STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD BLENDED MEDIA IN EFL READING PRACTICES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Engaging students in EFL reading lessons in a large class is always a challenge for teachers. Thus, blended learning removes barriers and expands educational opportunities. The study is conducted on the concept of blended learning, which combines paper-based text with the digital game-based response system, namely Kahoot, for EFL reading context. The purpose of this study is to investigate how students perceive blended media in EFL reading practices. The participants were 76 pupils from a vocational high school. The data were gathered through observation, questionnaire, and interview. The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The results indicated that the majority of students had favorable attitudes toward blended media in EFL reading practices. It influences their engagement, motivation, and attitudes. Additional investigation is advised to ascertain the influence on their performance in reading skills.

Introduction

Indonesian language educators frequently face the issue of diminished student motivation, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading lessons. This challenge is particularly pronounced in large class settings, where a subset of students exhibit little active engagement in the language learning process (Adamu, Tsiga, & Zuilkowski, 2022).

As the gathering of students' responses to reading practices is time-consuming, it creates several obstacles to the active interaction between teachers and students. Therefore, the selection of instructional media became crucial for engaging students and facilitating teacher-student interaction (Nedeljković & Rejman Petrović, 2023).

The development of technology has become an integral component of language instruction at all educational levels. The hardware and software innovations are so advanced that they have improved the quality of education. It has led us to new educational opportunities. Numerous teachers and pupils possess mobile phones or tablets that are capable of language learning (Gamlo, 2019).

The development of technology has created the opportunity to combine traditional instruction with digital or online instruction. Blended learning was devised to describe the combination of both instructional methods. Blending media is one of the numerous conceptualizations of blended learning that educators can adopt (Hrastinski, 2019).

In the past, reading practices and paper-based media were inseparable. With a large class, it is difficult for instructors to provide timely feedback if students' responses are

collected manually. The advancement of technology has enabled the creation of software applications that can rapidly collect student responses and provide feedback (Şahin, 2019). Among them is Kahoot (Janković & Lambić, 2022).

In addition to collecting students' responses, Kahoot provides correct/incorrect feedback. Additionally, Kahoot enhances the feedback by gamifying the students' responses (Ashtari & Taylor, 2021). It has been demonstrated that student participation in Kahoot is high (Figuccio & Johnston, 2022).

In the study by (Marsa, Kuspiyah, & Agustina, 2021), reading comprehension achievement was taught using Kahoot. Reading comprehension achievement is significantly different between students who are taught using Kahoot! game and those who are taught using a traditional game, according to the study. However, there is insufficient information that mentions if blended learning is applied in this study. This research investigated the perceptions of vocational high school students toward blended media in EFL reading practice, in light of the positive impact of Kahoot.

This study was conducted as a guideline for fostering students' motivation in reading practice and employing technology-based media suited to their requirements and characteristics.

Research Methods

The research was carried out in a vocational high school in Indonesia during the academic year 2022-2023. The participants in this study consisted of a sample of 76 students enrolled in a vocational high school, all of whom got into an English as a Foreign Language course. The students receive a total of three hours of English instruction every week. The data were obtained through the administration of a questionnaire, conducting interviews, and making observations.

The questionnaire has ten statements that students are required to select to express their thoughts regarding the use of blended media in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading practice. Subsequently, the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data was conducted, employing statistical measures such as percentage, mean score, and standard deviation (SD). The questionnaire was evaluated using a Likert scale, which consisted of five response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral/moderate, disagree, and strongly disagree.

An open-ended interview was done by interviewing 17 students. The questions asked were about the activity of reading practices through blended media and their experiences while applying it in their language learning process.

Results and Discussion

The present study aims to explore the students' perception of blended media in EFL reading practices. The means and standard deviations for students' responses to each item of the questionnaire relating to their attitudes toward blended media in reading practices are shown in Table 1. Using the SPSS Statistic, the reliability of the questionnaire has

.766 Cronbach's Alpha which means has passed the minimum standard of 0.60 (Sugiyono, 2018).

Table 1
Students' Perceptions Toward Blended Media in Reading Practice

Statement	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	mean	SD
Blended media using Kahoot in EFL reading practice is interesting	34.2	63.2	2.6	0	0	1.68	.522
I like to be involved in learning activities using this method	25.0	68.4	6.6	0	0	1.82	.534
This learning method helps me to improve my English skills in reading	30.3	59.2	10.5	0	0	1.80	.611
This learning method helps me to develop my skimming skill	28.9	61.8	9.2	0	0	1.80	.589
This learning method helps me to develop my scanning skills in reading	28.9	63.2	7.9	0	0	1.79	.573
Reading practice with blended media using Kahoot and paper makes me happy and fun.	21.1	65.8	11.8	1.3	0	1.93	.618
This learning method makes me feel bored	0	3.9	19.7	59.2	17.1	3.89	.723
If I have a chance to study English more deeply, I want to have a blended media of Kahoot and paper for reading practice	23.7	61.8	14.5	0	0	1.91	.615
This learning method of blended media makes me motivated to read a longer English text	11.8	60.5	25.0	2.6	0	2.18	.668
This learning method makes me feel confident and relaxing	15.8	68.4	15.8	0	0	2.00	.566

1= strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral/moderate, 4 = disagree, 5=strongly disagree.

