Quora: A popular platform to promote students' reading comprehension skill

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in mastering English. Relying solely on classroom instruction is insufficient for providing students with a comprehensive understanding of English texts. As a result, students must actively cultivate their self-directed learning abilities. It enables them to prioritize and focus on the areas they need to improve. Unfortunately, developing independent learning skills can be challenging without encouragement from teachers and an understanding of what they are learning. Thankfully, technology, such as language learning applications, can help overcome this challenge. This study examines using the Quora language learning application to enhance students' reading comprehension skills in English outside the classroom. Using qualitative research, this study involved 18 economic sharia students taking English for Business subject, and data was collected through a questionnaire and interviews. The findings revealed that Quora helped students improve their reading comprehension skills and supported their independent learning by allowing them to study English anywhere and anytime. As a result, students could take control of their learning and significantly improve their English reading skills.

Keywords: ICT; MALL; Quora; reading comprehension skill.

A. Introduction

The development of reading skills in one's native language typically occurs during early childhood. However, when it comes to acquiring reading skills in a foreign language, new obstacles emerge, necessitating the adoption of distinct strategies (Noviyanti, 2023).
As a result, ongoing research is being conducted on developing reading proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Reading and listening have traditionally been categorized as receptive skills, different from the expressive abilities of speaking and writing. However, recent studies have explored the relationship between reading and various skills, focusing on the correlation between reading and writing. Reading assumes a crucial role when people seek personal growth and strive to keep up with the abundance of information available everywhere (Ahmadi, 2018; Lestari, 2022). It becomes a fundamental aspect of our recreational activities, academic tasks, and professional obligations. University students, in particular, face the challenge of managing a substantial amount of reading material for their studies. They are presented with a choice between print and digital formats, with the primary goal of writers being to capture readers' attention and facilitate the retention of information.

Reading is an essential and formidable task students encounter throughout their academic journey. It holds immense significance as a skill for learning and acquiring diverse abilities and experiences that contribute to an individual's personal growth (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022; Oktarani, 2015). The ability to read proficiently lays the foundation for learners' future academic achievements, as a substantial portion of the school curriculum heavily relies on reading skills. Extensive research supports the notion that solid reading skills are closely linked to academic achievement, while weak reading skills are linked to decreased overall academic achievement. Reading skills serve as a foundational skill for all learning within a school setting, and without proficient reading abilities, individuals' prospects for educational and professional purposes success become limited. Despite its vital importance, reading remains a cognitively challenging skill for many learners to acquire, particularly during childhood. Moyo & Abdullah (2013) argue individuals who face difficulties in reading early on are more likely to experience ongoing struggles in higher grades and later in life. The students' reading performance and their behavior in the classroom are significantly interrelated by engaging high-quality reading instruction (Brokamp et al., 2019).

Developing reading skills is highly important due to its complexity and interactive nature, as it involves an individual's interpretation of written material. Reading encompasses both bottom-up processes (word recognition, decoding, automaticity) and
top-down processes (schema or background knowledge utilization) (Yunianti, 2014). When it comes to reading in a foreign language, the process becomes more challenging as each reader engages with the text based on their unique experiences and cognitive abilities. Hence, reading skill is a valuable skill for developing and improving the reader’s knowledge (Prilian ti et al., 2021).

Reading at an appropriate level is considered one of the most effective ways for learners to receive comprehensible input, which refers to language they can understand. Increased exposure to comprehensible output contributes to improving their English skills (Klimova & Zamborova, 2020). Additionally, technological advancements pose a current challenge in the reading process. Students now encounter hypertexts, informal texts with accompanying videos or pictures, and formats such as e-books and audiobooks. Consequently, teachers need to assist students in applying different reading strategies to adapt to the technological changes in reading in the twenty-first century.

Consequently, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational settings integrate mobile/smartphone applications into instructional activities, and their efficacy is being assessed. This integration is part of the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) or m-learning framework, which stems from Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). A thorough examination of MALL has gathered a detailed list of implementation studies conducted between 1994 and 2012, providing valuable insights into its practical use and influence.

Currently, there is a plethora of online educational platforms accessible that assist both educators and learners throughout the instructional and educational journey. These applications make studying various subjects, including English, much more accessible. Within the framework of this research, the focus is on English learning applications. Numerous applications for learning English are available for download on mobile devices, making it convenient for studying purposes. One notable language-learning application is Quora. Quora is a well-known question-and-answer platform that enables users to ask questions, provide answers, and participate in discussions on various topics. In 2009, Adam D’Angelo and Charlie Cheever established it, with its headquarters situated in Mountain View, California. Quora can be accessed through its website (www.quora.com) or its mobile applications, available for iOS and Android devices. There are also specific
English learning applications tailored to specific areas, such as English for Business, which is relevant for university-level studies. Quora can be used as a platform for reading and writing practice. Teachers can assign Quora questions or answers as reading assignments, and students can practice reading and comprehending authentic texts in the target language (Hidayati & Untari, 2023; Irwan et al., 2020; Noviyanti, 2023; Warni et al., 2018). Additionally, students can practice writing skills by composing their answers or comments in response to Quora questions, and receive feedback from their teacher or peers to improve their writing proficiency.

