

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF EXTENSIVE READING THROUGH WATTPAD FOR STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL)

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Abstract: This study aims to determine students' experiences with comprehensive reading strategies using Wattpad. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Data are collected using interviews, observation, documentation, and questionnaires. The analysis of this research uses a triangulation technique which consists of steps; data reduction, data display, and ultimately conclusion to analyze the data. The results of this study indicate that extensive reading through Wattpad can be used for pleasure, extensive reading through the Wattpad platform can reduce stress, extensive reading through Wattpad can increase motivation, and extensive reading through Wattpad can increase vocabulary. All of these activities can have a positive impact on students. Plus, Wattpad's platform is great for in-depth reading. Therefore, one of the best ways to learn English is to read extensively on the Wattpad platform. Teachers should realize that because Wattpad is a practical reading tool that can be accessed anywhere and at any time, all the stories students read must be age-appropriate.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Wattpad Platforms, EFL Students' Experience

INTRODUCTION

One of the important languages for students to master is English. To learn English, students must acquire speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. In addition, reading is the most important ability for students to learn from the four mentioned above. One of the important language skills is reading, especially in developing countries like Indonesia, where English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is considered difficult to learn (Hibatullah, 2019). Reading proficiency will make it easier for students to learn other skills, which can affect speaking, writing, and listening skills (Agustin & Ayu, 2021).

The previous coronavirus outbreak that attacked Indonesia significantly impacted that country's teaching and learning process (Nariswari, 2020), (Mawitjere, 2023). As a result, all students are involved in educational activities at home to stop the spread of the coronavirus. As a result, many students need more motivation to participate in learning activities and feel bored and lazy. The researcher then enabled students to use the Wattpad website to read extensively to overcome boredom, indifference, and lack of interest.

There are many places available in this 4.0 era for teaching and learning. Using platforms, especially for learning languages, can be more convenient. Given that students are now very familiar with the use of technology. Consequently, the researcher identified the Wattpad platform as a viable research tool that could be used in this study. The researchers wanted to know more about the extensive reading experiences of Wattpad users. When students select stories for extensive reading, they can do so in an engaging way that considers their interests and level of understanding. According to Maharsi, extensive reading can foster a friendly atmosphere where students are encouraged to choose materials that suit their reading skills and interests. Students who read a lot like it feel comfortable (Maharsi et al., 2019). Most of the relatively simple texts are read by students in extensive reading classes. They can read fluently, confidently, and enjoyably (Mufidah & Roifah, 2020). Students can choose reading material for in-depth reading according to their level of understanding; this will give them the confidence to read and allow them to do so without coercion.

Meanwhile, extensive reading has a goal: to read as many books as possible. Students participating in these activities must do so voluntarily and without time constraints or exam-related pressure. According to Ali, ER aims to expose students to the target language by encouraging them to read many books for enjoyment rather than academic credit (Ali et al., 2022).

Additionally, Nuttal states that living among speakers of a foreign language is the best way to develop your language knowledge. Reading it extensively is the next best option. Extensive reading is one of the best ways to improve your English proficiency. Reading before bed can reduce the stress

experienced daily, positively impacting human health (Shoesmith et al., 2021). According to Altena et al., reading books before bed is a relaxing exercise that can help people deal with stressful situations (Altena et al., 2020). In addition, just 6 minutes of reading each day can help people feel less stressed.

Moreover, Fekete & Deicher stated that even 6 minutes of reading daily can relieve 2/3 of a person's stress (Fekete & Deichert, 2022). Reading content on Wattpad helped students improve their overall reading motivation (Permatasari et al., 2020). Additionally, prolonged reading can increase students' vocabulary knowledge; specifically, long reading can increase students' vocabulary knowledge, and it is evident that as students read, they acquire a new vocabulary that can improve their understanding. According to Hsu and Lee, learners enhance their vocabulary knowledge through reading extensively, allowing them to meet terms in real-life situations (Tai et al., 2022).

