

Exploring The Potentials of Wattpad For Literature Class

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Abstrak :

The advancement of technology has evolved our habits. One of them who are evolving are reading platform. Wattpad is one of the existing reading platform in the world. This research aims to see the potentials of this application for literature class. The research use descriptive quantitative method where the researchers conduct a survey towards 37 students and 7 lecturers in Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. This paper focused on answering two issues, which are the students perspectives of Wattpad in Literature Class and the Perspectives of Lecturer in seeing the potencies of Wattpad as media in literature teaching. the paper shown that wattpad is useful to increase the motivation of students in giving better engagement in reaching the literary competencies. This study suggest that Wattpad need to be use in the class to achieve literary comprehension among students.

Kata Kunci : *learning media, learning class, Wattpad*

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Introduction

Wattpad is one of the biggest literacy platforms in the world providing the services for the writer to share their works and the reader to enjoy the works. There are many genres and also works based on their own category in Wattpad. Wattpad was created in 2006 by the founder Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen headquartered in Canada. Wattpad has succeeded to be accessible for more than 90 million users around the world. Wattpad provides the features to create a story as well as give the feedback. Furthermore, The algorithm that will allow the readers to find the story they will love. That's why Wattpad has become one of the biggest platforms to be downloaded for the reading platform because of their branding, accessibility and the features.

As technology develops, students' motivation in reading is getting low. Whereas, Freer (1983) stated that reading allows the readers to have their own interpretation of certain perspectives. It means that the ability to connect the text and reality is important in any subject. Currently, many students are struggling to stick with reading as the basis of knowledge exploration activity because students thought reading is boring and it's hard to stick with the written one. Knowing this fact, it means that education institutions should create an activity by using the things that are closed to the students to increase reading awareness, at first. Then, activity using Wattpad can be an option. Seeing from language features, wattpad also provides more than 50 languages for people to access. Therefore, there are plenty of potentials that could be explored for learning, especially language learning. Several studies on the use of wattpad for language learning have been conducted. Putri (2019) stated that the use of Wattpad has the ability to motivate students to read and write stories. In the same vein, Rahman and Iwan (2019) put a different analysis through this application where they believed that wattpad might be a new platform to implement a new technology blended learning program where teachers are expected to be versatile in this era. Together with this initiative, Adiningtyas (2020) also supported the idea of the way of teaching using wattpad, where she revealed a significant difference using wattpad to support the learning process that boost the teaching environment to be more interactive which resulted in a better score for posttest.

The previous studies above show that education institutions, especially high school level, have introduced Wattpad started to be utilized. However, the exploration of Wattpad in tertiary education level, especially in English literature study programs has been limitedly explored. The researchers believe that Wattpad has the strong potential to be explored in English literature class as a lot of literary works can be accessed. Seeing that English now becomes an asset to face the global environment both for students and lecturers (Suprayogi and Pranoto, 2020), it is also paramount to have English classes that utilize technology as well to make both students and lecturers technologically literate.

This study is conducted to see the potentials of Wattpad as an application that can be used in literary classes both for the students and lecturers. There are two things to reveal in this study. The first is the English students' perspective towards Wattpad application and its impact on their English literature subject understanding. The second is the English literature lecturers' perspective on the potentials of Wattpad as media in teaching literature subjects. In the end, this study correlates the potentials of Wattpad in achievement students' literary competences.

Method

This study aims to reveal the potentials of wattpad application for English literature students. The writers decided to use a descriptive qualitative method of research because it's useful to describe certain phenomenon and its factors (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Magilvy & Thomas, 2009 ; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The subjects of this study were 37 students in the fifth semester from English Literature study program in a private university in Indonesia. The subjects also include 7 lecturers teaching literary subjects in the same university.

The writer collects the data of the participant through an online questionnaire using google form. The questionnaires were distributed to all participants through Whatsapp application. The questionnaire for students consists of 12 statements about Wattpad as a learning medium. Likert scale of "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", and "strongly agree" was used. To analyze the answer from the participant, the writer uses mean score and standard deviation in it. The writer uses the mean score and standard deviation because it can reveal the average number or the average response coming from the participants, moreover the use of standard deviation used to prove the data distribution number. The interpretation through each level of strongly disagree (1.00-1.80), disagree (1.81-2.60), neutral (2.61-3.40), agree (3.41-4.20), and strongly agree (4.21-5.00). Open ended questions were also created to explore students' personal experience in using Wattpad. The questionnaire for lecturer consists of two essay questions regarding the potentials of wattpad in literature teaching.

Results

Students' perspective towards Wattpad in learning Literature

This part explains the findings in the study by examining students' responses in using Wattpad application as a literature learning platform. Each table provides the means and the standard deviations to each statement in the questionnaire. The following table describes the responses of students toward Wattpad as learning media in general.

