

A Survey of Readers' Reading Preference: Digital or Printed Reading Text

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ABSTRACT

Reading plays an important role in the process of language learning. In the modern society of today, teachers and students can apply digital technology in assisting the reading activities. Nowadays, digital text can be found almost everywhere align with the need of the students in getting the information in digital era. This study is a survey of readers' reading preference. There were two objectives of this study. The first, the study wanted to find out about the different kinds of reading media that readers prefer to use, and whether they are comfortable with the reading media they have chosen or not. The second, the study would like to know which tool makes the readers become more motivated to read. The subjects of this study are college students from every major fields of study and their ages range age from 16 – 20 years old. A total of 139 students agreed to be the volunteers for this survey study. To collect data, the writers used a questionnaire that consisted of 22 questions about readers' reading preferences. The data were analyzed using percentage analysis and interpreted. The results were also used to make some conclusions and suggestions. This article will discuss the results of the study.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important elements in the world and functions as a tool for communication. Language is the system of communication through which humans send messages (Burgmeier, Eldred, & Zimmerman, 1991, p.1).

English is known as the first foreign language to be taught in Indonesian. As a foreign language in Indonesia, English has been taught to almost level of education. It is taught from elementary school up to university. Based on school based curriculum in Indonesia, the students are expected to master the fourth major skills in English. They are writing, speaking, listening, and reading skill.

Reading is one of the four major skills in English that must mastered by students who learn English as their foreign language. It is one way of transferring ideas from the writer to the reader through written text. Reading plays an important role in the language learning process.

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Without reading, an individual will probably not know what is going on and perhaps will not keep up with the development in his or her surroundings and expertise areas. From what has been said, people must be able to read if they do not want to face any difficulties in their daily lives, whether in school, business, profession or even recreation.

Reading has been the subject of research for over a century. There is an abundance of studies related to reading all over the world. Clarke (1980) calls reading as 'the most thoroughly studied and least understood process in education today'. Reading is a dynamic process in which the reader works actively to construct meaning from the material (Barton, 1997). Students need to have the ability to adjust their reading in order to fit the type of material being presented. Effective readers are involved in the process of reading, actively looking for meaning. Ineffective readers play a passive role when reading, not connecting the text material with prior knowledge. Content area teachers can equip their students with strategies that will help them to access and use background knowledge, text feature knowledge, and general knowledge gained from the world, or as some would call it, common sense knowledge.

Nowadays, in this modern era, there are many devices invented in order to make people's lives become easier. These devices also deal with the learning process, including reading. There are a variety of multimedia technology to assist the reading process. The world currently is in an era when old-fashioned forms of reading are being gradually overtaken by technology and gadgets as it appears to be more and more difficult in this generation to find people who still find time to pick up a book to read.

Readers are free to choose which kind of text they want to read, whether they are digital texts such as e-books or the conventional ones like printed material i.e. newspapers, magazines or books. Some readers read willingly but some others do not. The reader's motivation to read can be affected by the tools used while reading.

This study was conducted to answer the phenomenon of readers' option, motivation, and comfortable feeling, of using reading media. Based on the explanation above the writers are interested in conducting a research entitled "A Survey of Readers' Reading Preference: Digital or Printed Reading Text".

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Reading

'Reading' is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of deriving meaning (reading comprehension) and/or constructing meaning. It is the mastery of basic cognitive processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning.

According to Rubin (2003, p.3), reading is a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the readers act together to produce meaning. However, in relation to language learning, reading is not only the process of acquiring information but also improving the ability of learning. Zint and Maggart (1989) state that:

Reading is an integral part of communication and that learning to read is built on the ability of boys and girls to receive and express language. Comprehension, metacognition, semantic processing, and unique type of language behavior and reorganization of schemata store in memory. Permanent interest in reading and in the development of critical and evaluative skills is as much as of a product of affect as of cognition.

Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Like all languages, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is

shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement.

Cooper et al. (1988, p.27) define comprehension as a process of constructing meaning from clues in the text and information in the readers' background of experience. This process of building meaning involves interaction between the reader and the texts. Readers use a variety of reading strategies to assist with decoding (to translate symbols into sounds or visual representations of speech) and comprehension. Readers may use morphemes, semantics, syntax, and contextual clues to identify the meaning of unknown words. Readers integrate the words that they have read into their existing framework of knowledge or schema. Reading is typically an individual activity, although on occasions, a person will read out loud for the benefit of other listeners. Reading aloud for one's own use, for better comprehension, is a form of intrapersonal communication.

2.2 Concept of Digital Reading Material

We are living in a digital era. We are surrounded by technologies that support our daily lives. The digital world that we live in today is the result of many innovations and technological advances. It can be seen that technology has become an integral part of almost all fields of life.