Quora offers a mobile application called Quora Mobile for Android users. The application can be downloaded for free, making it convenient for users to access Quora. To use the application, users need to sign up for the service. They can sign up for free using their Google, Twitter, email, or Facebook accounts. Quora can better tailor the content to users’ interests by signing up with one of these social networks. Quora’s activity feed provides recent updates on content that would interest each user, and it can be accessed by visiting the site’s home page. The Quora application serves as a medium to improve student’s reading skills, considering that most students have mobile phones. With the application, students can easily access and download it, allowing them to read and acquire new knowledge without carrying heavy books. Additionally, students have the freedom to choose the titles they like and want to read.

This article examines the potential of utilizing Quora, a social media technology, to enhance and enrich students’ reading comprehension skills. The research aims to uncover the students’ perspective regarding using Quora as a learning application, particularly in facilitating their learning experiences outside the traditional classroom setting. The study focuses on its impact on their reading comprehension skill throughout a semester while studying English for Business subject.

**B. Method**

This quantitative research aimed to explore students’ perceptions of using the Quora application to enhance their reading comprehension skills in the context of studying English for Business. The study took place at STAI Sufyan Tsauri Majenang, specifically in the economic sharia study program, during the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic
year. The research was initiated as a response to a particular incident that occurred during the teaching and learning process, leading to the utilization of a case study methodology.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting students who utilized online applications for learning. A total of 18 students enrolled in the economic sharia program and took the English for Business subject. The students were given guidance to utilize Quora as an educational tool beyond the confines of the classroom. The lecturer established a learning group to monitor the student’s activities on Quora, where they could complete assigned activities and practices. The points earned by students would later be reported to them to promote their reading comprehension skills outside of class.

Data collection primarily involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. The survey included both open-ended and closed-ended inquiries, focusing on the impact of using Quora to promote students’ reading skills from the student’s perspective. Interviews were conducted to validate further the data collected. The collected data was analyzed and presented descriptively, in line with (Elmiati et al., 2017; Suwartono, 2014) assertion that descriptive studies aim to systematically and precisely describe a particular object or phenomenon based on factual evidence.

The questionnaire started with introductory questions to collect basic demographic information about the respondents. It could include age, gender, educational level, and any other relevant background details. Then, to assess the extent to which students use Quora for educational purposes, the questionnaire included questions about how often they visit the platform and how long they typically spend on it during a given week. Next, participants were asked to specify the types of reading materials they access on Quora. This encompasses options such as articles, discussions, questions and answers, or any other relevant categories. A Likert scale or a similar rating system is employed to gauge the perceived impact of Quora on students’ reading comprehension skills. Participants rate statements regarding how they believe Quora has affected their ability to comprehend written content. The questions about the level of engagement with the Quora community was also included. This involves inquiries about whether they actively participate in discussions, ask questions, or provide answers to queries posed by others. Participants were asked about their preferred learning styles and whether Quora aligns with their
learning preferences. This helps in understanding why they choose to use Quora as a learning tool. Lastly, the questionnaire concluded with a section where participants could offer suggestions for how Quora could be enhanced to support students’ reading comprehension skill development better.

C. Result and Discussion

1. The implementation of Quora in Teaching reading

Before assigning practices or exercises on Quora, the lecturer formed a group to oversee and track the students' activities on the platform. This monitoring process involved observing the points earned by the students, which were subsequently shared with them to encourage their continued engagement with Quora. Based on interviews conducted with the students, one of the reasons they felt motivated was due to the presence of a point system or achievement framework within the learning process facilitated by Quora.

The lecturer meticulously curated the content accessible on Quora to correspond with the materials being taught in the classroom, guaranteeing that students can forge robust correlations between the two. According to the questionnaire data, 16 students expressed their opinion that learning reading through Quora is enjoyable and directly relevant to their study subjects. This suggests that the chosen texts on Quora effectively complement and enhance the student’s learning experience.