Table 1. Students' Responses about Wattpad as learning media

STATEMENTS		Results <i>mean</i> <i>SD</i>	
Statement 1	Wattpad is the easiest platform to read literary works, especially stories and novels.	4.02	0.86
Statement 2	Wattpad can be downloaded and operated easily	4.18	0.81
Statement 3	Wattpad has a good user interface.	3.86	0.71
Statement 4	I found myself happy when reading through Wattpad than textbooks.	3.78	0.91
Statement 5	Wattpad reading is time-wasting	2.75	0.83

Students mostly see Wattpad as the easiest reading platform as it provides easy-access features such as reading feature, commenting feature, and posting the writing feature. It is easy because students just need to create an account using the email. Then, after getting the username and password, they can directly access the stories they want to read. It is also available in smartphone version and desktop version; therefore, the students can read everywhere as long as they have internet access.

In line with this, Students also strongly agree that Wattpad can be downloaded and operated easily. It means that it is not a heavy application that will cut the available memory or space in a smartphone. Sometimes, it is not easy to operate a reading application because it takes sometimes to move from one menu to other menus. Wattpad contains 17 MB of memory and doesn't require frequent updates. The practicality of using Wattpad is seen from the following students' responses.

- Excerpt 1 *"...Wattpad is great. We can move to the next chapter just for one swipe, seriously. So it's easier."*
- Excerpt 1 *"...And also wattpad is easy to use, and it's easy to make a wattpad account."*
- Excerpt 1 *"...Wattpad is one of my reading app that i used to be used. There are a lot of various stories in any kind of genre."*
- Excerpt 1 *"...the features are easy and we can download stories we want to read so that we can save more on quota because they can be read offline."*

In terms of the interface, most of the students also agree that whatsapp has a good interface. Students can see the cover design of the story so that students have illustration of what the story is all about. Moreover, the placement of the bio of the author is right beside the cover thus students can directly connect the bio to the story. Wattpad uses white background so that it is eye-friendly, especially for those who love intense and long-duration reading.

The result of statement 4 and 5 on reading happiness level shows that now students are happier reading stories using wattpad compared to using printed books. Currently, both hybrid and full online learning makes students can learn anywhere using the mobile phone. Students may think that it is quite heavy to bring the printed materials where they have to be mobile. As a consequence, they need to have one gadget that can cover many things such as a handphone and laptop. In addition, they also do not think that it is a waste of time to do the reading through wattpad as they can be adapted to read faster or skim the stories they are reading through their devices.

The following table describes how Wattpad directly and indirectly affects their learning process in literature subjects. These students are English literature students who have literary subjects such poetry, prose and drama.

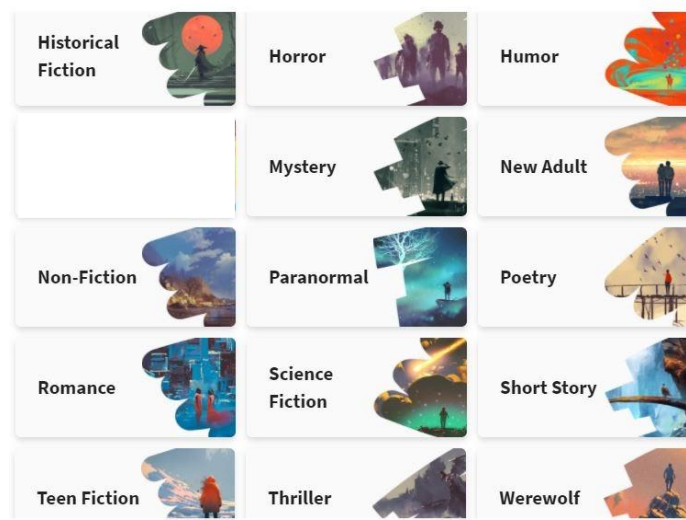
Table 2. Students' Responses about Wattpad to support literature learning

STATEMENTS		Results	
		mean	SD
Statement 6	Wattpad giving me new insight about issues that happening now.	3.18	0.73
Statement 7	Wattpad helps me in understanding literature subject	3.00	0.74
Statement 8	When I see difficult words and terms in the Wattpad, I often find the meaning first to continue reading.	3.89	0.61

Most of the students agree that Wattpad has already given insight about the issues happening in the world or the issues around them. Literature classes are closely related to portrayal of issues both common and marginalized, such as social gap, psychological disorder, gender acceptance, future technology, and many more. Thus, students see Wattpad as the medium to get in touch to the current development of both sociology and psychological issues.