Our life nowadays has been affected by the use of technologies. Technological invasion can also be seen in the text material used by people in their daily lives, especially in the teaching and learning process. These technologies provide us with the digital reading material. People nowadays spend a lot of time reading from a screen: television, computer, mobile phone, etc. where the reading materials are provided in the form of digital media.

Digital simply means "characterized by electronic" or "computerized technology." Digital media is any media that is encoded in a machine-readable format and performed in digital form (retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_media). The media can be pictures, sound, motion video, animation, and/or text items combined in a product whose purpose is to deliver information. In short, digital reading material can be explained as reading materials that are presented in digital form using devices.

2.3 Concept of Printed Reading Material

Globally, the flourishing of the new media, the Internet, with all its adjunct services seems to mark the beginning of the end of conventional reading. The term conventional means traditional and ordinary. In this study, conventional reading materials means reading materials that are in the conventional form using the printed media.

The definition of the term 'Print' is to put letters or images on paper or another material using a machine (retrieved from : <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/print>). In this study, printed reading texts refer to the conventional reading materials that are provided for the readers using printed paper such as printed text books, newspapers, books, etc.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method of the Study

In this study, the writers are going to use the survey research method. This method is used to collect information from a group of people through asking questions using a questionnaire. The data are collected from a sample of the population. The responses of the subjects to the questions are summarized, analyzed, and reported. The major purpose of this survey is to describe the

characteristics of the population. The writers also want to find out about the readers' motivation to read in relation to the tools they use.

McMillan (1992, p.69) states "a population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, object, or events that conform to specific criteria and to which to generalize the results of the research". With this definition in mind, the writers would like to generalize the result of the study to the general population. It includes all individuals with certain characteristics (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1991, p.339). The subjects from whom data are collected are college students in every major fields in the range of age from 17 – 25 years old. The amount of the Population is unlimited.

Sample refers to the group elements or a single element, from which data are obtained (McMillan, 1992, p.69). The sampling method employed in this research is simple random sampling as what Fraenkel and Wallen (1991, p.139) explain that simple random sampling is when every member of the population has an equal chance to be the sample. In this study, the writers take about 139 respondents from the whole population.

3.2 Data Collection

In this research, the writers used only one instrument, questionnaire. A questionnaire is the amount of written questions, which are used to obtain information from the respondents' which deals with reports about themselves, and things that they know (Arikunto, 2010, p.188). According to Hornby (1998, p.668), a questionnaire is a list of questions to be answered by a group of people in order to get information or facts. The questionnaire was used by the writers in order to collect the data related to the readers' preference and motivation in reading using multimedia and conventional reading. The writers used the open-close questionnaire that contains some open questions and some closed questions. According to Arikunto (2010, p.195), open questionnaire is one kind of questionnaire form which allows the respondents to answer the given question more fully and freely in their own way to express their opinions without focusing on certain choices and closed questionnaire is a questionnaire that has the choices of the answers, so the respondents just choose the answer that belongs to them.

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents in the sample. The respondents were given several questions about the readers' options and motivation in reading using digital or printed reading texts. The questionnaire consists of 22 questions about readers' reading preference to read using digital or printed reading texts. The questionnaire was constructed based on some sources from the internet and other preferences. The questionnaire was designed to collect information about readers' choice in choosing the media they use, whether they prefer to read using digital texts or the printed ones.

3.3 Data Analysis

In order to find out readers' option and motivation to read by using digital and/or printed reading texts, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to the readers. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using percentage analysis. The formula of the percentage analysis is as shown below:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Where: P = Percentage of the readers' choice
F = The total of the readers' choices

N = The total number of sample readers.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The results of the study presented here deal with the results obtained through the questionnaire. The total number of sample is 139 college students from many major fields and they consist of 65 male respondents and 74 female respondents (see figure 1). And the respondents were all bachelor degree undergraduates consisting of 76 students from the economic development studies programme, 19 students from the history education studies programme and 44 students from the math and biology studies programme (see figure 2). Their ages are in range of 16 to 20 years old.