The students were instructed to utilize Quora at least once a week. During each access session, it was observed that half of the students (50%) typically spent approximately 15-30 minutes on the platform. Additionally, some students (27.8%) spent less than 10 minutes, while a few (11.1%) dedicated more than 30 minutes, even extending beyond an hour. These findings indicate varying levels of time allocation by students when engaging with Quora.
The data on Figure 1 highlights that despite the students' consistent use of Quora every week, their engagement varied from one student to another. Several factors influenced this discrepancy, including the quality of the internet connection available to the students and their levels of motivation. Additionally, students often faced distractions from various activities and assignments, which could impact the time they allocated to accessing Quora. These findings align with a study conducted by (Irwan et al., 2020; Noviyanti, 2023), which identified barriers to learning using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) from the student's perspective, such as student mobility, varying technical skills, lack of time, and motivation.

2. Students' responses towards the use of Quora

The findings from a survey conducted with eighteen students indicated that most of the students (93.2%) can access the Quora application at any time and from any location. This implies that only one individual faces difficulty accessing it due to a specific issue, such as limitations with their internet connection. This problem is considered a disadvantage of utilizing online learning applications, as it requires a reliable internet connection. Regarding enhancing students' motivation, Quora has successfully captured students' attention by offering engaging reading material. The user interface and learning tools provided by Quora are user-friendly and easy to navigate.

However, despite these challenges mentioned above, students perceived several benefits from using Quora, including an improved understanding of English reading texts. The table below summarizes the students' viewpoints after utilizing Quora.
Table 1. The student’s perception of Quora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Quora helps me to learn to read</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quora helps me to understand the reading text</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quora is easy to access and use</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quora provides an interesting topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Quora provides authentic and real-world content that reflects how English is used in various contexts</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quora improves my motivation to read and improves my reading skills.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quora helps me develop critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Quora allows me to interact with the content through comments, discussions, and feedback.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Learning reading is fun</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the table, it can be inferred that Quora has had a beneficial influence on the development of students’ English reading comprehension abilities. The platform has facilitated an easier understanding of texts, enabling students to grasp their meanings more effectively. Additionally, Quora’s user-friendly interface and accessibility through smartphones have made it convenient for students to access the platform anytime and anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection.

Furthermore, the table also indicates that students strongly agree that Quora, specifically Quora, can enhance their independent learning skills. The point system implemented on Quora serves as a motivational tool for students to engage in English learning outside the classroom. If students encounter difficulties while using the Quora application, they can seek assistance from their lecturers and classmates, promoting collaborative problem-solving. It aligns with the lecturer's role in guiding students toward self-directed learning and fostering effective strategies for learning English.

3. The benefits of using Quora

After the implementations, the findings showed that there are several benefits of using Quora in teaching reading (Noviyanti, 2023; Oktaviyani et al., 2022):

a. Authentic Content: Quora provides authentic and real-world content that reflects how English is used in various contexts. This exposes students to diverse language styles, tones, and vocabulary they may encounter in real-life reading situations, helping them develop their reading skills authentically.

b. Engaging and Relevant Material: Quora content can be highly engaging and relevant to student’s interests and needs. It covers various topics and questions, allowing
teachers to select content that aligns with students' interests, motivation, and language proficiency levels. This can enhance students' motivation to read and improve their reading skills.

c. Multiple Perspectives: Quora allows users worldwide to share their knowledge, opinions, and experiences. This allows students to read content from diverse perspectives, exposing them to different viewpoints, cultural nuances, and language variations. This helps students develop critical thinking skills, gain a broader understanding of various topics, and develop cultural awareness.

d. Reading Strategies Practice: Quora content can be used to teach and practice specific reading strategies or skills, such as skimming, scanning, predicting, and inferring. Students can apply these strategies while reading Quora questions and answers, improving their reading comprehension skills and becoming more effective readers.

e. Language Input: Quora exposes students to authentic language input, including vocabulary, grammar, idioms, and expressions used in real-life contexts. This helps students expand their language skills and knowledge and exposes them to different writing styles and structures.

f. Interactive Learning: Quora allows students to interact with the content through comments, discussions, and feedback. This promotes active reading, encourages students to express their opinions, and fosters critical thinking and communication skills.

g. Technology Integration: Using Quora in teaching reading integrates technology into the classroom, motivating and engaging students. It also helps students develop digital literacy skills, such as evaluating online sources for credibility, reliability, and accuracy.

h. Flexibility and Adaptability: Quora provides a wide range of content that can be adapted to students' different levels, interests, and needs. Teachers can select the appropriate content for their students' language proficiency level, and customize reading activities and tasks accordingly.

i. Supplemental Material: Quora can be used as a supplementary resource in addition to traditional reading materials, providing an additional source of reading input and practice for students.
j. Real-life Application: Quora content is often based on real-life situations, which can help students connect their reading skills to real-world scenarios. This promotes the transfer of reading skills to authentic reading situations outside the classroom.