In the idea of whether Wattpad helps to understand literature subjects, more than half of the students agree that it does help them. Students feel that Wattpad is the real example of the lecturers teaching in literature subjects. The implementation of theories, approaches, writing models are exemplified in Wattpad stories. Furthermore, for students, Wattpad exposes students to a variety of genres. When lecturers usually give examples of literary works that they have read in the past, Wattpad provides a bunch of samples of literary works that are now trending in different genres.

Figure 1. The genre lists in Wattpad Platform



Some of the students highlight one of the flaws of Wattpad, which is there are several contents that should be paid. There is free content and paid content. This makes students unable to fully enjoy Wattpad reading activities, one side. However; students finally learn one point of literary appreciation, which is respecting literary works. This can be seen the following excerpts

- Excerpt 1 *"...In my opinion, it is very reasonable. Because when we want to read a book or novel, we have to buy it at a bookstore, where the costs are much more expensive than those on Wattpad or similar applications."*
- Excerpt 1 *"... they made that story with focus and imagination. I think when we pay their story, it's same like we respect the author."*
- Excerpt 1 *"...tbh this feature support the author the most yet for students who didnt earn money that mch, it is kinda hard to afford the journal that we need for our learning needs."*
- Excerpt 1 *"... I think it's okay because the content of story it self worth the price."*

Learning literature is also not separated from language learning. Most of the students agree that Wattpad enhances their vocabulary and reading skills. As many authors write different genres with more than one literary works, more vocabulary is exposed in different settings and themes of the literary works. The reading skills are also improved as they love the Wattpad reading activity which means the students read the stories more frequently.

Lecturers' perspective towards Wattpad in learning Literature

There are seven lecturers asked to give their opinion toward the use of Wattpad in Literature class and to support literary competence. First question is about the potential of Wattpad in literature class. Most of the lecturer agrees that Wattpad is a platform to build English skills. The first is to build students' reading habits especially in reading literary works; therefore, it is potential to improve their reading skills. The second is that Wattpad is a platform to boost their writing skills. These are supported by the following excerpts.

- Excerpt 1 *"Wattpad is potential to enhance students' reading interest. Besides, it can also become space to enhance writing skills."*
- Excerpt 2 *"Students can enjoy novel stories that are fun, romantic, horror, and funny by developing reading skills."*
- Excerpt 3 *"I always recommend such a platform for students in writing class. At least students can asses it to add their references for writing literary work and share it directly to readers."*

Excerpt 4 *“students will begin to improvise to compose their written stories by looking at examples of stories on the platform. The learning process becomes more independent with maximum results.”*

This is also supported by the fact that mostly the English books coming from Wattpad being dominated until 70%. It means students potentially have better access to learn English.

Besides improving the English skills, according to the lecturers, Wattpad is potential in literary analysis where literary analysis in this context deals with identifying issues, elements of literary works as well as the justification towards the literary works. The following excerpts reflect the lecturer's voice on the potentials of Wattpad according to their observation.

Excerpt 4 *“Now, Students have abundant contemporary literary works on wattpad and literature class discussion for example in sociology of literature, psychology of literature I think can be more engaging.”*

Excerpt 5 *“I think the quality of Poetry Analysis class will be much better than used to be as there are supplementary materials here to be explored.”*

On the second questions, the lecturers were asked to give their ideas on how they would utilize Wattpad in the literature classes they are teaching. Most of the lecturers said that Wattpad will be used for writing projects so that they will get experience to be the real author that will see the “market” of story right now in global context. Second of all, the lecturers also plan to use Wattpad as learning media for literary appreciation class starting from curating the short stories and novel and develop this into literary performance.

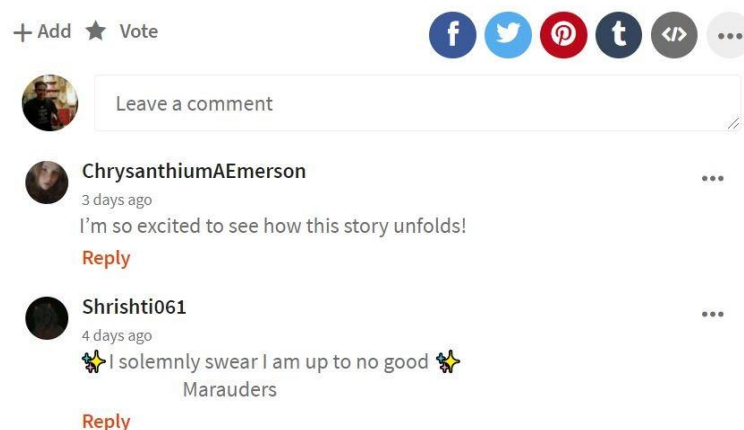
Excerpt 5 *“I think this will help me a lot in Prose Analysis. I will ask the students to comment some of the stories on the app and bring it to class discussion.”*

Excerpt 6 *“Wattpad has shown that the author is consistently productive. I can make the activity of comparing the different works of same author.”*

Excerpt 7 *“In my opinion, it is a great idea to create literary performance from here, from reading poetry, performing monologues until making short drama. Students will be happy to transform story into script.”*

From the excerpts, it can be concluded that activities in literature classes are varied, and can be further explored seeing the need of competences of each literature subject or courses the students need to achieve.

