



Utilizing Let's Read Asia Website to Enhance Students' Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the Let's Read Asia website to be applied for improving Junior High School students' comprehension in reading descriptive texts. A quantitative method through a quasi-experimental design was applied to 60 seventh grade students from a school in Surabaya, Indonesia. The data collection method was incorporated through writing tests prior and following the treatment that assessed aspects of understanding adjectives and meanings in descriptive texts. The data obtained were analyzed using an independent sample t-test with the purpose of determining differences that were statistically significant and using effect size calculations to assess the magnitude of the effect of the platform. The result demonstrated a notable increase in the pre-test average score of 61.83 and the post-test score of 81.67, indicating that the platform can be used to improve reading skills in descriptive texts. The independent sample t-test for the experimental class revealed a statistically significant difference. The media usage is demonstrated to have a large effect on the learning process. Findings highlight the benefit of the platform for further enhancing students' ability in reading.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text, Quantitative

Introduction

Reading plays a significant part in students' development in school these days. Reading has a vital role for students to comprehend diverse authentic texts while negotiating existent meanings without leaving key details behind (Park, 2018). According to Chen (2021), reading news articles or news updates regularly improves our understanding of current events and expands our knowledge of science, technology, and other relevant subjects. This importance of reading has been a subject of research for decades. Hoover and Gough (1990) elaborates what it requires to read in a rather simplistic way, called as the Simple View of Reading (SVR). SVR significantly put an assertion that reading requires a person's ability to incorporate their linguistic skills in full while also having the ability to decode the information into comprehensible pieces. This is an advancement of the previous view of reading by Gough and Turmer (1986). Throughout the years following, SVR has been widely integrated into explanations of the science behind reading towards students, teachers, educators, and other groups with roles to use reading in education and provide instructions towards it ([Rose, 2006](#); [Rose, 2017](#); [Moats et al., 2018](#);

[Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)). These studies further emphasize the needs of strengthening students' ability to read and comprehend texts.

In Indonesia, even though reading ability is an important skill that must be improved, the number of students' reading comprehension in Indonesia is still low ([Setiawan et al., 2025](#); [Raja et al., 2021](#); [Syafi, 2018](#)). This understanding is further supported through the result of Nugrahanto & Zuchdi's study (2019) which states that Indonesia was rated 60th out of 72 countries in the 2015 PISA findings due to a general decline in the average reading competency score of Indonesian students from 2000 to 2015. Moreover, the average score was still lower than that of other nations. From a prior observation by the researchers at one school in Surabaya, almost all students did not enjoy reading because they could not understand the meaning of the text, feel bored reading books, and lack motivation.

In overcoming lack of motivation for reading, technology-based media has been one of the methods that teachers use to grab students' attention while keeping its retention. This action facilitates students to be involved with what they are reading, and absorbing information and details from the texts is also well-supported through technology, as supported by the Simple View of Reading (SVR) by Hoover and Gough (1990). As an instance, Kim et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating how effective a digital technology product called as SMART is to support students' reading comprehension. The technology itself gathers and analyzes students' mental models to facilitate meaningful formative assessments in the form of feedback towards students' reading comprehension. This study further aligns with the Simple View of Reading where students' mental models can be enhanced to enable their information decoding and linguistic skills. Few more research studies have also been conducted to incorporate technology as an intervention towards students' literacy and reading skills ([Kim et al., 2020](#); [Stone et al., 2020](#); [Norman, 2023](#)).