4. The suggestions in implementing Quora for teaching reading

After implementing Quora in English language teaching, it’s important for teachers to carefully curate and verify the content to ensure its accuracy and appropriateness for their students. Teachers should also guide students on the responsible use of Quora, including respecting intellectual property rights, citing sources, and following online etiquette and safety guidelines. Here are some suggestions for teaching reading using the Quora application (Irwan et al., 2020):

a. Set Learning Objectives: Define clear learning objectives for the reading lesson based on your students’ language level and needs. Determine what specific reading skills or strategies you want to focus on, such as skimming, scanning, predicting, or inferring, and align them with the Quora content you plan to use.

b. Select Relevant Quora Content: Browse Quora and select relevant questions or answers that align with your students’ learning objectives and language level. Choose content that is engaging, authentic, and appropriate for the age and interests of your students. Verify the accuracy and reliability of the content to ensure its suitability for teaching purposes.

c. Pre-Reading Activities: Before diving into the Quora content, introduce the topic and activate your students’ prior knowledge through pre-reading activities. You can use brainstorming, discussions, or activating schema techniques to activate their background knowledge and build their interest and motivation for reading.

d. Introduce Reading Strategies: Introduce and model the reading strategies or skills that you want your students to practice using Quora content. Explain each strategy’s purpose, benefits, and application, and provide examples or demonstrations to help students understand how to use them effectively.

e. Guided Reading: Provide guided reading practice using the selected Quora content. Assign specific questions or answers to individual students or groups, and guide them to read carefully and apply the reading strategies introduced earlier. Encourage them
to use context clues, make predictions, ask questions, and monitor their comprehension as they read.

f. Post-Reading Activities: After students have read the Quora content, engage them in post-reading activities to reinforce their comprehension and deepen their understanding. You can use comprehension questions, discussion prompts, or reflection tasks to encourage students to reflect on what they read, make connections, and express their opinions or interpretations.

g. Follow-up Tasks: Assign follow-up tasks that require students to apply the reading skills or strategies learned from Quora content. These tasks can include writing summaries, analysing language features, comparing different answers, or discussing the implications of the content. Provide feedback and guidance to help students improve and apply their reading skills independently.

h. Reflection and Evaluation: Finally, reflect on the effectiveness of using Quora in teaching reading. Evaluate the learning outcomes based on the defined learning objectives and assess students' progress in their reading skills. Adjust your instruction as needed for future lessons and consider incorporating Quora content into your ongoing reading curriculum.

Finally, the findings discussed earlier showed consistency with previous studies conducted by Pinanggih (2021) and Azizah & Mabrur (2022), which support the effectiveness of using technology in language instruction and the benefits of student-centered and self-directed learning. According to Irwan et al., (2020) and Noviyanti (2023), Quora, a component of Quora, can serve as a valuable supplement to formal language instruction. Lecturers can guide students toward relevant resources, while students can enhance their learning approaches (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022; Mirna, 2018). ICT is not just an education tool; it's a game-changer. It empowers teachers to personalize learning, catering to individual student needs and styles. This technology-infused approach ignites students' cognitive fire, and a classroom where students have more say in their digital learning thrives, creating a nurturing and supportive environment (Schmid et al., 2022). The findings demonstrate that students' comprehension of classroom materials improves when they utilize the Quora language learning application to study in advance. It reinforces the notion that guiding students to
utilize technological tools like Quora facilitates their access to supplementary learning resources and fosters their independent learning abilities.

5. The implications of the study

The result and discussion revealed some important implications, such as that Quora could underscore the value of incorporating online platforms into educational strategies. It highlighted the importance of diversifying learning tools beyond traditional classroom methods. Quora is found to be effective; it encourages educators to explore similar platforms for promoting reading comprehension. The research suggests that platforms like Quora can adapt to various learning styles and preferences. This could lead to the development of more adaptive and personalized learning environments. The findings gave implications for teacher training. Educators might need to be trained in utilizing online platforms effectively to support students in developing reading comprehension skills.

D. Conclusion

The study found that using the Quora application as a tool can help improve students' reading comprehension skills. It is seen from students' perspective that showed that their reading comprehension improved after using the Quora application. Overall, the study concluded that using the Quora application had a positive influence and was effective in enhancing reading comprehension among students at STAI Sufyan Tsauri Majenang. Introducing something new, such as the Quora application, attracted students' interest in reading. However, for further research, the study should give more concern on the teachers' perspective in using online applications to teach reading.

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