Figure 2. The Comments Feature in Wattpad Application



Discussion

Wattpad to support technology-friendly literature learning environments

This current study is conducted to explore the potentials of Wattpad used in literature classes at university level. The findings found out that Wattpad services in providing numerous stories and novel books and most of the participants are happy about it, moreover the use of internet access can be beneficial if used correctly (İlter, 2015). In the end the quality of services of Wattpad was decent, and friendly to its users. Another thing that might be considered when using this app to blended learning style is its possibility to open new knowledge for both students and lecturer. where there is digital gap, when lecturer are having reluctance to adapt with technologies, the students might help the lecturer to introduce it creating a better interaction within students and lecturers. According to Ahmadi and Reza (2018), learners can help teachers in technology integration because learners have had abundant time to master technology while teachers work on directing the instruction.

The study also found that reading through Wattpad is less pressuring and somehow it is fun to catch on. To gain the ability in understanding the meaning of the text, it is obligatory to read frequently because without reading or reading less than the average reader, you cannot earn those abilities (Wooley, 2011). Therefore in order to make reading more fun, the use of technology might be used to boost it (İlter, 2015). The use of technology might simplify the process of making meaning in the text because it changes the situation into a more accessible and fun way to follow, and Wattpad making it that way. Therefore Wattpad as the one platform which combines accessibility and a good quality of stories can increase the enjoyment that the people need to read more.

The findings also found that there are still locked contents and need a couple of money to unlock that. This lack of access in giving free content, on one side, hinders some of the participants to enroll or read themselves a book. Surprisingly, there are also participants who believe that their reason behind paid content is located to its quality. Even if there are some works that are locked, the students are still willing to pay it. In addition, these responses are seen as positive highlights that students are aware of appreciating literary works and justify that amount of money should be paid is a part of showing respect towards the authors and their work.

Wattpad to Support Students' Literary Competence Achievement

In the context of English literature study programs, Wattpad is seen as an explorative learning medium. The features in the Wattpad application allow the lecturers to provide meaningful learning activities integrated in many literature subjects. When more literature subjects expose Wattpad as the learning medium, the students will have more practice on literary activities. Students will have a variety of literary work responses through Wattpad comment activities and students will give pieces of literary analysis of literary works from Wattpad. Even further, students will have a better quality of the stories that the students will compose. It is because they are able to see and analyze various author styles and story developments. Students are possibly creating combinations of many stories ideas into the stories that they will compose.

Furthermore, Wattpad has created motivation to the students themselves to come to the right environment. When they make an account, they will be asked "So, you like to write! What best describes you as a writer?" then students may choose the options of "I mostly write for fun", "I'm exploring the opportunities for my work(s)", "I'm pursuing a career as a writer", and "I'm a professional writer". Through this feature, students will indirectly motivate that they can also be a writer like other Wattpad writers and can be as productive as them.

In English literature study program context, literary competence consists of three things at least, namely literary analysis, literary production and literary appreciation. All of them are possibly achieved when the students have the right learning activities from the lecturers. Moreover, The role of English for global communication is more highlighted in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 as it becomes the international language (Suprayogi and Pranoto, 2020).

Conclusion

In this modern era, electronic literature is extensively available, one of them is Wattpad. Wattpad is one of the biggest reading platforms in the world which provides services for writers and readers, and also has benefits to help students to improve the ability to comprehend the text, analyze the texts and produce the literary texts. Wattpad is also successful to give better opportunities for people to explore more with the free access of written books there. This technology has been seen as useful and potential tools for English Literature students. Wattpad somehow helps students gain their attention to read more. They can think critically by giving comments or even expressing their feelings in Wattpad and in a piece of analysis on literary works they read. They could also get many new vocabulary from stories they read which is very helpful for them.

Furthermore, Implementing learning literature using technology, lecturers must be literate towards current technology that helps them to teach literature subjects as well as knowing the trends of how the literature develop in this digital era right now. Utilizing Wattpad means a small but real step to engage students to shape the literary competences during the classes, in which in the end help them achieve various literary competences as visioned by the English literature study program.

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