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## Digital Texts Support Remote Learning: The Teachers' and Students' Perceptions

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### Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the teachers and their students carried out online distance learning by reading text digitally. This study aims to determine the teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of digital text. The writer applied a quantitative qualitative research design. The participants of this study were six teachers from SMAN 2 Luwu and one teacher from SMK Kristen Seriti; 40 students from SMAN 2 Luwu and SMK Kristen Seriti. The participants were selected by using total sampling technique. The instruments were a questionnaire and a structured open-ended interview. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results showed that the implementation of digital text was less attractive to students. This was evidenced from questionnaire results which showed that 75% of SMAN 2 Luwu students and 45% of SMK Kristen Seriti students think digital text cannot be understood easily than direct explanations from the teacher. However, students assume that they feel challenged to read the digital text without an immediate answer from the teacher. Moreover, the teachers (50%) agreed that digital text is beneficial in delivering material. This study is hoped to give meaningful information for the teachers, students, and further researcher.

**Keywords:** digital text; remote learning; students' perceptions; teachers' perception

### Introduction

Reading as a process of critical-creative reading is done to receive reading comprehension and assessment of reading, values, functions, and reading it (Farboy: 2009). By reading, we will get additional knowledge about which knowledge will benefit us. According to Rahim (2007: 1), "people who love reading acquire new

knowledge and insights that will further enhance their intelligence so that they are increasingly able to answer challenges in the future."

Covid-19 has ushered in a sea change in the field of education, both in terms of teaching and learning. The very path of future schooling could shift in a short period of time (Koet & Aziz, 2021). Thus, teachers should be able to develop the ability to creatively use technology to meet students' learning needs. Because language learning should not be limited to the classroom, teachers and students can employ technology gadgets to aid language acquisition. (Cakrawati, 2017). Sari et al. (2017) found that the teachers are ready to integrate digital materials in the class. According to the study findings by Daud et al. (2015), the majority of students expressed a strong desire to use digital learning. The students believed that digital learning methods can have an impact on self-motivation to increase learning quality. It also demonstrates how digital learning management may streamline the delivery of teaching and learning.

2 Kamgar & Jadidi (2016) state that "because the technology has developed around the world, the quantity of texts available in various languages, especially in English has increased". It requires the learner to improve their reading ability and interact with different authentic material (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Huang et al. (2014) emphasized that the new reading system provides not only many innovative and attractive applications for digital text but also interprets it more appropriately with the brand-new context of use.

Digital text is a series of reading in English along with questions following the contents of the reading which is packaged electronically in the form of PDF files. Loh & Sun (2019) stated that reading in print refers to reading on paper, whereas reading online refers to reading textual information on a reading device, smartphone, tablet, or computer. Sun et al. (2021) stated that reading e-books in digital forms that follow the linearity of print books, as well as texts with hyper-links, can be done digitally. E-books can be downloaded through subscription services (such as Epic or Kindle books), libraries (such as Singapore's National Library App), or other online resources (e.g., project Gutenberg or Adobe Reader).

Some scholars have researched about the students' and the teachers' perceptions about the use of digital text reading such as Manalu (2019) who found that 65 participants thought reading digital texts was enjoyable. They liked reading digital materials because they were more motivating, entertaining, and conformed to their usual reading style. They had the most difficulty reading digital texts because of the screen light, which irritated their eyes. Manalu conducted his research at university meanwhile this research conducted at senior high school. Laeli & Setiawan (2020) found that all of the teachers are enthusiastic about the practice of reading digital text. Most teachers, on the other hand, have misconceptions about what they know and how to execute reading digital text activities. Handayani et al. (2020) found that The usage of digital literature in the teaching and learning process was well-implemented by the teacher. Furthermore, many students were influenced by the use of digital literature in teaching and learning activities.

Regarding the statements above, the writer formulated a research question as follows: what are the English teachers' and the students' perceptions about the use of digital text?" The objective of this study aims to determine the English teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of digital text.

## Method

The method used in this research is quantitative qualitative research. It is used to describe the perceptions of teachers and students in the teaching and learning process by using digital text.

The participants of this study were 20 students of science department and five teachers from SMA Negeri 2 Luwu; 20 students and one teacher from SMK Kristen Seriti. Participants were chose by using total sampling technique. This study was conducted on 2-22 October 2020.

The writer used questionnaire and interview to gather the data. There were 10 items in questionnaire to be answered 10 the participants. They replied to the statements by picking one of four options: 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree) (strongly disagree). To avoid misunderstanding, the writer wrote the questionnaire in Indonesian.

To validate the data acquired via the questionnaire, a focus structured open-ended interview was undertaken. It was conducted to gain a better understanding of the respondents' perspectives, not to create broad generalizations. There were 6 questions in interview.

The descriptive analysis technique was used to assess the quantitative data received by the questionnaire. The quantitative data was supplemented with information collected from the focused structured open-ended interview.

## Findings

The results of questionnaire from 40 students of SMAN 2 Luwu and SMK Kristen Seriti were presented below.