One technology investigated by researchers is the Let's Read Asia digital reading platform, developed by the Asia Books Foundation. Most prominently used during COVID-19 pandemic, the reading platform provides interactive graphics and illustrations with various arrays of colors, accompanied with clear captions to pique students' interest and to support students' understanding and imagination. As stated by Hoover (2023) that many studies have failed to establish an accurate portrayal of the practicalities of Simple View of Reading (SVR) ([Breadmore et al., 2019](#); [Hoover & Tunmer, 2020](#)), this platform might bear a huge potential in addressing common misdepictions of Simple View of Reading (SVR) in practice. Let's Read Asia has also been a well-known application in assisting young children's engagement in reading. Based on the previous study, the researcher found that Let's Read Asia has been used for teaching and improving the vocabulary and reading ability of the junior high school student ([Putri & Savitri, 2022](#); [Capodiecici et al., 2020](#); [Aprianto & Heriyawati, 2020](#)). The utilization of various picture book graphics, an array of colour, and simple statements underneath the pages, this application aims to pique children's interest in reading ([Mudawamah, 2023](#); [Capodiecici et al., 2020](#)).

There have been several studies investigating the reading platform of Let's Read Asia. Most studies address the application's usage in several fields such as its capabilities to

make students' learning to be more enjoyable and accessible, its extent of implementation towards developing students' vocabulary, its effectiveness towards enhancing students' comprehension in reading narrative texts for middle school levels., and its support for teachers and educators to establish effective tactics to strengthen students' vocabulary. However, despite the discovered advantages of using Let's Read Asia as mentioned above, there is yet a study investigating its effectiveness towards students' reading skills in descriptive text. Using the theoretical foundation of Simple View of Reading by Gough and Tunmer (1986) and Harmer's (2007) view of reading comprehension, this research aims to find out the impact of using digital book Let's Read Asia towards students' reading comprehension in descriptive text, with the consideration of the advantage of technology-based media in learning process.

Methodology

This research applied the quantitative design of quasi-experimental methodology to measure the effectiveness of Let's Read Asia as an educational tool and to answer the study questions. It was pertinent to quasi-experimental research, a type of research in which the study subjects are not entirely randomized in order to explore causal correlations between variables ([Anantasia & Rindrayani, 2025](#)). With the population of 60 seventh grade students gathered from a junior high school in Surabaya within the academic year of 2024-2025, the researcher used two classes, each consisting 30 students where one group as a control and the other as an experimental class. Both groups took the same pre- and post-tests. Following the pre-test, a treatment using Let's Read Asia as the medium of learning was given to the experimental group, whereas the control group acquired no treatment with Let's Read Asia. Instead, the control group referred to the guidebook during the teaching-learning process. The scores obtained from the post-tests conducted to both the experimental and control groups determine the study's outcome.

Moreover, collecting data through conducting a pre-test prior to the treatment, followed by a post-test, was done. The researcher used classes A and B that had similar categories; this case was taken by analyzing and asking the teacher in the school. To ensure the validity of an experiment, the control and experimental groups should be matched as closely as possible in key sociodemographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, ability, and other relevant factors. This helps to minimize confounding variables and allows any observed differences to be more confidently attributed to the experimental treatment ([Zajić, 2022](#)). The researcher conducted a pre-test using a paper containing questions related to descriptive text. After that, the researcher conducted the planned treatment: class A received treatment with learning using the Let's Read Asia application, while class B did not receive any special treatment and the learning was conducted as usual using books as learning tools.

In data collection, the researcher used pre- and post-tests. This was tailored to the research objectives and aimed to determine the subjects' initial state and measure their final state after the treatment. The difference between the two test results indicates the influence of the independent variable ([Abraham & Supriyati, 2022](#)). The pre-test was used to evaluate

each participant's prior performance. It utilized Google Forms as a medium, with each question type presented as a descriptive paragraph. It comprises two categories of questions: multiple-choice questions (10 questions) and true/false questions (10 questions), where respondents indicate their answers by writing 'T' for truthful or 'F' for false. The score for a correct answer to multiple-choice questions is 5, whereas the score for determining the answer by writing T or F is 10.