In this study, the researchers chose the Wattpad platform as a medium for Extensive Reading. Two Canadian engineers and colleagues, Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen, started Wattpad in 2006. Wattpad is a web 2.0 platform that works closely with schools. The employment of Web 2.0 in the modern period has proven to have a positive impact, particularly on students. Furthermore, Mustafa and Adnan noted that Wattpad is a Web 2.0 product that encourages collaboration and crowdsourcing of educational elements to develop an e-learning platform. The Wattpad platform for prolonged reading is an excellent choice for improving e-learning tools in education, particularly for English (Riwayatiningsih & Sulistyani, 2020).

Further, Rahman and Iwan stated that the Wattpad platform includes digital stories in a range of exciting genres, including fanfiction, teen fiction, romance, action, and other genres, with no need to read innately heavy books to enjoy the story. Additionally, Extensive Reading aims to read for enjoyment without any force. As a result, in Extensive Reading, individuals can read whatever narrative they desire and read it at their level of comprehension (Tang et al., 2019).

Previous research has explored the benefits of extensive reading in language learning, highlighting its positive impact on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and overall language proficiency (Li et al., 2021), (Karami, 2019). However, there is a notable research gap regarding the specific role and impact of digital platforms, such as Wattpad, in facilitating extensive reading for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). While studies have investigated the effectiveness of various digital tools and resources in language learning, limited research focuses on the potential benefits of using Wattpad as a platform for extensive reading in the EFL context. Consequently, the literature needs to include insights into how Wattpad's unique features, such as its vast collection of user-generated stories and interactive reading experience, can contribute to EFL students' language learning outcomes and motivation. Therefore, this study addresses this research

gap by examining the positive impact of extensive reading through Wattpad on EFL students' language proficiency, reading fluency, and cultural understanding. By investigating the potential benefits and challenges associated with using Wattpad for extensive reading, this research can provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking effective strategies to enhance EFL instruction in the digital age.

METHODS

This study employed descriptive qualitative research. The study gathered data through words or visuals rather than numbers. The nature of qualitative research is descriptive. Ten EFL students from an Indonesian university took part in the study from English Education Department, Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor. The participants were chosen because they enjoy reading. Data collection is conducted through interviews, observation, documentation, and questionnaires. The analysis of this research uses a triangulation technique which consists of steps; data reduction, data display, and ultimately conclusion to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study was carried out to investigate the students' experiences. The data will describe students' experiences with the Extensive Reading approach using the Wattpad platform.

Extensive reading on Wattpad is pleasurable.

All participants believed extensive reading through Wattpad was an enjoyable reading activity based on questionnaire statements and interviews. It is consistent with the information from the data interview below:

"Yeah, I feel so much fun using Wattpad. Because I can read a lot of stories there and a lot of genres, and you can read them by using your phone, and you can easily find what kind of genre you want, and I feel a lot of fun when I'm reading them using Wattpad." And

"Yes, I do. I get a lot of fun when I do my extensive reading through Wattpad. Because each story has different pictures, it makes me more flexible wherever I'm reading the stories while I'm lying on my bed or maybe on my way to go somewhere, and yeah, it's fine. Because we only need to scroll up and scroll down the stories to the phone." And "Yes, I have a lot of fun doing Extensive Reading through Wattpad. All the books are fresh on Wattpad, and I think it has a good word option. It is fun. Also, it has a lot of genres to read."

According to the first research findings, all participants believed that Extensive Reading on Wattpad was engaging. They can find a variety of exciting genres to read, and they may read on Wattpad from anywhere and at any time. It was supported by Sánchez & Gavilánez, who indicated that the purpose of ER is to get students to read a lot of books for fun rather than to be tested and to be the best to be exposed to the target language (Sanchez & Gavilanez, 2015).

