Technology, Literature, and the Digital World on Novel Reading Applications

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate readers' ability in understanding digital literature. The study was conducted by using a qualitative descriptive method and used novel reading applications and users' feedback as source of data. The data were collected through questionnaire. The findings shows that there are changes in pattern of reading novel in society. Writers make technology as a formal element from their work, and new media involve in significant changes of production and marketing of their work, which the readers also must followed.

Keyword: Digital literacy, New media, Novel reading applications, Reader society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of literature nowadays is marked by the rise of digital literature. The presence of digital literature had been around for a long time but proliferated when during the COVID-19 outbreak. Enjoying literature through the digital world is one of the safest choices since humans have done much more activity in the world of cyberspace (CS) than in physical space (PS). Published literature through the internet may form its literature genre. It is possible because multimedia literature utilizes visual images, audio-visuals, and animations. Types of this literature could be assumed as one of art collaborative form (Faruk, 2011).

Nevertheless, the study of this type of literature in Indonesia is yet to grow. This happened because the method used to analyze digital literature still uses a structural method that focuses on the presence of mode of production with economic activity as its priority. Meanwhile, the method of analyzing digital literature should change with more focus on the concept of mode of information (Poster, 1991; Faruk, 2011), which prioritizes information. The mode of information is a new paradigm for better understanding the history of society and culture. At the same time, it is characteristic of contemporary culture that has become the social context for post-structural theories. Suppose the social and cultural structuralist is society and culture mediated by mechanics writing and printings, social and cultural post-structuralist mediated by electronic audio-visual media. This electronic media is spread in Indonesia and throughout the world and is used in almost every daily

activity. As a result, this media can no longer say as neutral. Electronic media is a new power that could change the mindset, and the public's patterns to analyze life comprehensively (Faruk, 2011), including the public's mindset towards literature.

The emergence of digital literature is marked by the presence of Alire magazine in France in 1989, which was proclaimed as a digital literature magazine, initiated by the Parisian group LAIRE *(Lecture, Art, Innovation, Recherche, Ericiture)* consisting as Philippe Bootz, Frederic Develay, Jean-Marie Dutey, Claude Maillard, and Tibor Papp. Alire Magazine is known as Europe's oldest multimedia magazine. In his writing (2002), Bootz says digital literature is also a literary work. Digitization literature is there not to kill the works but precisely for change (transform). Transform synchronous print form to multimedia forms that exist in meta poetic novelty form (Bootz, 2002)

In Indonesia, this digital literature's presence was marked by the emergence of cybersastra.net at the end of 1990s led by Medy Loekito. cybersastra.net, managed by the Multimedia Literature Foundation. The emergence of digital literature in the development of literature in the digital era shows an adjacency between literature and dynamic and ever-change culture (Wanti, 2020). On the other hand, the presence of cybersatra.net bring up various reaction from literature workers; some reject and others accept it (Wanti, 2020). However, along with the development of the digital world that is increasingly getting to all aspects of daily life, the development of digital literature is not unstoppable. Literature is present

on various platforms. The presence of smartphone support, even more the presence of digital literature. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world and forced the public to switch from the physical world/space (PS) to the cyberspace (CS) world, including in literature activity. In fact, some community theater and traditional art were performed virtually during Covid-19.

Digital literacy comes in reading applications like Wattpad, NovelPlus, Storial. Co, English Novel Books, NovelToon, Yoylada, Hinovel, Google Play Books, WebRead, Novel Reader, Amazon Kindle, GoodReads, 5000 Free eBooks & Free Audiobooks, Innovel, NovelMe, WebNovel, GoodNovel, FizzoNovel, Kobo Books, Inkitt, Read Now, iReaders, Free Books, Babel Novel, Novel Chat, Mobo Reader, Novel Master, CaBaca, Karyakarsa, Nook, Aldiko, Gramedia Digital, iPusnas, Libby, Skoobe, 1000000+ Free Books, Islamic eBooks Library, and Free Ebooks. Of mentioned reading applications, those which will be discussed in this study are reading application that focuses on literature works, especially novels.

