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MENTIMETER AS AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING MEDIUM FOR TEACHING READING TO EIGHTH-GRADE EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading presents significant challenges for junior high school students due to limited vocabulary and low classroom participation. To address these issues, the digital interactive platform Mentimeter was employed to support a more engaging learning environment. This study aimed to explore how Mentimeter was used as an interactive learning medium to teach reading to eighth-grade students, identify the challenges students encountered, and describe the solutions implemented. Conducted at a public junior high school in Surabaya with 33 eighth- grade students, this research employed a qualitative design. Data were collected via classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that Mentimeter supported the reading process by activating prior knowledge during pre-teaching, promoting interactive feedback during while-teaching, and facilitating evaluation in post-teaching. Identified challenges included technical issues, unstable internet connections, limited English proficiency, and time constraints. These were effectively overcome through digital troubleshooting, peer collaboration, cognitive reading strategies, and self-regulated time management. Mentimeter proved to be a valuable tool in assisting reading comprehension and boosting engagement in EFL learning.

INTRODUCTION

English serves as a vital tool for global education and communication. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, junior high school students frequently struggle with reading comprehension. These difficulties often stem from a lack of effective reading strategies, limited exposure to texts, and insufficient vocabulary mastery (Hakim et al., 2021). Reading descriptive texts is particularly challenging because it requires students to grasp detailed information, reference aspects, and specific text structures. Factors such as low learning motivation, unsupportive environments, and conventional teaching methods further contribute to these difficulties (Fauziah et al., 2021). Therefore, integrating engaging digital learning media is essential to promote students' reading comprehension and motivation.

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The advancement of technology opens new opportunities to improve reading skills. Digital platforms can enhance fluency, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency by creating interactive activities (Janah et al., 2022). Mentimeter, a web-based interactive presentation tool, has emerged as an effective platform to boost classroom participation. Studies highlight that Mentimeter significantly increases student engagement, reaching up to 91% participation in various activities (Sari & Nugroho, 2021). Its features, such as the 'Word Cloud' and real-time quizzes, directly address students' cognitive barriers in understanding descriptive texts by facilitating vocabulary brainstorming and immediate comprehension checks.

While previous studies have shown the positive impacts of Mentimeter on students' engagement and writing skills, there remains a lack of specific research on how it aids eighth-grade students in comprehending descriptive texts. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Mentimeter is utilized as an interactive learning medium for reading, identify the challenges encountered by students, and describe the solutions implemented to overcome these obstacles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Media and Mentimeter

Learning media are pedagogical tools utilized to facilitate the learning process, captivate students' attention, and effectively transmit knowledge (Adriani et al., 2022). They serve to guide students from confusion to clarity by making complex concepts accessible. Mentimeter is a highly useful interactive educational tool that allows students to respond to questions and share opinions anonymously via their devices. It features various interactive slide types, such as live polls, word clouds, quizzes, and Q&A sessions. By incorporating these elements, Mentimeter fosters a dynamic, student-centered learning environment that significantly increases active participation (Khan, 2025).

Reading Comprehension and Descriptive Texts

Reading comprehension involves grasping main ideas, supporting details,

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and interpreting meaning through contextual understanding (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). It is a multifaceted interactive process where prior knowledge plays a crucial role in negotiating meaning. Descriptive texts, which aim to clearly depict people, animals, objects, or places in detail, require readers to engage their senses and recognize specific language features such as adjectives and the simple present tense (Fitriani et al., 2019). Employing visual and interactive media like Mentimeter supports the effectiveness of teaching descriptive texts by providing immediate visual feedback and vocabulary scaffolding.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in depth how the use of Mentimeter helped students understand descriptive texts (Cresswell, 2014). The research was conducted at a public junior high school in Surabaya, involving 33 eighth-grade students from Class 8J. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their prior English examination scores, categorizing them into low, moderate, and high proficiency levels to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the platform's impact across different capabilities.

Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations utilized checklists and field notes to record students' participation, interactions, and the instructional flow. Interviews were conducted with 18 selected students to gather insights into the challenges they faced and the solutions applied. The collected data were analyzed using the systematic procedures proposed by Ary et al. (2010), encompassing familiarization and organization, coding, and interpreting the findings. Triangulation of the observation and interview data ensured the validity and trustworthiness of the results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Mentimeter as an interactive learning medium was

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structurally integrated into three teaching stages. In the pre-teaching stage, the teacher utilized the 'Word Cloud' feature to activate prior knowledge, prompting students to brainstorm vocabulary related to food characteristics (e.g., taste, colour, shape). During the while-teaching stage, students read descriptive passages and responded to multiple-choice quizzes on Mentimeter. This allowed the teacher to monitor comprehension and provide instant corrective feedback. Finally, in the post-teaching stage, open-ended question slides and the scale feature were used to evaluate students' ability to construct their own descriptive sentences and reflect on their overall understanding. Table 1 summarizes these instructional stages.

Table 1: Stages in the Teaching and Learning Process Using Mentimeter

Stages	Teacher's Activities	Students' Activities
Pre-Activities	Explains objectives; uses Word Cloud to activate vocabulary.	Join session; contribute food characteristic words.
Whilst-Activities	Instructs reading; uses Quiz for comprehension; provides feedback.	Read text; answer quizzes; revise misconceptions.
Post-Activities	Uses open-ended slides for sentence creation; evaluates via scale.	Formulate descriptive sentences; rate comprehension.

Despite the engaging nature of the platform, students encountered several challenges during the Mentimeter sessions, which were categorized into four main areas: technical problems, internet connectivity, limited English proficiency, and time management. Device limitations and network congestion often caused delayed submissions and screen freezing. Furthermore, linguistic limitations caused confusion in interpreting instructions and descriptive vocabulary. Consequently, students felt rushed and pressured by the time constraints on quiz slides. To mitigate these issues, both the teacher and students employed proactive coping strategies, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Challenges and Solutions

Challenge Aspect	Obstacles Faced	Implemented Solutions
Technical Problems	Frozen screens, login failures, loading delays.	Students refreshed pages; teacher provided manual troubleshooting.
Internet Connection	Unstable signals disrupting answer submissions.	Relocated for better reception; borrowed peer hotspots.

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Limited English	Confusion over vocabulary and instructions.	Utilized keyword identification; learned via peer word clouds.
Time Management	Anxiety from time limits reducing accuracy.	Read questions thoroughly first; skipped difficult items temporarily.

These findings reinforce previous research indicating that Mentimeter significantly enhances student engagement and collaboration due to its interactive and anonymous response features (Khan, 2025; Sari, 2021). However, this study extends those insights by demonstrating Mentimeter's specific utility in scaffolding descriptive text comprehension. The instant formative feedback provided by the platform allowed the teacher to promptly clarify vocabulary distinctions, minimizing misunderstandings. The successful integration of Mentimeter relied heavily on the combination of the tool's capabilities with effective teacher facilitation and students' self-regulated learning strategies.

CONCLUSION

Mentimeter served as a valuable learning medium for assisting eighth-grade students in comprehending descriptive texts and promoting their engagement in English learning. Interactive features such as quizzes and word clouds enabled students to actively respond to reading tasks and receive immediate feedback. While technical issues, internet connectivity, time constraints, and limited English proficiency presented notable challenges, these were effectively mitigated through digital troubleshooting, peer collaboration, and strong instructional guidance. Ultimately, the integration of Mentimeter transforms reading from a passive activity into an interactive, socially constructed learning experience. Future studies are encouraged to explore its impact across different text genres and larger educational contexts.

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