Fostering Multimodal Literacy Using Powtoon Application in Teaching English Reading: High School Students' Perceptions

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Abstract

The 21st century is a digital era marked by the use of technology that can ease human activities including education. Hence, with the existence of technology, students do not only read through textbooks but also other modes of meaning-making including audio, visual, and images. Therefore, this multimodal literacy should be integrated into the teaching and learning process. This study is intended to explore 6 students' perceptions of using the Powtoon app in fostering multimodal literacy for English reading. This study used a qualitative case study. The data were taken from students of SMP PGRI 1 Buduran, Sidoarjo through interview, observation, and document review. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The data revealed that students perceived several benefits in the form of providing students with the incorporation of multimedia elements into reading materials, assisting students to have better materials understanding, engaging and interactive materials for students through multimodality, and facilitating students in evaluating the multimodal texts.

Keywords

multimodal literacy, powtoon application, students' perception, teaching reading

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INTRODUCTION

Among the four language skills, reading is one that professionals in the field of language education learn most thoroughly and intensively. According to research on the nature of reading, language teachers must decide between different instructional strategies for pupils learning to read in a second language (Epstein et al., 2018; Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Singer & Alexander, 2017). Reading is one of the most effective strategies to develop linguistic abilities when studying a language like English because it has several advantages for students' personal lives, and is also beneficial for their language mastery like improving students' writing skills, spelling, and vocabulary knowledge. Not only that a student learns to think, find ideas, facts, and new experiences in English, but also in this 21st-century learning, of course, there is a challenge for educators so reading skill remains the most important ability that must be possessed by students.

Learning in the 21st century is learning that focuses on standards that are used as a reference in achieving the learning objectives that have been set. In contrast to learning in the previous century which only paid attention to standards. According to Sumardi, Rohman, and Wahyudiati (2020), some of the characteristics of learning in the 21st century are the scientific approach and the use of technology. Learning using this scientific approach is learning that prepares students to be able to compete in the global era by using the knowledge they have and also facing the challenges and opportunities that exist.

The use of technology in the 21st century is very common where all jobs that have the same or repetitive nature have been replaced by machines. Technology has touched various fields, including the field of education. In the world of education, technology is used as a facility that can support the learning process and also improve performance through various learning models (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019).

In the context of reading skills that must be possessed by a student, this 21st century can also be referred to as the era of globalization or the digital era which is marked by the use of technology. So, in this century students in their efforts to have reading skills do not only read through textbooks but can also be in the form of text with static or dynamic images and have also added movement, audio, spoken language, and written language. It is a process or way that educators and students can use an interactive text as a learning medium or can also be referred to as multimodal text. Using multimodal text that involves audio, movement, and static images, can foster students' interest in reading skills or literacy activities, which are generally problems that students currently have when they are bored and lazy with long reading texts.

The existence of technological developments can facilitate both educators and students to be able to improve literacy skills or reading skills in a multimodal manner so that many companies develop free or paid tools and software to assist instructors in the learning process, particularly in language programs (Mezhuyev, Al-Emran, Ismail, Benedicenti, & Chandran, 2019). PowToon is one application that can help teachers with their lessons. This Powtoon program is an internet software that includes a variety

of animated videos that can be accompanied by sound. PowToon's free icons, sounds, and animations are entertaining, but the software also offers a paid menu with more varied and intriguing icons, animations, and noises. Not only that, the results of this Powtoon animated video can also be uploaded to Youtube so that educators can more easily share it with students. According to Sutisna, Vonti, and Tresnady (2019), Powtoon is a web-based animation software that allows teachers to rapidly and easily construct animated presentations by altering previously produced items. Furthermore, teachers can include imported photos or videos, music, and noises to make the teaching and learning process more fascinating and fun for young learners.

Several studies have been conducted related to utilizing technology in learning, especially in improving reading skills. In the research, Sutisna, Wahyuni, and Vonti (2020) revealed students' attitudes toward the use of Powtoon in teaching reading. In addition, research conducted by Ardaningsih and Adnyayanti (2022) focuses more on the use of Powtoon as a learning medium.