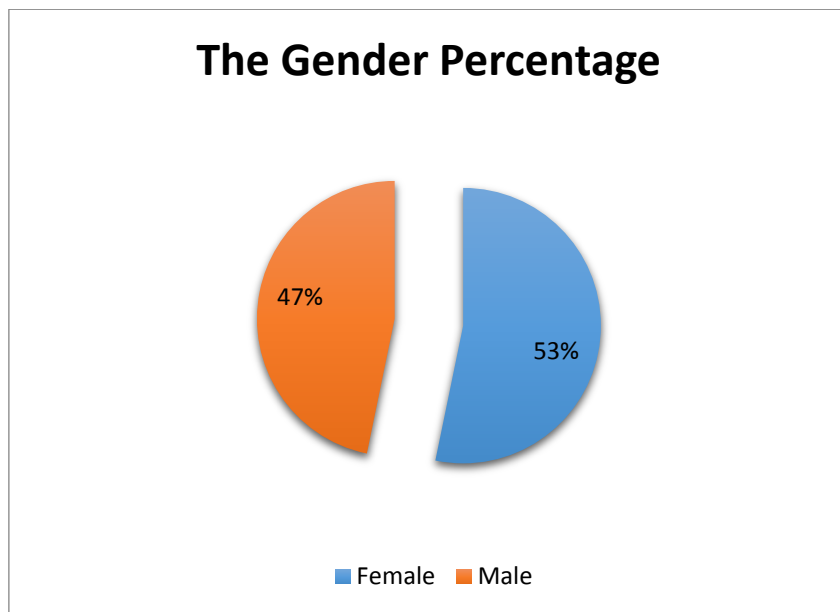


Figure 1. The Respondents' Gender Percentage

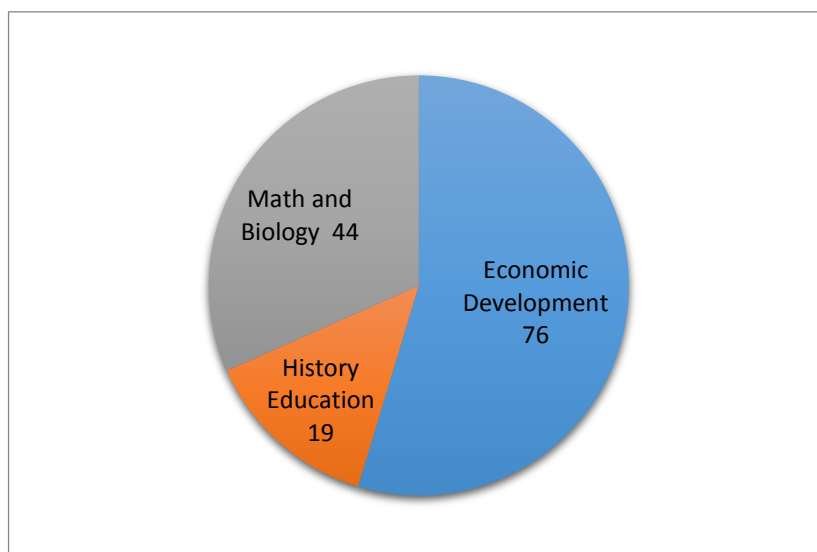


Figure 2. The Respondents' Majors Field Percentage

In the questionnaire, the writers asked 22 questions about the readers' reading preferences. the writers also asked about the readers' difficulties while reading with the media they chose, which media made them more motivated to read, and which media that was used more often. The distribution of the responses to the questionnaire can be seen below:

Questions		Responses			
i	Do you like reading?	yes	percentage	no	percentage
		116	83.5 %	23	16.5 %
ii	What is your purpose of reading?	information	entertainment	knowledge	other
		109	72	98	4
iii	How many hour (s) do you spend reading in a day?	< 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-4 hours	> 4 hours
		54 (38.8%)	69 (49.6%)	15 (10.8%)	1 (0.7%)
iv	Do you read printed text materials?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		99	71.2 %	40	28.8 %
v	Do you read non-printed text materials?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		109	78.4 %	30	21.6 %
vi	Do you know about digital reading texts?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		138	99.3%	1	0.7%
vii	If your answer for the previous question is 'Yes' , what kind of multimedia reading materials do you know of?	e-book			73
		e-journal			22
		e-magazine			49
		e-mail			88
		Powerpoint presentation			63
		Others			13
viii	What tools do you use for reading multimedia reading text materials?	Computer			82
		Television			58
		Mobile phone / tablet			157
		Billboard			17
		others			2
ix	Which kind of reading text materials do you like more?	digital	percentage	printed	percentage
		95	68.3%	44	31.7%
x	If the reading text material is an English text, which type of reading do you prefer?	digital	percentage	printed	percentage
		67	48.2 %	72	51.8 %
xi	If the reading text material is an Indonesian text, which type of reading do you prefer?	digital	percentage	printed	percentage
		78	56.1 %	61	43.9 %

xii	Which kind of reading text material makes you become more motivated to read?	digital	percentage	printed	percentage
		92	66.2 %	47	33.8 %
xiii	Do you feel comfortable about the reading text material that you choose?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		137	98.6 %	2	1.4 %
xiv	Do you have any difficulties while reading printed reading text materials?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		22	15.8 %	117	84.2 %
xv	Do you have any difficulties while reading non-printed reading text materials?	Yes	percentage	no	percentage
		27	19.4 %	112	80.6 %
xvi	Which kind of reading text materials do you use more often?	digital	percentage	printed	percentage
		95	68.3 %	44	31.7 %