Table 1. The Percentage of the Students' Answers

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
It's enjoyable to study at home utilizing the internet.	28%	8%	3%	58%	5%
The digital text makes students easy to learn.	18%	-	18%	48%	18%
All facilities that support online learning are available.	8%	8%	13%	35%	38%
Digital text is more efficient because it can save my time in studying.	3%	5%	20%	55%	18%
I feel more comfortable	-	3%	5%	35%	58%

when studying using digital text.					
Reading digital text is easier to understand than reading textbooks.	10%	3%	20%	25%	43%
Digital text is difficult to understand without the teacher's explanation.	53%	28%	5%	10%	5%
Digital text wastes of money because it spends many internet quotas.	35%	38%	13%	13%	3%
Because I must use a smartphone or computer to read digital text, it is quite laborious.	40%	43%	5%	8%	5%
I cannot improve my knowledge by reading digital text.	5%	43%	28%	10%	15%

Table 1 shows that most respondents disagree (58%) that it is enjoyable to study at home utilizing the internet because students must have a good internet connection, then students can learn online. The students disagree (48%) that digital text makes them easy to learn because it must be supported by adequate digital tools and a good internet connection. The students disagree (35%) and strongly disagree (38%) if online learning facilities were available because they did not get these facilities. Therefore, the students must try by themselves to study online. The students disagree (55%) that digital text is more efficient because without an additional explanation from the teacher. It will be difficult for them to understand the e-books content. The students (58%) also strongly disagreed that they feel more comfortable when learning using digital texts. The students stated that it is difficult to understand the reading content without guidance from the teacher.

The students strongly disagree (43%) that reading digital text is easier to

understand than reading printed textbooks. They can better understand by getting direct explanations from the teacher. The students strongly agree (53%) that learning without direct explanation from the teacher is difficult to understand. The students also strongly agree (48%) that digital text wastes of money because it spends many internet quotas. However, some students doubted and disagreed with the statement (neutral = 13%, disagree = 13%). The students strongly agree (43%) that learning by reading digital text is boring because they have to use digital devices such as computer or smartphone. The students agree (43%) that digital text reading cannot increase knowledge; however, 27.8% of students hesitated about it.

**The Teachers' Perceptions on Digital text**

The answers of six teachers at SMAN 2 Luwu and SMK Kristen Seriti were presented below.

Table 2. The Percentage of the Teachers' Answers

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Digital text makes it easier for teachers to deliver the material.	17%	50%	-	33%	-
Digital text can help teachers streamline their study time.	17%	83%	-	-	-
All digital text support facilities are available for teachers.	17%	33%	33%	17%	-
Digital text is useful for increasing the students' knowledge.	50%	17%	33%	-	-
Digital text can improve students' acquisition	17%	17%	%	33%	-
Digital text is wasteful because it needs many internet quotas.	-	17%	-	50%	33%
Students do not	17%	17%	17%	50%	-

understand digital text because teachers have difficulty explaining the material.					
The students are lazy to read digital text.	17%	17%	17%	-	50%
Digital text cannot be applied because the limited facilities available such as the internet.	17%	17%	17%	33%	17%
I do not entirely recommend students to learn digital text because it cannot add insight to them.	33%	-	-	67%	-

Table 2 shows that the teachers (50%) agree that digital text makes them easier to convey material because it can save time and become a learning tool for students at home. The teachers (83%) agree that digital text could streamline study time because they no longer needed to borrow books from the library or no longer record material. Some teachers agreed and doubted (agree = 33%, neutral = 33%) about the facilities that support digital text available to teachers because it requires an internet connection. The teacher must summarize the material according to the needs of their students. The teachers (50%) strongly agree that digital text can increase students' knowledge because they can learn from home with digital text students. The teachers doubted and disagreed (neutral = 33%, disagree = 33%) if digital text can increase students' acquisition because most students do not understand learning by digital text.

The teachers disagree (50%) and strongly disagree (33%) that digital text is wasteful because it requires a lot of money to buy internet credit. Digital text helps teachers deliver material. The teachers (50%) disagree if digital text is not understood by students because they argued that digital text can be understood when the teacher has previously explained the content of the material. Teachers strongly disagree (50%) if students are lazy to read digital text, especially during a pandemic like this, requiring students to study from home. The teachers disagree (33%) that digital text could not be applied because of the limitations of the internet,



and in a modern era like this it required students to be able to master digital, especially since the internet network is now easier to reach in certain areas. The teachers disagree (67%) if the students cannot use digital text. However, the teachers can make students learn from home as well as increase knowledge depending on their respective whether each student can take advantage of digital text to increase student knowledge.

#### ***The Results of Interview with the Students***

Based on the results of the writer interviews with students on 2<sup>nd</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, students who read digital text have problems, the internet network is not quite right; they can get internet quota with a good network, but at a relatively high price. Particular responses stated by the students are mentioned below:

Student A: *"Most of my friends and I have problems with internet quota, so even if you buy a cheap quota the network is also not good"*.

Students have not fully utilized the internet to read digitally because it is also used to open social media.

Student E: *"I don't fully use the internet for digital text because I also use it for personal needs such as watching (YouTube) and opening social media"*.