However, there are still few studies that focus more on multimodality through the use of Powtoon in improving students' reading skills. Therefore, the study aims to explore students' perceptions about the use of the Powtoon application in teaching English reading to foster multimodal literacy. The difference between this research and previous research lies in the things studied in more depth. The research conducted by the researchers focused on exploring students' perceptions about using the powtoon application in learning to read English to foster multimodal literacy in grade 8 junior high school students. In this study, researchers used the Powtoon program, which enables students to learn to read by combining several types of communication such as text, graphics, animation, and sound. This study lays a solid foundation for the development of a new learning approach that incorporates multimodal literacy and technology in the context of teaching English in secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Definition of Multimodal Literacy

Multimodal literacy, according to Mills and Unsworth (2017), is a subfield of social semiotics, which is the study of language by mixing two or more modes of meaning. Social semiotics is a method of social approach that uses semiotic structures or cultural resources to produce meaning. A few social semiotic examples of fashion are speech, gestures, written language, music, mathematical notation, images captured by photography, or moving computer images.

According to Kristina (2019), multimodal literacy is a word that derives from social semiotics and refers to the ability to learn through writing and other media using a variety of digital platforms. A person can be called digitally literate when at any time he can find, evaluate, select, and build new compositional products using various digital platforms so that digital literacy relates to individuals who can find, evaluate, and organize information through writing and other media on various platforms.

Fedorenko (2019) also stated that multimodal communication refers to the combination of several ways of communication and modalities such as visual, auditory, and somatic. In the context of literacy, multimodal literacy is the capacity to mix reading, writing, talking, listening, and viewing in diverse channels of communication logically. Multimodal literacy is defined as a broad, multidimensional set of information, abilities, and attitudes that provide multiple possibilities to improve critical thinking and reflection.

Furthermore, multimodal literacy is an important idea in current education, particularly in the digital age, as communication is becoming increasingly multimodal. The capacity to mix reading, writing, talking, listening, and viewing within diverse modes of communication and across various modalities such as visual, aural, and somatic is referred to as multimodal literacy. It is a personal sociocultural capacity that teaches each learner how to solve issues, relate to others, and survive in a variety of social circumstances. Multimodal literacy is defined as a broad, multidimensional set of information, abilities, and attitudes that provide multiple possibilities to improve critical thinking and reflection. Multimodal literacy is required in the context of language learning to develop the capacity to read, write, talk, and listen. Pictograms and other supporting media can assist speed up the process (Fedorenko, 2019; Tan, Zammit, D'warte, & Gearside, 2020).

English Reading Skill

Reading aptitude is the capacity to receive and comprehend textual information before responding with comments, interactions, and ideas (Ahmed, 2020). This is a crucial skill to have while teaching English as a second language. Reading is also vital throughout our lives, particularly while dealing with new demands and changes at work. Reading for pleasure can help you enhance your reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, and grammar. A lack of reading literacy abilities makes it difficult to live, work, and survive in general.

Reading skills, according to Sarika (2021), are essential for kids. Understanding texts in the context of learning subjects can help pupils acquire domains of knowledge and higher-order thinking skills. Furthermore, having superior reading skills is related to improved reading comprehension and enhanced student involvement in learning. Good reading skills also assist kids in comprehending the information they read, gaining knowledge, and developing critical thinking abilities. Sutisna et al. (2020) also stated that the importance of reading is due to two fundamental elements. For starters, reading benefits students in their personal life. Reading also helps students learn a language and improves their vocabulary, spelling, and writing skills.

Krismadayanti and Zainil (2022) defines reading ability as the ability to comprehend and interpret the content read. Furthermore, reading ability is a sort of receptive written language ability. Reading is meant to stimulate students to broaden their perspectives, enhance their memories, and think swiftly and critically. Reading skills can be improved by using various learning methods and media.