Several studies have discussed digital literature previously. The first thing to discuss is that when researching digital literacy, the perspective used is the same as that of printed literature. This point of view must therefore be changed. Mode of information is the point of view that should be used as it focuses on the emotional relationship between humans and computers. One example is in the form of the interactive fiction genre, which puts forward the reader's feedback and decides the structure of the story (Douglass, 2007; Faruk, 2011; Rokib, 2017: Pramatanti, 2018). Another thing that is being discussed is the reader's significant influence in the writing process (Wulansari & Sumardi, 2020; Sutarini & Dara, 2022). However, these studies discussed the reader's ability to respond towards the emergence of digital literacy. Whether the reader can read digital literacy perfectly or if there are any problems to resolve will be discussed in this article.

2. METHOD

The data source is a questionnaire distributed to students. The number of questionnaires distributed was 300 people, and 82 of them answered. There were 15 questions. It can be seen in table 1. Data was collected through google form for one week. The questionnaire was analyzed by comparing the answers to the difficulty level of reading digital literature and printed literature.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Digital literature is disseminated through the reading application that the public can consume through Android and iOS smartphone. Android is a system operation for mobile which Linux based, which includes a middleware operations system. Android provides an open platform

Table 1. Questionnaire question

No	Questions
1	Do you prefer to read printed or digital books?
2	Do you have difficulty reading digitally?
3	Do you get any benefit from reading digitally? Please state
4	Have you ever read novels through digital reading applications
5	How many digital books were read in a month?
6	How many printed books were read in a month?
7	Time to read digital books daily
8	Time to read printed books daily
9	Type of digital reading you prefer
10	Type of printed reading you prefer
11	How long does the concentration level last reading digitally?
12	How long the concentration level last reading printed books?
13	The preferred genre of digital novels
14	The preferred genre of print novels
15	What are the primary considerations for reading a digital book?

for the developer to make their application but then purchased by Google Inc., which involves 34 various hardware and software device companies and telecommunications such as Google, HTC, Intel, Motorola, Qual Comm, T. Mobile, and Nvidia (Ichwan, M & Fifin, 2011). Android is open source and can be freely expanded for the latest technology. This platform will keep on developing innovative mobile applications. One of its privileges is that it does not differentiate between original and third-party applications. Android also provides wide access for users to use required libraries of tools to build more and better applications (Lestari & Irwansyah, 2020). These conditions allow the development of various apps, especially reading applications. The android features allow transformation in literature, which back then bounded with printing to multimedia technology that makes literature a collaborative art form.

One of the forms of technology information applied in reading applications is taking the form of chat stories. Chat stories is the story presented in the form of text messages, just like communication on WhatsApp. Message form like this is very recognizable to generation Z, which grows with message text and often uses it. Chat is an activity to converse through the internet without mandatorily meeting with others. Chat forms could be in the form of text, audio, video, and more. The message sent could also be in the form of text, images, sound, video, animation, and files. This chat allows humans to interact with other human beings in various parts of the world (Putri, 2021).

This form of chat stories could be found in several reading applications like Lure, Wattpad, Hooked, Cliffhanger, Yarn, and Joylada. Lure is an application that can be opened with a computer with iOS Windows

11/ Windows 10/8/7/Vista. The publisher is Representative LY, LLC.

The next one is Wattpad. This application is a complete one. The form of chat stories on Wattpad begins with introducing the character. One of them is a story titled "Sosmed" written by dntfym. The form of the story is chat from characters, then from the chat also appears comments from the reader. What is interesting is the characters given Korean women names, such as Taeyon Kim, Jessica Jung, Sunny Lee, Stephanie Hwang, Hyoyeon Kim, Yuri Kwan, Sooyoung Chai, Yoona Lim, and Yuhyun seo. They are very famous South Korean artists today, but the author makes the conversation in the chat in Indonesian, especially young Indonesian slang, or words nowadays. This proves that the author has penetrated national borders in terms of being creative. This proves that literature that utilizes technology information allows penetration of state administrative boundaries. It also can be seen collaboration between the world of celebrities with fiction stories from different national and cultural backgrounds, all of which stirred becomes a new different genre. If previously a literary work, such as a novel, when presenting a character, readers are given an image by the author through words it conveys. The reader could imagine with their imagination and experience what would it be the image of the character. This was previously shown in printed literature. However, in digital literature, especially in the reading application, the writer describes a figure through a photo. The photos shown are from the real world. The writer conveys to the reader, "this is approximately a description of character X," and readers could comment directly if that photo is not fit. Sometimes the writer will try to look for another photo so readers can feel the correct figure for the character. This shows the existence of collaboration — can be said — between the fictional world and the real world, especially in figure depiction.