The researcher gave the post-test to both groups after they had finished all the steps using Let's Read Asia as the learning content. It deliberately utilizes questions like the pre-test to enable a comparison of learners' scores pre- and post-process. These evaluations indicated whether utilizing Let's Read Asia for the classroom's media of learning might improve students' comprehension in reading or not. The tools employed in research must follow the requisite requirements to be considered effective instruments. High-quality instruments must possess both validity and reliability. The instrument used in this study had been proven to satisfy essential standards in validity and reliability. The following text outlines the prerequisites for the authenticity and reliability of research equipment.

The researcher employed data analysis techniques to obtain the mean score. ANOVA analysis techniques is one that can be used to test differences between groups (Syauqi et al., 2026). The researcher used that test to analyze the data from this experiment. This study required an inferential statistical test to measure the significance of the differences in variance between groups that were not selected randomly (quasi-experimental) because it involved a comparison of the averages between these groups. When it came to getting better at reading, the researcher found a big difference between the class determined as the experimental group and the other class as the control group. Evaluation of the Let's Read Asia website's impact on students' reading comprehension was conducted. In order to find the mean of the test, the researcher looked at how homogeneous and normal the pre- and post-tests were. Subsequently, the mean and subsequent standard deviation of the differences in scores between the pre- and post-tests were conducted. Lastly, to find out if the Let's Read Asia website had a tremendous impact on improving reading skills using descriptive text for junior high school students, the researcher used a t-test with the purpose of finding differences among the means between exams.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. Pre-test independent sample t-test result

Result	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-)	Mean	Std.	95% Confidence	
								Low	Up
Assumed	1.6	.205	-.751	58	.456	-3.000	3.997	-11.001	
Not Assumed	40		-.751	57.375	.456	-3.000	3.997	5.002	

As discussed in the methodology, the researcher conducted pre-test assessment of participants' descriptive text reading comprehension grades, divided into the experimental and control groups. Demonstrated in Table 1, the 2-tailed significance value of the independent sample t-test result for the pre-test assessment was found to be 0.456, which

was greater than 0.05. This significance value reports that the difference in pre-test scores between both groups appeared to be only within a slight amount, indicating that all students were able to understand the descriptive text they read before the treatment.

Table 2. Post-test independent sample t-test result

Result	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	95% Confidence	
								Low	Up
Equal Variances Assumed	3.028	.087	3.467	58	.001	10.67	3.08	4.508	16.83
Equal Variances Not Assumed			3.467	51.19	.001	10.67	3.08	4.490	16.84

In the case of the experimental group, the analyzed data of the test given after receiving the treatment for this research is presented in Table 2. Based on the result of the post-test independent sample t-test, it was found that the 2-tailed significance value was .001. This significance value evidently demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference of the means between the control and experimental group of this research when being compared. Ultimately, it indicates that after being given the treatment where the Let’s Read Asia reading platform was integrated, the reading comprehension of descriptive text of the experimental class either greatly improved or changed. It can be concluded based on these results that the digital reading platform used in the experiment provides a significant impact towards students’ reading skills.

Based on the researcher’s interpretation of the data they gathered and examined, using the Let’s Read Asia website improves seventh-grade students’ reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The researcher found that the significance value of 2 tailed tests was 0.001, indicating a significant difference in statistical terms between the means of both independent groups being compared. Ultimately, following the treatment, the experimental class either greatly improved or changed. In other words, using the Let’s Read Asia website proved to result in a positive impact for student’s reading comprehension. With an effect size of 0.17, the media was considered as having a moderate effect towards reading comprehension improvement.

These findings further support the benefits of the Let’s Read Asia media where it can be concluded that the interactive features, engaging visuals, and wide choice of books are able to strengthen students’ reading comprehension. Moreover, as motivation is one of the main principles of teaching reading to students (Harmer, 2007), these features can be underlined to have a positive effect towards it. The simplified but authentic language used in the Let’s Read Asia media provides a meaningful experience for students in studying reading and can further improve students’ academic performance (Capodiecici et al., 2020). As underlined by Harmer (2007) regarding strategies to develop students’ reading comprehension, those factors take into account the development of their reading scores after the treatment.