According to Suryati, Riadina, Istiqomah, Kusumawati, and Febryan (2021), reading abilities are critical for language learning and are viewed as both receptive and productive skills. Reading helps pupils to receive and comprehend the text's content before responding with comments, exchanges, and ideas. Reading skill is critical to develop, especially in the digital age where information is easily accessible and extensively disseminated.

Furthermore, Putri et al. (2023) also added that reading skills are extremely closely related to knowing a large vocabulary. Students with a large vocabulary tend to have greater reading comprehension because they can readily recognize and grasp the words in the text. Good reading abilities are essential for pupils' academic development and performance in a variety of areas. Students with strong reading abilities can gain access to knowledge and better understand the subject and concepts being taught. Reading abilities are crucial because they have a substantial impact on reading comprehension, student interest in learning, extending perspectives, and students' capacity to gain knowledge and thinking skills.

Powtoon Application

Sutisna et al. (2020) mentioned that Powtoon is a web-based animation software that allows users to create animated presentations and can manipulate previously created objects, not only that Powtoon also provides music as voice actors or back songs. Powtoon can also help teachers to develop students' motivation to learn. This application is also assessed quickly, easily, and efficiently for use in learning.

Powtoon is an animation software that can create animated videos that seem professional (Adnyani, Sadnyana, Suartini, & Hermawan, 2020). Powtoon is also classified as being very simple to use for a beginner, and there is no need to download an application to utilize it because it can be accessed through a web browser. Users can change many templates in this Powtoon, allowing them to use their imagination to create interesting videos.

Qurrotaini, Sari, Sundi, and Nurmalia (2020) also stated that Powtoon is a web-based program that allows users to make animated and video presentations quickly and effortlessly. This application is intended to assist users who lack design abilities or extensive technical understanding in creating visually appealing multimedia material. Users of Powtoon can choose from a choice of animated templates or construct a presentation from scratch by combining text, photos, animated characters, backdrops, sounds, and transition effects. Users can utilize Powtoon to produce engaging, dynamic, and simple presentations that can be used in a variety of learning scenarios, such as teaching English and reading skills.

According to Megawati and Utami (2020), the Powtoon application is used as a medium of learning for 5th-grade students of SDN 3 Banjar Jawa. In the process, Powtoon Application is developed based on syllabus analysis. Then it is used as a game to analyze teacher needs. After the Powtoon animation video has been completed, it is

submitted to several teachers and developed again through the opinions that have been given.

In addition, the research by Ardaningsih and Adnyayanti (2022) is shown the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic so that learning is carried out online. In his research, the researcher examines more deeply the sources of data that come from previous research which shows that the use of the Powton application shows a positive impact on students, such as students feeling learning is more fun and it is easier to understand the text delivered.

While, the research by Fatmawati (2021) focused on adaptations and innovations that must be carried out for elementary school students who are not accustomed to learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic, thus using Powtoon as a learning medium. This Powtoon animation video was created using the ADDIE model, which entails the stages of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation to create audiovisual learning media in the form of animated videos that have been tested by media experts, material experts, and small group and field trials. The findings of the tests indicate that the animated Powtoon film is appropriate for use in remote learning English for primary school children during the epidemic.

In the study by Fitriana and Budiman (2022), the Powtoon application is used as a learning medium. The research method used was quantitative research in the form of a one-shot case study focusing on all 4-th grade pupils at SDN Nalumsari Jepara. According to the findings, the usage of Powtoon media in learning English was very beneficial at SD Negeri 2 Nalumsari Jepara. This is also supported by the research of Dewi and Adiartanto (2021), which focuses on constructing Powtoon applications as learning media using data from 18 students. Product validation was used in his research by language learning and media professionals. The product validation findings suggest that the Powtoon application is rated as very good.

Furthermore, in a research by Amelia (2021), Powtoon is used to teach reading and writing abilities. The study was a classroom action research that included triangulation approaches such as surveys, observations, and tests. The data came from two cycles, and the second cycle revealed that 90% of students received high marks. The students responded positively, stating that they were delighted and eager about learning English online with the Powtoon application.