Student B: *"Sometimes I don't use the internet to read digitally because sometimes I use it to play games and play Tik-Tok and open social media"*.

Students feel challenged to understand the material from digital text without direct explanation from the teacher, for example, in an interview:

Student A: *"It is difficult to understand without a more detailed explanation"*.

Students consider digital text having a positive side, which is to make learning easier (wherever they can learn and without meeting the teacher directly) and can find answers via google. Digital text also has a negative side, namely students do not understand the content of questions and explanations in digital text. Students answered in the interview:

Student C: *"The positive side of digital text is that it usually makes it easier for us to learn while the downside is when we don't fully understand the questions and explanations"*.

Student D: *"Learning to read digitally can sometimes be understood, sometimes not, but on the positive side we can find the answer via google"*.

#### ***The Results of Interview with the Teachers***

Based on the results of the writer's interview with the teacher on 2<sup>nd</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 about the obstacles faced in learning to read digitally is the unstable internet network, especially for some students are in places that lack internet access. One teacher mentioned this in an interview:

Teacher A: *"Not all students are facilitated with internet data, especially in the current pandemic conditions where many students did not study because of the internet network factor"*.

Teachers have used the internet to collect student assignments, namely using the WhatsApp application and messenger application. As stated in an interview:

Teacher B: *"There is no specific email to collect assignments, but uses social media such as Messenger and WhatsApp"*.

Digital text has a positive side: it can make it easier for teachers to deliver material, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring working from home.



However, digital text also has a negative side: it requires a good internet connection and can interfere with vision if you have to stare at gadgets for longer. For example, in an interview:

Teacher C: *"digital text is more attractive to students. It can be done anywhere (working from home), but the downside is that it is wasteful (because it requires a good internet network) and can damage eyesight. From staring at the phone screen for too long"*.

Also, some teachers have not provided digital text because they are constrained by the media used.

Teacher D: *"Sometimes digital text is provided for students who already have an Android, and for students who don't have an Android, it is done manually, and the teacher doesn't fully ask the students to read digital text because of the student's condition"*.

Teacher C: *"Alhamdulillah, it is classified as possible even though it is not fully"*.

### Discussion

The topic of whether a digital text is equally effective as or more effective than a paper text has no obvious answers. According to Singer & Alexander (2017b) the length of the text utilized in the research made a difference in comprehension. Participants who read a digital text longer than one page did not have the same level of understanding as those who read a print book. They came to the conclusion that children can comprehend digital texts more successfully if they can break them down into smaller chunks.

Skimming and keyword searching are encouraged in digital texts. Many readers, according to one theory, utilize this technique to cope with information overload. Even digital text elements like the layout of the text on the screen and the device's brightness can create an environment that encourages skimming rather than deep reading (Konnikova, 2014). Deep reading, on the other hand, necessitates students asking questions and searching the material to find answers, as well as making connections between their existing knowledge and the ideas found in the book. Singer & Alexander (2017a, 157) stated that digital texts are well positioned to aid someone wanting to delve deeply into a topic.

The students in this study think that digital text is difficult for them because they have to learn without direct explanation from the teacher, especially during a pandemic like this which requires them to learn from home. In this case, students can take advantage of the internet as their learning tool because it is proven that they are using the WhatsApp application and the Messenger application to collect assignments. In using the internet, students can't use it properly because they don't use it to read digitally, so they think that digital text cannot add insight. For students to read digital, it also costs money to access it, one of which is that students must have a good internet connection to use digital text. In other words, digital text is less effective for students. This research is in line with Blumenstyk (2001), the students' overall attitude after using digital texts appeared to be negative. Although several students praised the digital texts' search function, many wished they could read their books whenever they wanted in bed, at the park, or at the beach. Students were likewise dissatisfied with the digital texts' annotation functions.

Besides, six teachers from senior high school and vocational high school argue that digital text helps teachers deliver material because it can save time and can be

used in times of a pandemic like this, so it requires a learning process carried out from home. For teachers, digital text can also add insight to students so that they have broad insights. However, it all depends on each student whether they can take advantage of digital text to increase knowledge. Teachers also consider digital text to be a practical way of teaching English. This, if the teacher applies a project-based learning model in digital text learning, students can achieve the 4C principles of education in the 21st century, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, as stated by Zubaidah (2017). However, digital text also has a negative side, namely, it costs money to get a good internet connection and can also interfere with your vision because you have to deal with digital devices such as laptops or cellphones.

### **Conclusion**

Digital text is very beneficial for teachers and students during a pandemic like this because they cannot directly carry out the teaching and learning process. From the results of digital text learning, it can be concluded that it is useful for teachers in delivering material and make them easier to give assignments because it can be done from home. For students, reading digital text makes them difficult to understand the contents of the reading because they learn without getting explanations directly from their teacher. Therefore, it is critical for the government to provide high-quality online reading materials based on the needs, interests, and behavior of online readers.

Future studies should include a bigger number of individuals from a variety of educational institutions to make generalizations safer. The teachers and students' perceptions of using digital texts for studying more particular language learning domains, such as language skills, linguistics, and grammar, should be investigated in future studies.

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