The next one is Hooked. As mentioned, this application was also a story chat application, but from user comments, it seems complicated to access in Indonesia. This application address is in New York. Next is Cliffhanger. This application is apparently not much accessed either in Indonesia. There are no related comments with this application; its address is at Alameda, California, and the language used is English. The next one is Yarn; this application is addressed in Santa Monica, California, and manufactured by Science Mobile LLC. From the user comments, it is mentioned that this application is difficult to access because the user must subscribe before opening it. The next one is Joylada. This application was announced as first stories chat application in Indonesia, developed by Ookbee Uco. Ltd. This application address is located at Suanluang, Bangkok. From the comments, this application has many users in Indonesia; however, they still face constrained often in payment.

With so, it can be said that in Indonesia nowadays, novel reading applications in the form of chat stories can be easily accessed on Wattpad and Joylada. Meanwhile, other applications, namely Hooked, Cliffhanger, Yarn, and Lure are rarely used by users in Indonesia. It also seems to relate to the language used. Four applications that Indonesian users rarely access are applications that use English as the primary language. While both Wattpad and Joylada already use Indonesian. It is also worth noting that worldwide Wattpad users already reach over 90 million. According to a survey conducted to 82 students, Wattpad occupies second place (19.8%), which a lot accessed after Webtoon (63%). Compared to Webtoon, this application was older than Wattpad. Webtoon, addressed in South Korea, was launched in 2004, while Wattpad was launched in December 2006. However, in early 2021, Webtoon turned out to be acquired by Wattpad.

Webtoons are reading applications that prioritize comics more. It could also be said that Webtoon is digital comics. Numerous digital comic reading applications exist, such as Chuchyroll Manga, Comica, WeComics, Ragasukma Comic, Manga Toon, WebComics, ComicRack Free, Marvel Unlimited, Dark Horse Comics, and Tapas. Comics won't be discussed more thoroughly in this paper.

The following reading application is the reading application that has the main attention in novels. There are many enough applications that mention themselves as novel reading application; among others are Wattpad, storial.co, NovelPlus, 50.000 Books and Audiobooks, NovelToon, Joylada, HiNovel, WeRead, GoodNovel, Baisah, Novel Reader, English Novel Books, GoodRead, Innovel, NovelMe, NovelToon, BestNovel, WebNovel, and Amazon Kindle. It's also noted that these mentioned novel reading applications not only contain novels but also bring up another form. Wattpad, for example, in addition to novels, there are also other ways to convey stories, chat stories like already displayed before, for example. There is also a reading application in the form of audiobooks, such as 50,000 Books and Audiobooks. There is also reading application novel that appears in its comics, like NovelToon.

Wattpad is a novel reading application with many enough users in Indonesia. It can be said a complete enough application. The novels released on Wattpad, besides rising digitally enough, many of them later became a printed novel, one of which is literary writings compiled by Tenderlova. This book was released in 2020 in Lov Rinz. Other than that, some previous novels uploaded on Wattpad also filmed, such as "Antares", airing on WeTv every Thursday and Friday at 18.00 in 2021. It seems necessary to note that reading applications are also related to the television industry and have their own television station. This thing seems to be the one reason why Wattpad gained so many users. Another work

also filmed is Abigea by Chelsea Karina, which was previously already published in Black Swan Books and later filmed, directed by Tarmizi Abka, and airing on Genflix on September 17, 2021. It is also interesting that this application has its own section in Suara.Com which contains related news with Wattpad. Also, necessary mentioned, there is the Hikayat Kadiroen novel written by Semaun in digital form.

Next application is storial.co. This application mentioned itself as a reading and writing application simultaneously. Founded by Steve Wirawan, Aulia Halimatussadiah, and Brilliant Yotenega. This application seems to tend more emphasize on writing. This is aligned with vision of the apps, to give opportunity as wide as possible for writers to publish their work. Inside this application, besides reading lists in the form of novels, there are also podcasts and audio stories. One of the writers at storial.co is Dee Lestari with his work Rapijali.

