WEBTOON: A Phenomenological Study on Reading Preferences Among Senior High Students in Quirino National High School

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Abstract

This research aims to find out the experience of Senior High School students in the webtoon. They read webtoon as their reading preference in Quirino National High School, Quirino, Isabela, Philippines. The researcher used the phenomenological design of research. The researcher used an individual direct interview in gathering data. The researcher used purposive sampling using narrative analysis.

The researcher found that ESL senior high students used webtoon as reading material because of its availability, trend, ease of use, and access to gadgets and internet connection. They are also entertained in reading webtoon because they can use their extra time effectively and educationally by reading webtoon. Webtoon is a great tool to enhance their reading skills. Students use webtoon as reading material for them to improve their vocabulary or to learn new words. Through this, they can discover something new such as cultures and traditions shown in a story, making them aware of what's happening around them.

Keywords: *webtoon, reading preferences, phenomenology, reading, reading skills*
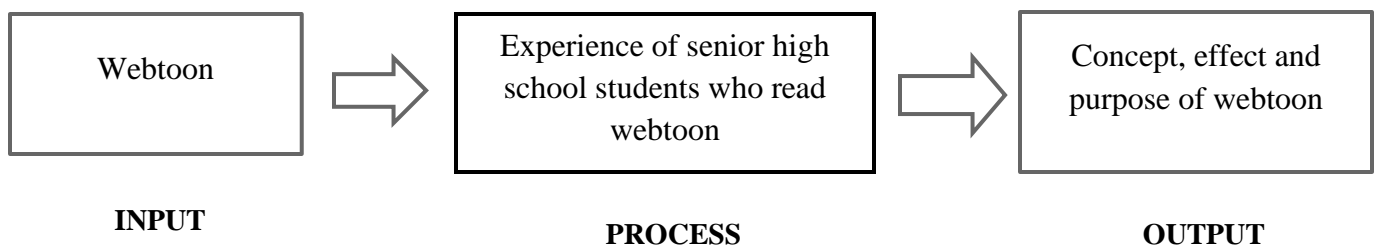
Introduction

Webtoons are animated series of digital comics published online. It can be accessed through different gadgets. Webtoons were originated in South Korea, but because of its trend and its accessibility, it also becomes one of the reading preferences of students.

Nowadays, because of its trend, many students are now reading and interested in it. In the beginning, it serves as an entertainment piece only. But as we can see nowadays, readers almost spend their time reading different series of stories in it, neglecting their homework and just keep on reading. But some students also use it as a part of their reading habit for them to improve their skills.
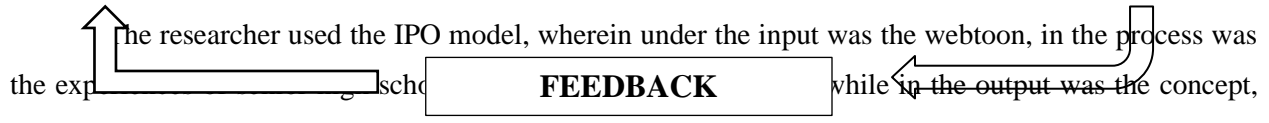
According to Junko Kim, Webtoons have been hugely successful in Korea, ever since we initially launched the NAVER Webtoons service back in 2004. Webtoons are a popular part of daily life in Korea, where we see more than 6.2 million daily users on our service, with an average of 17 million monthly users enjoying it regularly. Over the last ten plus years, fans have accumulated more than 29 billion reads of the webtoons, which are a combination of the words web and cartoons. Readers in the U.S. may be more familiar with the term webcomic, but they're similar to some unique features we're excited for fans to experience potentially for the first time.

In this study, the researcher aims to know the reasons why students choose webtoon as one of their reading materials and what is the effect of it on their education and vocabulary enrichment.