This research supports previous studies such as a thesis by Mudawamah (2023) claiming that the media is able to be implemented towards steps of students' reading and vocabulary acquisition with a positive impact. Putri and Savitri (2022) with similar subject and incorporating the same media towards improving students' reading comprehension further revealed positive impacts from both students' and teachers' perspective. In the context of vocabulary enrichment, the results found in this research support common understanding of the connection between vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Reflecting on the Simple View of Reading (SVR) proposed by Gough and Tunmer (1986), students' ability to comprehend words is in line with their capabilities to store them as essential information. This may explain the increasing score between students' tests both prior and after the treatment.

As demonstrated within the findings of this current research and supported by previous studies, it can be highlighted as a significant point that the Let's Read Asia media has more than enough capabilities to be used as a way to improve students' reading comprehension. The media usage has huge potential to be implemented across classrooms especially among the similar subject characteristics as what the mentioned and current studies have explored. Features of the media not only can enhance students' capability to understand texts, but they can also hook and maintain students' motivation to read. Furthermore, this research puts to the surface the need for digitally-integrated media on improving students' language skills, especially reading, in this era of advancement. Future studies of different media and different language skills to explore are highly advised.

Conclusion

The major aim of this study was to further analyze whether using the Let's Read Asia website affected seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of descriptive literature. The study's findings demonstrated that both the experimental group getting Let's Read Asia treatment and the control group receiving traditional learning media treatment demonstrated notable gains in reading comprehension on both tests' scores. Based on results of the current study, the average score obtained from the experimental group rose from 61.83 to 81.67, whereas an increase from 64.83 to 71.00 was found in the control group. The experimental group demonstrated a marginally greater gain in reading comprehension than the control group, although both groups had strong reading comprehension.

However, this score was not enough to conclude that students within the group receiving research treatment through Let's Read Asia improved more than those who were treated through traditional learning materials. So, the researchers also used an effect size calculation to measure the treatment's impact on reading comprehension. The results of the eta squared calculation: the value obtained was 0.17. Based on this value, it is safe to conclude that Let's Read Asia has a major impact on reading comprehension in descriptive text for grade 7. Based on the results of this research alongside the comparison with previous studies, this study seeks out to demonstrate and emphasize the need for integrating digital technology as a method to strengthen students' English as Foreign Language (EFL) skills, especially reading comprehension. Let's Read Asia has been shown to be one of the digital reading media that can be utilized as an enrichment or an intervention towards students'

reading comprehension ability. This research further notes that digital media integration is one important point to focus on towards the better development of classroom's interactive nature.

Since this particular study mainly sets out to find out the effect of utilizing Let's Read Asia website for strengthening students' reading comprehension especially in descriptive text, study limitations can be investigated and recommended to be focused for future studies in the similar context. As this study only focuses on the Let's Read Asia media impact for reading on descriptive text, future research that explores wider varieties of English academic texts within formal school context are recommended. A better insight as well as expanding academic understanding for the effect of this media can be achieved through incorporating it in different kinds of texts.

Moreover, future studies are recommended to investigate more different and diverse subject characteristics. Since this current study only focuses on a certain formal school in Indonesia, exploring other groups of participants in terms of age and region is highly suggested to provide further data on the effect of media usage. Since reading comprehension is a developing process in a person's cognitive ability, different subject groups might have distinct results alongside other factors to account for. Integrating a deeper research approach such as a mixed-method or a long-term observation might be beneficial to gain a more complete understanding of the Let's Read Asia's benefits. Furthermore, difficulties found in this research are concerning around the execution of the experiment based on time and accessibility aspects. The length of the experiment conducted towards participants needed to be more extended to gather a more authentic and representative data while adjusting to the school academic year's schedule for a more convenient and student-friendly experience to be achieved. Further studies are recommended to take note of these aspects in order to gain accurate data regarding students' reading comprehension abilities and how digital reading platform can be proven to be impactful.

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