning process. In conducting this research, the researcher was also helped by a collaborator. The instruments used in this research were test and field note.

The procedure was cyclical as it is stated by Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Koshy (2005:4). Thus, it was conducted through four steps; they were planning, action, observation and reflection. In the planning process, the researcher conducted a preliminary test, arranging the lesson plans, preparing observation sheet and teaching aids, setting the schedule for Whatsapp chats and choosing the collaborator. The action was implemented based on the planning. There were two kinds of activities—teaching learning process in the classroom and learning through Whatsapp chats. The researcher set both the action in the classroom and through Whatsapp chats. Whatsapp chats in this case were the extra time for the students to deepen their understanding about the texts which had been delivered in the classroom but it seemed that the time in the classroom was not enough for the students to understand. By the guidance of the teacher through an application named Whatsapp, the students had several more time to make them have good understanding about report and descriptive texts. In order to know whether every student sent his/ her own answer or not, the teacher gave a brief test in the next meeting in the classroom just before another material was delivered. In teaching and learning process, another observer, in this study one of the English teachers at the school helped the researcher to cope with the activities. At the end of every meeting, the English teacher helped the

researcher to assess the students and filled it into the observation sheet. In the reflection process, the researcher reflected on how the students follow the class and how online reading texts and activities helped them in comprehending reading. If the applying of online reading texts and activities could improve students' reading comprehension, it was categorized successful. But if the problem could not be solved, the research would be continued to the next cycle.

Results and Discussion

The finding of this research shows that the online reading texts could improve students' reading comprehension. The ability of the students of XI MIPA 1, SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan in understanding report and descriptive texts increased after having more sources to find much more texts and having much more time to discuss about report and descriptive texts. The result can be seen in the following graphic.

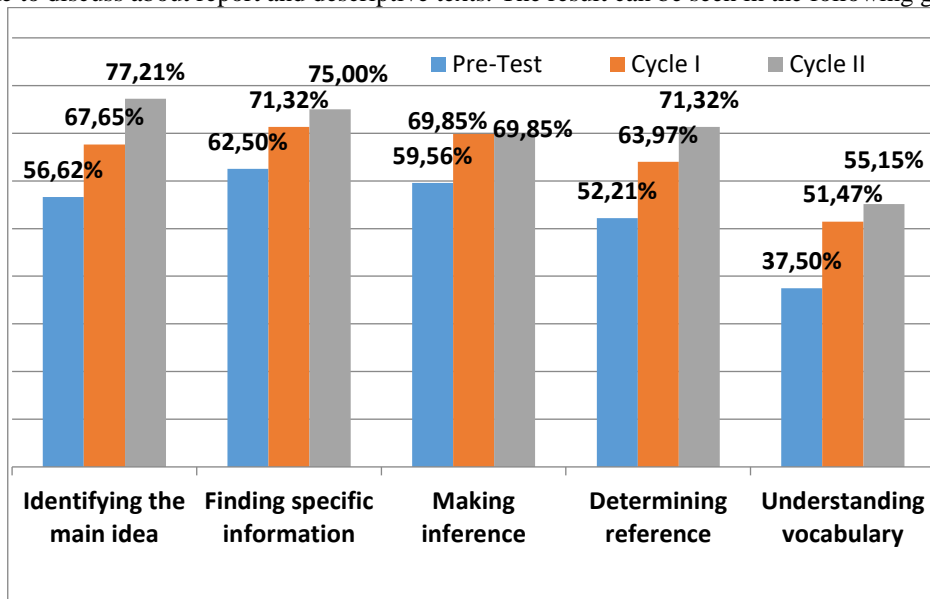


Figure 1. The ability of the students of XI MIPA 1, SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan

The graph above shows the improvement of students' reading comprehension from preliminary test, cycle I test and cycle II test. There were satisfying improvements for each kind of question. In the preliminary test the percentage of the correct answers of the students in answering identifying main idea was only 56.62%, then they increased to be 67.65% in cycle I test, and then it became 77.21% after cycle II, even it was the best score among the five kinds of the reading comprehension questions.

In answering the questions of finding specific information in texts, the percentage of the correct answers of the students was 62.50%, it increased to be 71.32% in cycle I test, and then it became 75.00% in cycle II test. There was also a satisfying improvement for this kind of question. The percentage of the correct answers of the students for making inference questions in preliminary test was 59.56%, it increased to be 69.85% in cycle I test, but it did not increase in cycle II test. So, it can be concluded that the improvement was not too satisfying. The percentage of the correct answers for determining reference questions in preliminary test was 52.21%, it increased to be 63.97% in cycle I test, and then it became 71.32% after cycle II. It was also a significant improvement.

In this case, online reading texts as the addition references of reading texts and Whatsapp chats as the extension time for learning for the students could be the solution for the reading comprehension of the students as the result of the teacher's guidance in controlling the chats through Whatsapp group chats. As stated by Strickland and Morrow (1989), thousands online sites and pages can fulfill the insufficient reading texts available in the worksheets of the students. The students needed some more reading texts in order to make them more opportunities to practice their reading comprehension. By having the online reading texts, the students could have much more practices to improve their reading comprehension (Cheng, 2016). These theories were actually impressed the significant of online reading texts in supporting the students in learning process.

This result supports the research of Patel and Jain (2008) who found that the extension of time through Whatsapp group chat and the addition of sources from online media under the guidance of the teacher made the students have much more opportunity to comprehend reading texts which had to be discussed in the

classroom. In this case, online reading texts as the addition references of reading texts and Whatsapp chats as the extension time for learning for the students could be the solution for the reading comprehension of the students as the result of the teacher's guidance in controlling the Whatsapp chats through Whatsapp group chats. This result is also inline with the finding of Kheryadi (2017), Bouhnik and Deshen (2014), Kocak (2010) who found that the use of Whatsapp application in the teaching and learning gives advantages to the students learning. The advantages include the students' improvement in learning result, motivation, and interest. In this research, the result clearly shows that the use of Whatsapp application in teaching reading comprehension improved the students reading comprehension.

Based on the result of this research, there are several suggestions can be drawn by the researcher. Finding sufficient sources of reading text is very important in order to be able to help students in improving their reading comprehension. The availability of smart phones and internet connection in the hands of the students should be the advantage of the teacher in finding the solution of the limited meeting frequency of teaching in the classrooms. This research was limited on the effect of online reading texts on the students reading comprehension. Further inclusive research should be conducted in other skill of language students, thus the effectiveness of the online reading texts can be seen widely.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, the researcher concludes that online reading texts helped the students of XII MIPA 1 of SMAN 1 Teluk Kuantan in improving their reading comprehension significantly. The improvement can be seen from the increase of their scores from preliminary test, test of cycle I and cycle II. It also can be seen from the observation sheet and the field notes of the collaborator. The researcher considers that online reading texts can be one of the solutions for problems of the insufficient sources of reading texts and the limited meeting frequency in teaching reading comprehension.

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