According to the data presented in Table 1, a significant proportion of students (97.4%) see blended media as being interesting. A significant majority of pupils, approximately 92.4%, have a strong inclination towards participating in this particular activity. A significant majority of participants, namely 89.5%, reported that the implementation of blended learning has proven beneficial in enhancing their English reading abilities. Notably, the participants highlighted the positive impact on specific skills such as skimming, with 90.7% expressing improvement, and scanning, with 92.1% reporting enhanced proficiency. About their attitudes towards blended media, a significant majority of students (86.9%) reported experiencing positive emotions such as happiness and enjoyment during reading practice. Conversely, a considerable proportion (76.3%)

denied experiencing feelings of boredom. It is consistent with the study conducted by (Mat Husin & Azmuddin, 2022).

In terms of future considerations, it has been observed that a significant majority of students, namely 85.5%, express a preference for a combination of Kahoot, a digital learning platform, and traditional paper-based materials for engaging in reading practice, given the opportunity. A significant majority of students, specifically 72.3%, express a heightened sense of motivation towards engaging with lengthier English texts through the use of this particular strategy. Individuals have a sense of confidence and relaxation when engaging in the aforementioned procedure. Statement 1 exhibited the lowest mean value of 1.68, indicating a high level of consensus regarding the positive perception of blended media. The remark that received the highest mean score of 3.89 indicated a denial of becoming bored with the method being discussed.

Based on empirical evidence, it can be observed that every student actively engaged in reading exercises utilizing a combination of traditional and digital media. The individuals consistently anticipate the outcome of the top five rankings with great anticipation, as they observe varying results for the top five rankings of each number through the usage of Kahoot. Occasionally, they find themselves included within these high ranks, while at other times they are excluded (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). There is no certainty that the students who achieved the top five ranks will necessarily secure a place on the podium. The final ranking is represented by the podium, which honors three students who have achieved the highest level of performance (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Kahoot Podium

According to the data obtained from the interviews, students acknowledged the necessity of attentively reading the text before participating in the Kahoot exercise. It is comprehensible that individuals may encounter challenges in responding to questions on Kahoot within a restricted timeframe, particularly if they have not thoroughly read the accompanying text. Additionally, it is stated that the participants engaged in immediate discussions with peers regarding the answers, as the feedback for the correct responses was promptly displayed. One student expressed the view that this particular strategy is

highly advantageous due to its ability to engage students enjoyably while simultaneously yielding successful outcomes. If the text were to be incorporated into a Kahoot game, the font size would likely be insufficiently large. The individual further acknowledged an inability to identify their flaws due to the pleasurable nature of these experiences. Individuals do not experience feelings of anxiety due to perceiving the task as a game; nonetheless, they are still able to attain reading skills.
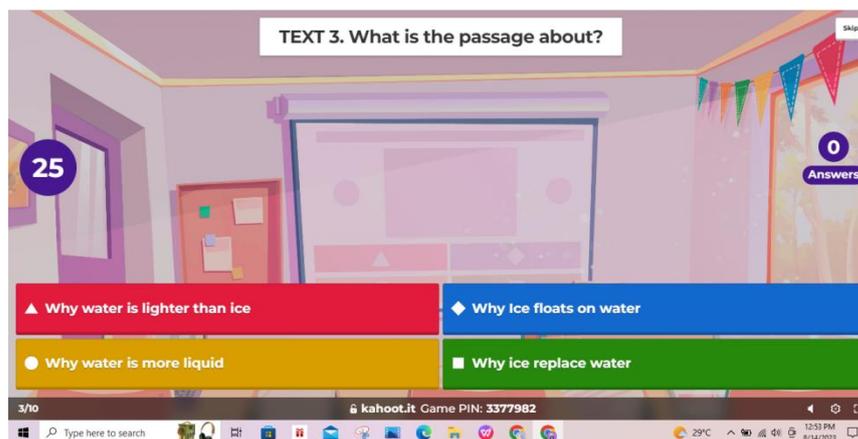

Figure 2. A sample question on a common screen

Hence, the results indicate that the implementation of blended media in reading practices may give more positive perceptions. The study might support the several studies conducted by (Licorish & Lötter, 2022) & Lötter, 2022; and (Figuccio & Johnston, 2022).

Conclusion

It is evident from the findings that blended media could be one of the alternatives used to support the practice of language instruction at the high school level. It is also assumed to be an effective instructional instrument for EFL reading practice. The utility of Kahoot and paper-based text is assumed to be useful blended media that can facilitate reading practice in the classroom to increase student engagement. In addition, the students had positive perceptions of reading practices that incorporated blended media. They viewed these activities as pleasant and intriguing. Based on these findings, it would be sensible to conduct additional research on the reading skills of EFL students and how their development may influence their reading skills performance. Thus, blended media may be necessary for English teachers to implement in the classroom to encourage students' interaction, motivation, and attitudes toward English learning.

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