

THE DIFFICULTIES OF READING ONLINE TEXT FOR ESL STUDENTS AT COLLEGE LEVEL

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Abstract

Firdaus, Fiqih. 2020. The Difficulties of Reading Online Text for ESL Students At College Level of *Univesity of Muhammadiyah Jember in 2019/2020 Academic Year*. Thesis, English Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember. Advisor: (1) Fitrotul Mufaridah, M.Pd (2) Nurkamilah, M.Pd.

The purpose of this study is to find out and explain the difficulties of reading online text for ESL students at college level. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The collecting data used was an interview with the students of University of Muhammadiyah Jember about the difficulties of reading online text for ESL students, of which there were 6 students in University of Muhammadiyah Jember. The result of data analysis show that the interview which were the analyzed the difficulties of reading online text for ESL students it is because when reading online they only use their eyes without moving their heads at all. So that it has an impact on their eyes which will feel sick and tired apart from the influence of the light of the cell phone itself and the strategy used by students are focus on the purpose, consolidate information, and setting the devices.

Keywords: *Difficulties, Strategies, Online Reading*

Introduction

Reading is an activity to get information about something. It is very important for teacher to improve the students' mastery of English. The main objective of English instruction both in lower and upper secondary school is the development of reading skill, and students graduated from secondary school must be

competence in reading. Huda in Fauziati (2002, p.112) stated that the goal of English teaching is the acquisition of communicative competence with an emphasis on reading skill, and not on oral skill. This is the reason why reading skill is so important. Reading skill is to develop fluent and proficient readers who are knowledgeable about reading process.

Therefore, the use of suitable books must be appropriate with the standard criteria that could involve the student's competence in reading, the student feels comfortable and understand the content of the books.

Online reading is the process of extracting meaning from a text that is in a digital format. Also called digital reading. The researchers agree that the experience of reading online (whether on a PC or a mobile device) is fundamentally different from the experience of reading print materials.

Reading helps in mental development and known to stimulate the muscles of the eyes. Reading is an activity that involves greater levels of concentration and adds to the conversational skills of the reader. The habit of reading also helps readers to discover new words and phrases that they come across in everyday conversations. The habit can become a healthy addiction and adds to the information available on various topics. It helps us to stay in-touch with contemporary writers and makes us sensitive to global issues (Gani, 2016).

There are a great number of students who experience reading difficulties. There are those students who are diagnosed with a learning difficulty.

Also there is an even larger group of students, who do not have diagnoses, but who need good reading assistance. Kibby and Hynd (2001, p.123).

Online reading difficulty is different from reading printed. In online reading we read by using mobile phone which is not all people have a good internet and they do not read full of text. It is different from printed, they can read full of text and comfort. Sometimes people even if have a good reading when they are reading on screen they must read silently, and spend many times to repeat it. It can become they really understand the text or not at all. So, they do not focus on their goal.

Method

In this case uses the method use is qualitative research. Ary (2010, p.29) states that qualitative research seeks to understand the difficulties and strategies of reading online by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it into variable. It means the explanation focuses more on description rather than numeric. Qualitative method is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning.

Based on the statement above the qualitative methods used to help the researcher in describing the data. The result of the analysis will form description of the investigation that has been carried out through observation and interview to the student. The qualitative methods especially describing is the best way to help the researcher in analyzing the data..

The data collecting technique is used based on After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data. Wiersma (1991, p.85) stated “Data analysis in qualitative research is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis. Data reduction is necessary for the description and interpretation of the

phenomenon under study”. In short, data analysis is systematically process to analyze data which have been collected.

To analyze the data, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative to analyze data. According to Sugiyono (2008,p.245), there are three activities to analyze data in descriptive qualitative research. Those activities are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Based on those statements, the researcher divides the activity in analyzing data into three activities, they are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Here is the questions of the interview with the students :

1. STUDENTS STATEMENTS SHEET IN READING DIFFICULTIES

1. Did you find any difficulties when reading an online text? Yes, what?
2. Is reading a difficult skill to you?
3. What challenges did you find when reading an online text?

2. STUDENTS STATEMENTS SHEET IN READING STRATEGIES

1. What do you usually do to deal with your reading difficulties?
2. Did you learn using that strategies from class or you found it yourself?
3. Have you used these strategies from high school or only from college?

Result and Discussion

After finding some data, both from the results of research in the interview. But in the description of the results of this study that can be reduce is interview with students. There are three things the

researcher found, namely; sore eyes, tired eyes, and difficulty focusing. These three things focus on the physical problems that make it difficult to read online.

1. Sore Eyes

Too bright light from cellphones can cause eye pain, making it difficult to do online reading activities. This can also be caused when the subject uses his cellphone or laptop to read in a dark room. Subjects said that the most common thing happen when they read online was how they felt in their eyes. They said that they need a significant portion of their time to read online activities of around two to three hours, in this long period of time they started feel pain in their eyes due to the influence of the light on their cellphones. This causes them to find it difficult to continue reading activities online. The statements came from two subjects, namely BL and ND, whose statements can be observed through the following excerpts.