Conceptual framework

Webtoon	→	Experience of senior high school students who read webtoon	→	Concept, effect and purpose of webtoon
INPUT		**PROCESS**		**OUTPUT**

The researcher used the IPO model, wherein under the input was the webtoon, in the process was the exp_____sch_____ **FEEDBACK** _____while in the output was the concept, effect, and purpose of the webtoon. The model has a feedback mechanism for enriching the use of the webtoon as a tool for teaching and learning.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer these following questions:

1. What is the most preferred genre of story students want to read?

2. Why do the students choose webtoon as reading preference?

3. How did they understand a story on a webtoon?

Scope and limitation

This research study was conducted at Quirino National High School – Quirino, Isabela, Philippines, senior high school (Grade 11 and 12) under the academic track including Humanities and Social Sciences, Accountancy, Business and Management, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

Review of Related Literature

Third, Roslidah (n.d.) held a study entitled the influence of reading English comics on a student's English subject achievement at school. The researcher conducted this research to inform the reader about the importance of reading comics on the student's English subject achievement at school. This research will give input to several parties who concern. This research is limited to one student who likes reading English comics. The case study research was used to answer the research problem. This study covered all of the English skills, except listening. All those results and discussion can be concluded that English comics have a significant effect on the student's comprehension and ability to inter something in reading.

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IALSB averting (2008)portrays today's young Americans as a generation who lack knowledge that makes them informed citizens and have meager skills to cope with information-heavy and communication-based society. The millennials are described by adolescent consumers who are attracted to trivial matters and ignorant of adult realities. In addition to that somewhat samber picture, millennials have been described as showing interest in the community but lacking interpersonal skills, and enjoying image-rich materials more than plains books without pictures(lower,2007).

Gierzynski(2013)found that young Americans in almost every demographic group not to read fiction, poetry, and drama as much as the earlier generations. Moreover, when they do read, they also do other activities at the same time, like checking e-mail, chatting with friends, watching a video clip and the like. Understandably their comprehension is impaired. Even though these claims were based on a nationwide survey in the U.S, the characteristics of the millennial described above very much resonate with most of the millennials generation across the globe, particularly those who come from the upper-middle class. LINE STORY FROM SEMIOTICS VANTAGE POINT Semiotically, a sign can be analyzed from its syntagmatic.

Chanlin.2000: Mayer,2001/.The animation is an essential component in designing interactive multimedia, which creates visual interest and makes scientific learning more appealing and enjoyable for learners(lih-Juan changing,2000). Furthermore, the animation is one such component that can be part of computer-based instruction and which cannot be combined with any other media(Rieber,1990). Animation adds two unique elements as compared to the static graphic-motion and trajectory(Klien,1987).

There is a general consent on the beneficial contribution of graphics with the related text information for the readers(Morrison, Ross, and kemp,2001). Graphics are a good source of visual communication and can deliver the textual message effectively(Levie and Lentz,1982).

Williams (1995) investigated how comic books can be used as instructional materials for ESL students with low-inter-mediate-level English learners and limited discourse and interactive competence. The researcher found that using comic strips in second language classrooms can guide students to hypothesize about the cartoons language, to raise awareness of pragmatic, and to emphasize underlying language regularity.

Finally, a recent study (Liu,2004) investigated the effects if comic strips on L2 learner's reading comprehension 107 university-level students of English were divided into two proficiency groups: intermediate proficiency group and high average proficiency group. Two texts were used as the research instrument. First, a book was created for an upper-intermediate proficiency group, and a second text was simplified to make it a low level one by the English-speaking professionals. Students in each group were divided into four treatment groups.T1, low-level test only, T2, low-level text with comic strips.T3, high-level version only, and T4, senior book with comic strips. The data were collected with immediate recall protocols (IRP) in which students wrote what they understood from the text after they read and analyzed by scoring the IRP results. First, each recall was divided into pausal units and was ranked from 1 to 4 according to their semantic significance to the text. Later, three raters scored each protocol individually, and high inter-rater reliability was achieved (.95).

Vernon(2006)observed that by the time students get to university, they have developed particular reading habits and are often reluctant to change those habits. In his study of 23 students in a master of social work class, he found that the majority of students did not read their texts online even when provided with the means to accomplish the task. His students preferred to print the book and read it in paper format

.Similarly, Woody, Daniel, and baker(2010), in their study of undergraduate students found that students preferred textbooks over e-books for learning when given the option of purchasing anime-book or more expensive books. Tom Marshall(1997), annotations can be "procedural signals" that indicate which sections of text require further study or "further attention."