The difference between this research and previous research lies in the things that are studied in more depth. In their previous research, they investigated students' attitudes toward teaching reading through the Powtoon application, teaching English using Powtoon as a learning medium, and also using Powtoon in 5th grade elementary school. While the research conducted by researchers was to explore students' perceptions about the use of the powtoon application in learning to read English to foster multimodal literacy in the 8th grade students of junior high school.

Student's Perception

Perception is an ability that is used to recognize, understand and interpret information received by someone from the surrounding environment. This perceptual ability is very important because it can influence the way a person thinks, acts, and reacts to existing situations. Perception is also closely related to cognitive concepts such as memory, language, and reasoning. Goldstein (2018) commented that perception does not only depend on how a person understands sensory information but also on a person's ability to use that information in making decisions and acting. In short, perception is a complex psychological process that allows a person to understand the world around him.

Perception can be influenced by many factors and is closely related to cognitive concepts such as memory and language. Understanding perception can help a person to better understand himself, others and also be able to adapt to a changing world. In addition, students' perception is an important factor in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Recent studies have shown that students' perceptions of teachers, subjects, and teaching methods have a significant impact on their learning motivation and academic performance (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative case study. Anas and Ishaq (2022) said that qualitative research focuses on understanding the problem in research. The reason for using a qualitative case study is because it is an in-depth, detailed research design that focused on the study of a problem or phenomenon. This method is used to find the observed facts from the participant's point of view.

The data in this study were a transcript of the interview, notes of observations, and documents of students' portfolios of using the Powtoon application on fostering multimodal literacy for reading. The source of data was 6 students at SMP PGRI 1 Buduran Sidoarjo. The reason for selecting the target is because the school was an internship place for researchers so it can facilitate data collection that would be needed.

The data were taken in a variety of forms: Audio interviews, observation, and documents. The interview technique used in this study was a semi-structured interview where students were the ones to be interviewed to express their opinions about the teaching of using the Powtoon application on fostering multimodal literacy for English reading. In addition, the interviews that had been conducted were also transcribed by the researchers so that they were used as evidence in the research conducted. While in the observation, the researcher observed the use of the Powtoon application as a multimodal literacy in the teaching and learning process. In addition, the researcher made notes that contain what happened in the classroom during the learning process. Then the method of document used in this study was a student portfolio that contains the results of student work after the use of Powtoon in learning. The existence of these documents was intended to be used as evidence that the researcher conducted the research.

Thematic analysis was used to examine the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves examining data sets to identify, interpret, and report repeating patterns. Numerous steps of theme analysis had to be completed, as follows familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Providing Students with Incorporation of Multimedia Elements into Reading Materials

Several students showed positive responses during the interview towards the use of the Powtoon application in fostering multimodal literacy for English reading. This is reflected in student responses such as: "*Ada .... Gambar, suara, teksnya lebih mudah dipahami dan ga ngantuk kalo baca tulisan*" (There is .... The pictures, sound, text are easier to understand and I don't get sleepy when I read the text) (S.1). According to student 1, she liked the learning that had been done because of the images and sounds contained in the Powtoon video.

Not only that, other students also said that "*Iya karena video Powtoon ada animasinya dan gambar .. gambar yang mendukung ke karakter siswa yang suka ada gambarnya*" (Yes, because Powtoon videos have animations and images ... images that support student characters who like images) (S.4). Meanwhile, student 4 in his statement really enjoyed the animation provided in the video and also added that the Powtoon video really supports the student's character. Student 4 said that because they were in a transition period from childhood to adolescence, it can be concluded that they prefer pictures over text. Other students also mentioned that "*Cukup paham karena ada penggambarannya jadi paham dengan materi yang disampaikan*" (I think I understood it because there was an illustration, so I understood the material presented) (S.5). Students 5 mentioned that he liked the illustration given in the video. This refers to the audio-visual contained in the Powtoon application. The above responses emphasize that audio-visual includes images and sounds contained in the Powtoon video. So it can be concluded that the Powtoon video not only displayed material in the form of text but there were also supporting things in the form of audio-visuals.