Reading extensively on the Wattpad platform Can Help to relieve stress

Based on the questionnaire statements and interviews, all participants agreed that Extensive Reading on the Wattpad platform could benefit their health, particularly in reducing stress. It is consistent with the information from the following interview:

"Yes, I agree with your statement that reading using Wattpad can reduce my stress because reading is healing when you read something entertaining and making you feel happy. It will reduce your stress. I have experienced that using Wattpad can reduce my stress. Because there are a lot of stories that can entertain me to feel happy and don't worry about many things."
And

"Yes, of course, it can help us to reduce stress. Because when we read through Wattpad, the order gives us the fantasy or maybe the feel when we read the stories, and all of them have different stories like that. So, it can make us more comfortable and help us reduce this stress."
And "Yes, I do agree about it. As I said before, the books are fresh to read, and a lot of genres to read, and it doesn't make me bored to read a book, and of course, it can reduce the stress."

Based on the study's results, all participants believed that extensive reading on Wattpad may decrease their everyday stress. The task is therapeutic; it is one thing that favors the body; for example, reading 6 minutes a day can lessen the day-to-day tension that participants endure, and reading something interesting will ensure that participants feel joyful. According to Kourkouta et al., 6 minutes of reading daily can decrease 2/3 of a person's stress (Kourkouta et al., 2018).

Extensive Reading on Wattpad Can Help to Increase Motivation

Based on the questionnaire and interview results, all participants believed that Extensive Reading via Wattpad could drive them to perform Extensive Reading since Wattpad offers a variety of genres and intriguing stories to read. It is consistent with the information from the following data interview:

"Yes, I agree. Because of Wattpad, I can read extensively by reading a lot of different genres, and it entertains me a lot, and I feel so happy when reading a lot of stories. So I don't

feel burdened to do extensive reading using Wattpad. It's so fun, yeah, I can read extensively."

And

"Yes, I agree with that. Reading interesting stories with interesting content may help us be more motivated to read extensively. It could persuade the readers to be in that story itself. So, sometimes when we read the stories with the interesting content, we will motivate it may be in the point of view of the reader or maybe the point of view of the order, yeah, we can be motivated for the stories." And "Yes, it's motivated me a lot to read more. Because I haven't found an application like Wattpad that has a lot of interesting stories and has a lot of genres that I like."

According to the research findings, all participants believed Extensive Reading on Wattpad could boost their reading motivation. Wattpad has numerous exciting stories and genres, which can encourage people to read extensively. According to Permatasari & Nafisatul, reading content on Wattpad helped students improve their extensive reading motivation (Permatasari & Nafisatul, 2019).

Extensive Reading on Wattpad Can Help to Improve Vocabulary

Based on the questionnaire and interview results, all participants agreed that Extensive Reading on Wattpad may help them enhance their vocabulary. It is consistent with the information obtained from the interview:

"Yes. I think that my vocabulary is increasing, and I have a lot of new vocabulary to learn and to memorize because there are a lot of stories that use some heart words are words that I haven't known about it, so I should open my google translate. I try to translate the meaning of the words, and yeah, I can use more new vocabulary." And

"Yes, I did because when we read each sentence and each word, we need to know what the meaning of the word or the sentence is right. So, we can find out in the online dictionaries, or maybe you can find in the text dictionaries, and of course, it increases our vocabulary. And, of course, we will have a new vocabulary. When we have a new vocabulary, we will write it down on paper, on the list of our vocabularies, and then we will implement this word in the daily activities or maybe talking with someone else." And "Yes, my vocabulary is increasing. It has a lot of words that I rarely found in books, good word options that I didn't know about before."

According to the study's findings, all participants believed that extensive reading on Wattpad could help them improve their vocabulary. Extensive reading can give children a broader perspective,

particularly regarding language skills. According to Hsu and Lee, learners improve their vocabulary by reading extensively, which helps them encounter concepts in real-life circumstances (Chen, 2018).