According to Kawase, Herder, and Nejdl(2009), students commonly mark their textbox in four typical ways: (3) taking notes in the margins or near figures; and, (4) taking notes in the margins or between lines of text (p.241). Another key advantage of using a paper-based document is the concept of information stability.

According to O'Hara and Sellen(1997), It appears that the enhanced physical tangibility of a material allows the reader that the improved physical tangibility of a document allows the reader to conduct multiple activities "simultaneously note-taking while reading whereas the current online annotation tools tent to slow down and impede the reading process. This makes online reading less appealing for students who need to master content under tight time restrictions.

Reading and also the other language skills have an essential role in FEL learning. According to Gallik(1999), reading is a cornerstone for success in school, and even throughout life, the ability to read provides opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success.

Besides, Ediger(2011) states that reading is considered very valuable in the context of foreign language learning because it is one of the primary sources for students to obtain the input language. Also, according to Mikulecky and Jeffries(2004), reading is one meaningful way to

improve the students' general language skills in English and help the students to think in English, enlarge the vocabulary, increase the reading speed, gain more knowledge, and an excellent way to find about new ideas, facts and experiences.

Pretorius(2000) also claims that the teaching of reading is an essential part of foreign language learning because it is one of the most prestigious academic skills in the teaching and learning process. Based on the Curriculum 2013, the teaching of reading as a part of the English subject aims to help students comprehend the reading materials. However, reading comprehension in English is a challenging task for Indonesian students.

The study was done by Nurhafizah(2012), who involved the second-grade students of SMPN 4. Malang showed that they had a problem in understanding the main idea of the texts and finding both implicit and explicit information.

Another study in reading comprehension done by Shamaila(2010) has also identified some factors why the students got difficulties in reading comprehension: the elements were the students' lack of background knowledge, the selection of reading materials, the students' lack of reading quantity, the student's differences and the students' lack of motivation. Reading comprehension is also a challenge for seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 32 Palembang. Based on the results of the English reading test given by the writer on October 2nd, 2013, it was found that the students' mean score was 55, while the Minimum Passing Grade was 75. To help students improve their reading comprehension, it is arguable to say that English teachers have an essential role. For example, teachers can use new reading materials.

As Cameron (2001) says, "The teachers must take on the responsibility for adjusting tasks and topics so that they relate to the student's interests "(p.58). In Indonesia, the National Education Department (2003) also requires the teachers to use different kinds of texts, such as narratives, descriptive and expository texts, in there to develop students' comprehension of the reading text and communicative competence. There are several ways to help students to improve their reading comprehension. One of the ways is by using interesting teaching materials. In this study, the writer wants to use the English comic book series.

According to Csabay(2006), comics are authentic, and using authentic material is very important in language teaching and learning. Comic book series is a book of comic strips or cartoons in series, often relating a sustained narrative.

As Hornby(2002) describes, comic book series is a sequence of drawings arranged in interrelated panels to display brief humor from a narrative, often serialized with text in balloons and captions. According to Grant(2010), comic books have had motivating power in literacy development for children, especially young boys, since their introduction in the1930. Krashen (2008) states that comic books and other "light" reading can be an essential part of learning to read at an academic level.

Krashen(2008) summarizes the previous research concludes that comic books contain a high number of unusual and academic vocabulary words that comic book readers tend to be better overall readers. Using comics can alleviate the negative view of reading for some students (McVicker, 2005).

Also, Lio (2004) states that comics are visual highly texts: they are useful primarily for reading comprehension for second/additional language learners. In summary, comic books can hold the students' attention longer than blocks of print because the format is equal parts of pictures and texts.

According to David Welsh of Bloomberg, comics account for a quarter of all book sales in South Korea, while more than 3 million Korean users paid to access online manhwa, and 10 million users read free webtoons. As of July 2014, Never had published 520 webtoons while Daum had published 434.