2. Assisting Students to Have Better Materials Understanding

In the interview they stated that with the use of Powtoon videos in learning, the material presented was easier to understand, as in "*Karena tidak mudah mengantuk dan lebih mudah dipahami. Kalau teks biasa itu biasanya males baca*" (Because it is less sleepy and easier to understand. If it is plain text, I am usually lazy to read) (S.1). According to student 1, by using powtoon, he can understand the text more easily and can reduce bad habits that usually happen. Other student had opinion "*Iya pembelajaran masuk... ke.. apa.. pembelajarannya dapat dicerna dengan baik*" (Yes, the learning goes ... to ... what ... the learning can be well understood) (S.3).

Then another student responded that *"Mudah karena ada videonya itu jadi cukup terbantu dan lebih paham"* (It was easy because there was a video so it was quite helpful and understood better) (S.5). The other student said that "*Iya karena kalau pakai video lebih mudah paham karena ada gambar.*" (Yes, because when using videos it is easier to understand because there are pictures) (S.6). After knowing the opinions of students through interviews conducted, it can be concluded that with the use of Powtoon videos in learning, they understood the material presented better. The results were also supported by the documents review showing that students answers the assignments well.

3. Engaging and Interactive Materials for Students through Multimodality

Most students said that they felt happy with the use of Powtoon videos in learning, as one student stated that "*Bagus karena tidak membosankan dan membuat lebih paham*" (Good because it is not boring and makes me understand better) (S.5). According to student 5, the use of Powtoon videos in learning made learning not boring and the material presented can be more easily understood. Other students mentioned that "*Karena kalau pakai video tersebut saya tidak mengantuk, Kalau pakai tulisan teks mudah mengantuk*" (Because when I use the video I do not get sleepy, when I use text writing it is easy to get sleepy) (S.2). While student 2 had the opinion that with the Powtoon video, learning was more fun and can reduce bad habits such as sleepiness.

Then other students added that "*Ya karena kalau tidak pakai Powtoon saya lebih bosan dan pembelajarannya seperti diulang-ulang*" (Yes, because if I do not use Powtoon I am more bored and the learning seems to be repeated) (S.4). Then student 4 also mentioned that learning using Powtoon videos was not monotonous like previous learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that using Powtoon videos in learning can make students feel happy and more interested in learning and also reduce negative things that usually occur in learning such as being boring, monotonous, and also sleepy.

4. Facilitating Students in Evaluating the Multimodal Texts

The use of Powtoon videos in learning can assist students in the process of text evaluation as in the opinion of one student "*Iya karena soal-soal itu terdapat di dalam pembelajaran Powtoon*" (Yes because the questions are contained in Powtoon learning) (S.4). Other student mentioned that "Mudah karena lumayan terbantu karena adanya video tersebut" (It was easy because the video helped me a lot) (S.2). Then the other students have same opinion such as "*Mudah karena ada videonya itu jadi cukup terbantu dan lebih paham*" (It was easy because there was a video so it was quite helpful and understood better) (S.5).

Therefore, after looking at the opinions held by students, it can be concluded that the use of Powtoon can be used as a tool for students to analyze a multimodal text. This can be said not only in text but also images given in the video. Students feel that with the images, they can answer more easily the questions given in the test. Not only that, students can also understand more easily, conclude and analyze a given text. This can be

confirmed by observation when using Powtoon videos in learning. The students quickly caught the point of the material being taught.

Powtoon is a media in the form of videos that help students in learning. Winarto, Syahid, and Saguni (2020) stated that good media must follow visual principles that are easy to see, attractive to students, simple and easy to use, reliable or can be accounted for, or reasonable and systematically designed. In this Powtoon application, there are also audio-visual features that make it easier for students to understand the material presented, so the material presented is not only in the form of text. Moreover, there are also depictions of animation and sound that support the delivery of material to make it easier for students to understand. This is in line with the opinions of students who have been interviewed. They said they liked learning using Powtoon because there was an audiovisual depiction. Yuniari (2018) also supported this point. Her research uses experimental research as a design by providing a post-test-only, control group design that investigates the significant impact of using Powtoon as audio-visual media on students' writing achievement in English subjects. The results showed that the use of Powtoon as a learning media was better than conventional learning.