The next application is Novel Plus, which has four things that become its vision: read, connect, share, and write. Unlike storial.co which focuses more on writing, this application focuses more on reading. For reading, it is mentioned that there are various kinds of novels inside the application. The writer and reader could connect and exist in its community. For share, it is mentioned that users could share their mind from reading novels in NovelPlus then share to Facebook, twitter, or Instagram. For writing, it is mentioned that users could become a writer and make money.

The next application is 50,000 Books and Audiobooks, which use English. It is in Eincino, Los Angeles, United States. Most of its contents are novel in English, including English Classic. It seems that in Indonesia, the app gained not so many users. Language becomes the main reason. The next application is NovelToon, which in it, besides novels, there are comics, anime, and AudioToon. However, when switching to comic and anime, the application name turned to MangaToon.

AudioToon seems to be part of MangaToon because if we open AudioToon, it is mentioned that its developer is MangaToon. However, for NovelToon it seems different; the developer address is also different; NovelToon is addressed in Shanghai, while MangaToon is addressed in Hong Kong.

NovelToon as a novel reading application, has several sections: More Viral on Facebook, Hot Novel, Highly Recommended, End Novel, Modern Romance, CEO, Story Chat, and Web Series section. The existence of "*Lagi Viral*" on Facebook section marked that this app connected directly to social media. It can also be said that the promotion channel for this reading application is social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. On social media such as Facebook, this app presents a snippet of novels that exist inside that application. When the reader is interested in the work shown on Facebook, the reader will then be directed to download the application to continue the reading. This is one method of reading application to gain the interest of the reader.

The following application is HiNovel, since Joylada already discussed previously in the chat story discussion and because this application prioritized chat stories. HiNovel is an application that is addressed in Singapore. Several sections are provided in this application, including romance stories, metropolitan stories, CEO stories, youth stories, and action stories. This remarkable application was specifically dedicated to romance, fantasy, werewolf, vampire, and thriller stories (https://hinovel.id.uptodown.com/android). Next is WeRead, which is manufactured by PlayMate and has its address in Hong Kong. This application's main characteristic is a special channel for women and men.

Also, inside this application, there is a community author. Opportunity to become a writer is open inside this application. There is a direct chance to become a writer because there is a special section. The user could direct sign up in this to write. Inside WeRead, there is a special column for women and men, while in GoodNovel application, there is only *"Pria Bercerita"* column as part of the types of works inside the application. It seems that woman's problems or women telling stories to dominate this application. GoodNovel is in Singapore and produced by GoodNovel with the genre of books: Romance, Mystery, Fantasy, Western Stories, Sci-Fi, Fan-Fi. Not so much different from other applications, promotional media used is Facebook. What is interesting is there is also a community on Facebook for GoodNovel, which functions to promote the author's new book.

Out of several applications that have been discussed, several things can be delivered here. First, social media has a very close relationship with applications. Social media is made to be a place for promotion. On this social media, the applications' users, readers, and writers, respond to and communicate with each other. They form specific communities. In addition to social media, applications use certain pages to convey various things about the applications. This is also one of the promotion tools. Second, every application has its specificity separately. They could specialize as the foremost in chat stories, at the forefront in comics, or the foremost in audiobooks. Others gave special attention or differentiated between the woman and man sections. Third, there are reading applications that seem to give the broadest opportunity for everyone to become a writer, even though several applications state themselves as an application to write.

4. CONCLUSION

Reading applications now use android technology as a place or alternative for the public to develop literature widely. Literature that exists today only could be categorized as popular literature. However, the development of technology and the influence of global engagement through social media give the works that exist in various applications several privileges. First, literature works also take the form of collaboration because it does contain not only simple text and characters but also pictures/photos, and sounds, even in film. It all appears in one work. Besides that, the characters because the author provides images/photos, often originated from a celebrity. Second, the relationship between writers and readers is very fluid and sometimes could exchange place. Sometimes, the user becomes a writer, and other times it is otherwise. Sadly, the digital reading ability of the public is still low. The user community still used to book print. However, the presence of reading applications could increase interest in reading from society, especially in generation Z, because the literature they read in the application follows the habits on social media, becoming the "center" of generation Z life.

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