First, Apriani(2014) held a study entitled the use of English Comic Book Series in teaching reading comprehension. Her study analyzed whether or not the use of English comic book series could improve reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 32 Palembang. In this study, one group pre-test and post-test control group design was applied. The population was 170 seventh grade students in the academic year 2013/2014. The result of the data analysis showed that the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group was significant ($p<0.05$). The results of the independent sample t-test also showed that the mean differences of the post-test of the experimental group and control group were significant (p.<0.05). These results confirmed that the use of English comic book series could be used as a reading material to help the seve graders of SMP Negeri 32 improve their reading comprehension. Also, the result of this study showed that using a variety of reading materials in teaching reading comprehension is important.

Arroyani(2010) held a study entitled the effectiveness of teaching using comic strips to facilitate students' reading comprehension skills in narrative text. Test research showed that the use of comic strips could improve the students' reading comprehension skills of the narrative test. There was a significant improvement in students' achievement in the experimental group. Base on the finding and discussion in the previous chapter, it could be concluded that the use of comic strips as a kedia in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text was effective. The obtained score of the t-test proved it. The t-test showed that t-score 5.191 was higher than t-table 1.66, it means that Ha was accepted, and Ho was rejected.

Research Methodology

The researcher used phenomenology design. The researcher investigated and analyzed the experience of a phenomenon through interviews with the subjects. Phenomenology is an

approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The research instrument used an interview accompanied by audio recordings and pictures or photographs. The researchers used purposive sampling in selecting the participants. The participants were students of senior high school who are reading webtoons in their gadgets. Purposeful/Purposive Sampling is the most common sampling strategy. In this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought based on pre-selected criteria based on the research question. Since this is a qualitative type of research used the narrative method of analysis to analyze the given data that we have been gathered from our participants. The result was recorded fairly and honestly.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter discusses the findings, presented and interpret the data

A. Preferred Genre of Stories

The senior high school students who read webtoon preferred to read both fiction and non-fiction stories which are Romance, Comedy, Action, Drama, and Rom-Com(romance-comedy)

This was testified by:

*Key informant: "I don't have a favorite genre because all of them catch my attention, but I prefer the **romantic/action."***

Key informant: "My favorite genre of the story is The RomCom(romance-comedy)"

Based on the responses of the informants, the researcher finds out that they almost have the same preferences. They choose the genre that is suitable for what they are experiencing, what they feel, and what suits their personality and age.

Likewise, with the study of (Davila & Patrick, 2010; Koss & Teale, 2009) Predominantly fictional texts. Despite this, certain texts in the fiction genre may interest boys. For this to occur, these texts must contain themes that gravitate around the action or science-fiction or fall into the category of crime novel or thriller. To fully interest boys, the focus of these texts should involve their characters in a timeline, in action, and various adventures (Moeller, 2011). Not only are they more interested in the story, but it is also easier for them to follow and to understand than when the focus is on the relationships and emotions between the characters, for example (Moeller, 2011). Girls, on the other hand, tend to prefer fiction (Moeller, 2011; Koss & Teale, 2009) in the form of thrillers, romance (Davila & Patrick, 2010; Wilson & Casey, 2007), or

mystery novels (Burgess & Jones, 2010). In contrast to their male counterparts who prefer to read concrete facts in informative texts.

B. Webtoon as Reading Preference

The senior high school students choose webtoon as a reading preference because webtoon enhances their reading skills and learn or discover new things and words that can improve their vocabulary. Through reading webtoon also, they can learn about different cultures and discover something. They also read webtoons because it's their way to consume their vacant time.

This was testified by:

Key informant: "It enhances my reading skill because I encounter and know more words that can enhance my vocabulary."

Key informant: "I am interested in reading webtoon because I like to discover new things, and through reading webtoon, I can learn and discover new things."

Based on the data gathered, we found out that through reading webtoon, they can learn something. Learn the different cultures of other countries in which the story came from. Through reading webtoon, they can encounter and learn new words that can improve their vocabulary.