For question i, the writers asked whether or not the respondents like reading. It was found that 116 respondents (83.5%), out of 139 respondents like reading, only 23 respondents (16.5 %) do not like reading. In question ii, the respondents were asked about their purpose in reading. 109 respondents said that they read to get information, 72 respondents read for entertainment, 98 for gaining knowledge, and 4 respondents stated other purposes. In questions iii, the writers asked about the amount of time they spent reading in a day. Almost half of the sample (49.6 %) answered that they spent about 1-2 hours in a day for reading, 38.8 % answered that they spent less than an hour, and 10.8 % spent 2-4 hours, while only 1 respondent answered that he spent more than 4 hours in a day for reading. For questions iv and v, the writers asked whether the respondents read using printed and non-printed text material. Almost all of the respondents (above 70%) answered that they used both printed and non-printed reading text materials. In question vi, the respondents were asked whether they know about digital reading texts or not, and almost all the respondents (99.3 %) answered that they know about digital reading texts.

In question ix and xii where the respondents were asked which kind of reading texts they liked more and made them more motivated, more than half of the respondents (66% - 69%) agreed that they like digital reading texts more, and it made them more motivated to read, but the language of the reading text also affected the respondents' answer. It can be seen from questions x and xi where they were asked which kind of texts they preferred to use if the texts are in English or in *Bahasa* Indonesia. The result showed that if they read English texts, they prefer to use printed material (51.8 %) but if the text is in *Bahasa* Indonesia, they prefer to use digital texts (56.1 %). The writers also asked for the reason for the choice made and most of the reasons from the respondents stated that when reading English text they prefer using the printed materials because it's healthier for their eyes and they can highlight the unknown words and look for their meanings later. But when reading *Bahasa* Indonesian texts, more than half of the respondents said that they prefer to use digital texts because it's already in their language so they do not need to worry about finding unknown words so they can read it easily with digital texts. For questions xiii where the respondents were asked whether they feel comfortable with their choice, most of the respondents (98.6%) answered that they feel comfortable with it. For questions xiv and xv, the writers asked whether the respondents had difficulties in reading printed or non-printed text materials, and most

of the respondents (80% - 85%) said that they did not have any difficulties in reading printed and/or non-printed reading text materials. For the respondents who answered that they had difficulties in reading printed and/or non-printed reading text material, the writers also asked what were the difficulties they faced, and most of them said that they had problems with their eyes if they read multimedia text for a long time and they also said that reading printed text is not practical since they have to hold papers or books (sometimes very thick ones) when they want to read. and for question xvi, the writers asked which kind of reading texts that they used more often, and the answer was 68.3% of the respondents answered digital texts and 31.7% answered printed texts.

4.2 Discussion

The writers made some interpretations based on the data obtained. First, most respondents like reading. They read for reasons like getting information, having entertainment, gaining knowledge, etc. The second interpretation, the readers prefer to use digital reading texts. Most of the reasons are based on the digital texts' practicality. Most of the respondents said that digital texts are practical. They do not need to hold heavy texts/books while reading. They just need to bring their devices and they can save and read many texts on one device. They also said that digital reading texts are much more interesting and fun than the printed ones. But for texts that need more attention like texts in another language (in this study we asked about English texts), the readers prefer to use the printed ones because they can give a footnote or highlight the unknown words and find out the meanings later.

Third, the writers found out that all the readers feel comfortable with the reading tools that they had chosen whether they had chosen the printed or digital texts. They all felt comfortable using them, despite the difficulties in reading using each type of media. Last, from the data obtained it is found that most of the respondents become more motivated to read when they use digital reading texts. They think digital reading texts are much more interesting and practical than the printed ones.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are: (1) in common, the reading tools that the respondents prefer to use are the digital reading tools, (2) the respondents feel comfortable with the reading text tools that they chose, and (3) the students become more motivated to read while reading using digital reading tools.

The writers also conclude that both digital and printed reading texts have advantages and disadvantages. Students can use both of them in balance depending on the outside factors such as readers' needs and type of texts.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the data obtained, the writers suggest doing further research about digital and printed texts that are used in reading, and also for learning in general. The writers suggest focusing on the disadvantages and difficulties of reading using digital and printed reading texts, and also how to minimise or reduce the disadvantages and difficulties from both digital and printed reading texts. So, it can be concluded that digital and printed reading texts can be used effectively in the teaching and learning process, especially for English teaching and learning.

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