In a text reading, students need to understand the content of the text, because it can have an impact on the answers given in a question. Through interviews conducted with students, it can be seen that the use of Powtoon videos is very influential and provides benefits for students in the form of making it easier for them to understand a given text and also easier to take tests. This is also supported by the results of research from Sutisna et al. (2019) in observations made, that learning through animated videos from PowToon can help students understand in learning narrative text. This is based on students' answers in class explaining narrative text. Besides that, Powtoon videos are also part of technology in education which is a tool for students in understanding a text. This is supported by the opinion of Afach, Kiwan, and Semaan (2018) that the use of technology in education, especially video presentation tools, makes it easier for students to understand concepts in learning.

In a lesson, a teacher is required to be able to convey the material well. However, the delivery of this material must be supported by various media so that the learning carried out is more varied that it can foster a pleasant, attractive, and classroom atmosphere. Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that before the use of Powtoon videos in learning, students felt that learning was boring, monotonous and harmed students. This is also supported by the opinion of Megawati and Utami (2020) that the use of Powtoon Animation is the right choice for teachers to make students more enthusiastic and focused in the learning process. The use of Powtoon also eliminates the effect of tending to get bored if the classroom atmosphere takes place monotonously. They also added that students feel happier learning by involving media rather than hearing explanations from the teacher. In addition, the results of research conducted by Ningsih (2021) show that the use of Powtoon can influence the learning situation to be fun so that students have enthusiasm for learning.

Powtoon video is a facility or tool for students in which some images and animations make it easier for students to analyze a given text. Students said that through the use of Powtoon, they could more easily answer the questions given in the test. Not only that, students can also understand more easily, conclude and analyze a given text. Ayub, Mohamed, Malek, and Kamarudin (2018) in their research studied blended learning in improving students' engagement in reading. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires and descriptive analysis. The results of the study showed that the use of Powtoon in reading comprehension to meet students' needs showed an increase from previously learning not using Powtoon.

The research conducted by the researchers focused on exploring student perceptions about the use of the powtoon application in learning English reading to foster multimodal literacy in grade 8 junior high school students. This research also contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge, particularly in the context of teaching English with a concentration on reading abilities. In this study, researchers employed the Powtoon program, which allows pupils to learn to read by combining several kinds of communication such as text, graphics, animation, and sound.

The findings revealed that using Powtoon improved students' perspectives of learning to read by boosting their interest, motivation, and understanding. Furthermore, students felt that the use of multimodality in reading instruction helped them develop critical thinking abilities, envision material, and creatively communicate their learning. These findings emphasize the necessity of using technology and multimodality in English instruction, particularly in enhancing students' reading abilities effectively and engagingly. This study lays a solid foundation for the development of a novel learning approach that incorporates multimodal literacy and technology in the context of secondary school English instruction.

CONCLUSION

The study is intended to explore the students' perceptions of using the Powtoon application in fostering multimodal literacy for English reading, it can be concluded that students perceived benefits from the use of Powtoon. This can be shown from the results of the study that Powtoon videos in learning had several benefits in the form of providing students with the incorporation of multimedia elements into reading materials, assisting students to have better materials understanding, engaging and interactive materials for students through multimodality, and facilitating students in evaluating the multimodal texts. Therefore, the Powtoon application had a space in fostering students' multimodal literacy for English reading through various modes of meaning-making.

Based on the conclusions described above, the researcher has suggestions for several parties including the students to increase their interest in reading which can be started from things they like first, because by reading the knowledge they have is more and easier to remember. Meanwhile for teachers, researchers suggest using different media in each lesson so that students find learning very interesting and not monotonous,

such as using Powtoon media. Besides that, other reasearcher may develop the study with the involvement of the English teachers as the subject of the research and the improvement of teaching and learning activities using Powtoon application.

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