The same with the study of Arroyani (2010) held a study entitled 'The Effectiveness of Teaching Using Comic Strips to Facilitate Students' Reading Comprehension Skill in Narrative Text.' This research showed that the use of comic strips could improve the students' reading comprehension skills of the narrative test. There was a significant improvement in students' achievement in the experimental group. Based on the finding and discussion in the previous chapter, it could be concluded that the use of comic strips as media in teaching reading comprehension skills of narrative text was effective.
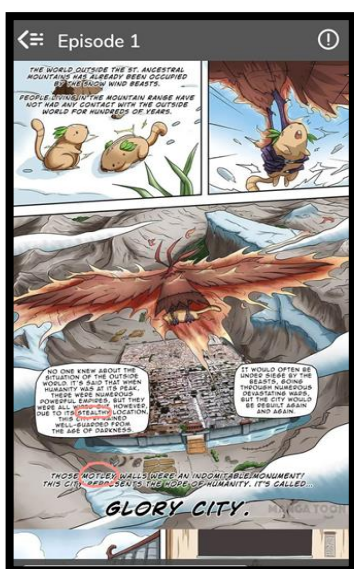
Sample Materials

Vocabulary Enrichment

Stealthy -quiet and secret to avoid being noticed.

Motley-made up of many different people or things.

Commoner- a person who is not a member of the nobility.

Realm- an area of activity, interest, or knowledge; a country that is ruled by a king or queen

These are some words that may not understand by a regular reader. To understand a concept, they need to consult a dictionary. In that way, they are now exploring new things or adding other words or set of words in their vocabulary, increasing their reading comprehension or ability. That's how webtoon improves one's vocabulary.

C. Understanding Webtoon Story

Based on the informants, they can easily understand a story on a webtoon because the scenes are already drawn; they just need to look at the graphics and read the written words.

This was testified by:

Key informant: "I understand a webtoon easily because the pictures are already given or shown. "

Key informant: "It enhances my imagination to understand a story because it contains pictures easily to understand. "

The researcher found out that the icons, drawing or graphics help aot in understanding a particular story in the webtoon. It gives a clue or vision of what is happening in the story that also enhances the imaginative skill of students.

Likewise, Adding printed text, static graphics, charts, maps, dynamic graphics - animations may increase the cost of the instructional material, but these elements can make learning an active process (Clark & Mayer, 2003). The psychological evidence in combining "relevant graphics" with the instructional material can lead to learning gains (Clark & Mayer, 2003). Presenting an instructional message in words and pictures engages people in active learning by making mental connections between pictorial and verbal representations. Due to a lack of integration between oral and graphic images as a unified structure, presenting words alone may engage learners in shallow learning (Clark & Mayer, 2003).

Conclusion

Based on the data and its interpretation, the researcher, therefore, concludes that; students use webtoon as reading material because of its availability, trend and its easy to use as long as you have a gadget and internet connection. Students are entertained in reading webtoon because through it; they can use their vacation time effectively and educationally by reading webtoon.

Webtoon is a great tool to enhance their reading skills. Students use webtoon as reading material for them to improve their vocabulary or to learn new words. Through this, they can discover something new such as cultures and traditions that are shown in a story, making them aware of what's happening around them.

Recommendation

Based on findings, a webtoon is an excellent tool for more effective learning. It can help students to understand their lesson especially in narrating stories, easily. Because through webtoon, students will be more interested in reading a text because of its attractive graphics, making them focus and quickly get the central concept of a story or lesson.

In the case of students who have difficulty in reading, webtoon is the perfect material for them to enhance their reading skills. Even if they hardly understand a word or phrase, there is a graphics or drawing which can guide them and gives them an idea of what the phrase or sentence means, so it's useful reading material for them.

The researcher recommends our simple project "Let us UPGRADE" or "let us Upgrade, Promote, Generate Reading Ability through WEBTOON Driving them to Entertainment and learning" with the partnership of language teachers who would help us a lot in conducting this project. At this project, youths who are interested will be having their time in reading a webtoon story with the guidance of language teachers who are facilitating. In this case, readers will enhance their reading skills, learn more things while having fun and entertainment.

For future researchers, we recommend them use a quantitative type of research for them to get and find out a broader and more relevant result for this study.

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