The Wattpad Platform is Great for Extensive Reading

Based on the questionnaire and interview answers, two participants agreed that Wattpad is a platform that can be used as a learning medium, particularly for reading skills, because Wattpad provides a variety of intriguing tales and is very easy for students to access. According to Mustafa and Adnan, Wattpad is a Web 2.0 platform that supports collaboration and crowdsourcing of educational elements to produce an e-learning tool (Mufidah & Roifah, 2020). However, one argued that Wattpad is not a better reading medium: "It could help the learners. Besides, there are so many interesting stories, and they will feel comfortable reading using Wattpad." And "Yes, I consider Wattpad a good way to improve the learning activity, especially in reading. Because Wattpad applications are easy to use, it also contains great stories and creative writers that can motivate learners to read more and write more."

Meanwhile, according to the interview results, one of the participants does not believe Wattpad can be utilized as a learning medium for underage children. Wattpad offers adult-oriented stories, and filters for underage readers do not work properly. It is consistent with the information obtained from the interview:

"I think it is not. Because Wattpad is where people can find 'any' stories, it can be about the genre like thriller, mature content, or things that are from the rule in our living, so some of them are inappropriate for someone underage to read. The filter in Wattpad is also not working, so we as a teacher should be careful that our students should read books that are allowed and appropriate for them.

Below are the results of the questionnaire:

Table 1. Questionnaire results

No	STATEMENTS	Yes	No
1.	I enjoy reading by utilizing Wattpad.	(100%)	(0%)
2.	A lot of fun I get when I do Extensive Reading Through Wattpad.	(100%)	(0%)
3.	Extensive Reading through Wattpad can reduce stress.	(100%)	(0%)
4.	Wattpad provides me with a variety of exciting genres story to read.	(100%)	(0%)
5.	I do extensive reading every day.	(0%)	(100%)
6.	I usually read five to seven books on Wattpad in a week.	(0%)	(100%)

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7.	The flexibility in accessing the book makes me interested in doing Extensive Reading on Wattpad.	(100%)	(0%)
8.	The engaging stories make me more motivated to do Extensive Reading.	(100%)	(0%)
9.	I found many new vocabularies in the Wattpad stories, which increased my vocabulary knowledge.	(100%)	(0%)
10.	Reading using Wattpad is one of the best ways to improve my vocabulary skills.	(100%)	(0%)
11.	Extensive reading on the Wattpad platform makes me broad-minded.	(100%)	(0%)
12.	I become more concentrated on reading, decoding, and solving a problem.	(100%)	(0%)

Based on the questionnaire result in Table 1, it was discovered that every participant thought spending a lot of time reading through Wattpad was enjoyable. The statement that "The objective of ER is to get learners to read a lot of books and do this activity for enjoyment, without the pressure of being assessed and the best, to be exposed to the target language" was supported by Sanchez and Gavilánez (Sanchez & Gavilanez, 2015). As well supported by Fatimah, extensive reading may foster a welcoming atmosphere where students are encouraged to choose appropriate materials for their reading skills and interests. Students who read extensively like it and feel at ease (Fatimah, 2019). Additionally, it was discovered that all participants concurred that including Wattpad in in-depth reading activities could inspire kids to read. Students who don't enjoy reading can be made to enjoy it by using Wattpad. This is so that readers may find intriguing tales on Wattpad in various genres.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, Extensive Reading through Wattpad can have a positive impact on students' skills in the following ways: Extensive Reading through Wattpad can increase students' enjoyment of reading because Wattpad provides various genres and exciting stories, Extensive Reading through Wattpad can also reduce students' stress, Extensive Reading through Wattpad can also increase students' motivation in reading, and Wattpad is one platform that may be utilized to learn English, particularly reading skill. On the other hand, teachers that want to use the Wattpad platform as a learning medium should give reading material from the Wattpad that is acceptable for the students' ages.

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