“When I read online text the light from my cellphone makes my eyes hurt.” (BL)

“When I read online text the bright light from my cellphone makes my eyes hurt.” (ND)

2. Tired Eyes

With a cellphone size that is not too big, it is different from books that can cause eye fatigue when we are reading online. Subjects said their eyes would feel tired more easily when reading online with less resting bodies because they needed more concentration to read online. The researcher also found that the tired eyes

experienced by the subjects were influenced by the habits of the subjects when reading online. Subjects said they often read online while lying down and at a close distance between their eyes and their cellphones. This of course will cause their eyes to tire easily. Of all subjects investigated in this study, subjects ZK and FR deliberately stated the state of their eyes which went tired when reading through their smartphone.

“When I read online text the narrow screen and strong light from cellphone makes my eyes tired. The time duration from me to read online text can not be long, it is only 2 hour.” (ZK)

“When I read online text the bright light from my laptop makes my eyes tired and also for a long duration my concentration will be decreased.” (FR)

3. Difficulty in Focusing

When we read online using our electronic devices, we often experience distractions such as getting a call or getting a message that will distract our focus on reading. Subjects, particularly K and HP, said that when they read online via smartphone, they often get an incoming call that requires them to answer the call, which affects their focus on reading online. Not only that, the subjects also said that even though there were no calls or messages

coming to their cellphones, sometimes the desire to contact someone could interfere with their concentration to focus on reading online with the cellphone they used because there will be a notification that pops up on the screen; For example a new chat or video call from the application. The small text size on cellphones also affects their focus in reading online as it will limit the spacing between pages of the text. The data related to this finding can be found in the following interview excerpts.

“When I read online text I feel hard to focus because the size of the text is small and I can not easily to mark some important information.”(K)

“When I read online text, I can not underlined the difficult word and I feel hard to understand the meaning from some difficult word. I feel not comfortable with the distraction like a phone call or text messages.”(HP)

The strategies of reading online text the researcher found, There are three things the researcher found, namely; focus on the purpose, consolidate information and setting the devices.

1. Focus on The Purpose

When the reader needs specific information, they will focus on one

particular reading only, this will make it easier for the reader to understand the information. Subjects said that the text with an attractive title would make them more interested in reading it, they will start reading online by typing keywords into a search site based on something they like, for example a novel or certain news stories. Even though it is not the information they need to get, they will sometimes look for entertaining readings according to their preferred category such as adventure or fantasy stories.

“When she read online text, she is trying to look some interesting reading with her cellphone and read it in the quiet place.”(BL)

2. Consolidate Information

In reading online, sometimes the reader will find words that are difficult and they rarely encounter in everyday life, so they will use tools such as dictionaries to be able to understand those words. Subjects said they used the dictionary directly when they came across difficult words before continuing their reading, it would make it easier for them to understand the online text.

“When she read online text, she is using dictionary for searching the meaning of some difficult word that she does not understand.”(FR)

“When she read online text, she is using translate application for searching the meaning of some difficult word that she does not understand.”(ND)

3. Setting the devices

There are things that the subject needs to prepare when reading online, it will help them feel comfortable doing so, for example adjusting settings on their cellphones such as the light on the screen and the size of the text. Subjects will also familiarize themselves in reading online,. It is a separate strategy for each subject, some are using certain methods of reading online such as scanning method.

“When she read online text, she is upgrading her knowledge for more understanding the reading, and also she read a lot to improving her reading skill and stimulated her brain.”(K)

“When she read online text, she periodically repeat her reading until she is understand the reading. She uses canning method for reading online.”(HP)

Conclusion

Based on the research findings that had been explained in previous chapter, the difficulties of reading online text are sore eyes, tired eyes, and difficulty focusing,

“When she read online text, she always make sure that she can enjoy and feel comfort, so she always set her cellphone screen with sufficient light and enough size for the text.”(ZK)

The discussion it appears that the difficulties in reading online that have been discovered by the researcher are events that have occurred and been discovered by previous researchers. In reading online the readers are not only given comfort but also there are some problems that make difficulties on reading online. Likewise, the strategies in online reading that have been found by the researcher are similar to the theories that have been put forward by previous researchers. The small difference that can be seen in this study with previous research is that it is easier for online readers to overcome difficulties in reading online with the strategies they employ due to technological advances in today's factors.

subjects use several strategies in their difficulties of reading online text. This section will look at the advantages and disadvantages of the media for its users, or if a more specific question is asked, what are the advantages and disadvantages of

reading online text. It depends on the user when he reads text online. Reading regularly on the screen of a device or laptop will affect eye health, light / light from digital media screens can affect eye health, causing eye \ eyes problems if the use of digital media is not used wisely. Moreover, it can be concluded from the research findings and the discussion that the strategy used by students are focus on the purpose, consolidate information, and setting the devices.

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