Digital Versus Print: Unpacking Indonesian University Students' Perceptions of English Language Learning

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Abstract

Due to technological advances, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who previously relied on printed books have switched to digital books. Higher education is, therefore, one of the levels of education currently one of the most heavily touched by digital technologies. This study aims to determine Indonesian students' perceptions regarding using digital books in reading classes. 127 students from a private university in Indonesia took part in this research. This type of research was a mixed-method design that used a five-point Likert Scale survey and semi-structured interviews to improve and support the results of the previous quantitative methods. The conclusion of this study covers students' past experiences, usefulness, preference for digital books vs. printed books, and English learning with digital books. In terms of students' past experiences, 84% of students have read digital books on computers or tablets, and 92% always use their phones. Moreover, in terms of usefulness, the interviews showed that many participants did not know the highlighting and note-taking features of the digital book. 64% of students prefer digital books, but some interviewees prefer printed books with some justification. In addition, 88% said digital books helped them learn English, especially in reading class, supported by interviews with several participants who said they were better at learning vocabulary from the digital book.

Keywords: Students' perception; digital book; printed book; reading class.

1. Introduction

The role of technology in our personal and professional lives is ubiquitous (Astri et al., 2022). In recent years, it has become obligatory to employ technology in the classroom (Rasita et al., 2020). Higher education is, therefore, one of the levels of education currently one of the most

heavily touched by digital technologies. The ongoing development of information and communication technologies has made the environment conducive to adopting novel strategies in the classroom. Numerous aspects of the emergence of new technological innovations, such as easy access to mobile devices and the internet, have impacted social life, business, and recent learning trends.

The rapid spread of electronic gadgetry is a notable feature of modern technological progress. There is a continuing trend from reading books with physical pages to reading from electronic screens due to the ubiquitous use of digital devices (laptops, computers, mobile gadgets, tablets, etc.) in everyday life. Reading using a digital device rather than paper is the preferred method for digital natives. However, digital natives, on the other hand, have a strong desire to learn quickly, are skilled at digesting knowledge fast, and are more motivated to obtain information through various communication platforms (Frand, 2000; Oblinger, 2003; Prensky, 2001a) Digital natives' thinking and information processing styles have been radically affected by new digital gadgets like tablets (Prensky, 2001b)

In addition to the research that has been conducted on the various distinctions that can be made between reading from a screen and reading from a paper, there has also been researched done on how students behave when using online resources versus print ones. Furthermore, new technological innovations have also drawn several research studies dealing with students' behaviour when using online and print resources. Such studies have endeavoured to understand the student's perceptions and interactions with both forms of media. Despite these scholarly pursuits, there appears to be a gap in equipping students, educators, and educational institutions with the tools to effectively foster and harness technical affinity. This research aims to bridge this gap by examining Indonesian students' perceptions of digital books, a pivotal educational technology product. By exploring the readiness of students to embrace and leverage advanced technologies, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights into integrating digital tools in educational contexts. The theoretical significance of this inquiry lies in its potential to inform and guide future research on the utilization of technology across various language skills, such as writing, listening, or speaking. Addressing the critical issue, this study is poised to answer pivotal questions about the intersection of technology and education:

1. How are students' past experiences with digital books influencing their current use?

2. How do students perceive the utility of digital books in their academic pursuits?

3. What preferences do students exhibit between digital and printed textbooks? And what factors contribute to this preference?

4. How do students perceive the impact of digital books on their English language learning, specifically within reading classes?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading on paper versus reading on digital devices

Some researchers believe highlighting the advantages of digital reading is an effective way to foster a culture of reading. Incorporating multi-media components such as sound and video clips is only possible in digital or electronic materials because these components cannot be displayed in print books (Bodomo et al., 2003). Users of automatic writing have access to various educational opportunities, including the ability to control the font size, the use of word references, the highlights generated by text-to-speech, and the resources for taking notes (Larson, 2010). Visuals such as graphics, shapes, and illustrations are used in traditional texts; however, in digital textbooks, in addition to those visuals, a wide variety of visual and audial components such as videos, sounds, and animations can be implemented in the environment. Traditional texts are limited to only using visuals. People's "reading" and "writing" abilities have evolved as a direct result of this phenomenon. As an alternative to reading printed materials and writing on paper, it has become common practice to read from electronic devices such as mobile phones, computers, and e-book readers and write using the same electronic devices. This practice has become widespread in recent years (Mazzoleni, 2012).

On the other hand, Brown (2016) asserts that the strategies and methods of comprehension utilized while reading printed texts might not apply to the process of reading from a screen. This is because printed texts are more easily digested than digital texts. Because of this, it is essential to question and develop one's skills, methods, and techniques when reading from the screen.

Reading on paper versus reading on digital devices, such as computers (Mayes et al., 2001; Noyes & Garland, 2008; Wästlund et al., 2005), video display terminals (VDT) (Mayes et al., 2001; Noyes & Garland, 2008; Wästlund et al., 2005), has been the subject of a significant number of investigations (Ackerman & Lauterman, 2012; Mangen et al., 2013; Noyes & Garland, 2008; Yu, 2010) (Margolin et al., 2013; Tees, 2010; Zambarbieri & Carniglia, 2012). In a previous study, researchers examined how reading comprehension and computer skills were related (Yu, 2010). Reading comprehension is constructing the text's meaning (Astri & Wahab, 2018). Tablets, a relatively new form of mobile technology, have quickly emerged as one of the most popular tools for educational settings. Tablets combine the functionality of laptops, smartphones, and older forms of tablet computing, and they also feature constant internet connectivity and a plethora of apps that allow users to customize their learning experience (Johnson et al., 2013).

The act of reading and the comprehension of the message meant to be conveyed in the text is affected by several factors. Sometimes, the context seems to significantly impact the meaning gleaned from the text and how it is understood. In the eyes of cognitivism, this is the result of thoughtful integration of the material world (the medium/device in reading) with the social world (the context in which the text is read). This exchange occurs during the reading process and between the text and readers in printed and digital environments. According to the findings of several studies, for example, Fortunati & Vincent (2014 and Martin-Beltrán et al. (2017), results from a transaction conducted on paper were found to be more favorable than those obtained from its electronic equivalent (such as reading on a computer screen).

Several studies highlight the many benefits of reading a book printed on paper instead of one read electronically. For example, several factors can make it hard to focus on the text on a screen, including the presence of other windows or tabs, the brightness of the screen, and the presence

of distracting items such as images or videos. According to Solak (2014), staring at a computer screen can be tiring and irritating, preventing readers from using reading strategies effectively. In addition, the materials printed on paper allow for immediate access to the text. In addition, the readers are aware of the length of the text due to the text's physical and tactile properties (Mangen et al., 2013). In addition, reading lengthy texts on the screen can be a particularly challenging experience. As a result, some students gravitate toward the more sensual practice of reading from paper (Mikuska & Seaton, 2011).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This type of research used a mixed method design, which is a way to get measurable results by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Klassen et al. (2012), this method is more complicated than collecting and analyzing two different types of data because it combines the functions of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, this means that the results of this method are better than those of quantitative and qualitative research.

The strategy employed by the researcher is an explanation-sequential approach. This means that this strategy emphasizes quantitative methods first and then uses qualitative methods to improve and support the quantitative methods' results. According to Klassen et al. (2012), this explanatory sequential strategy is implemented by collecting data and conducting quantitative analysis in the first stage, then collecting and analyzing data in the second stage, which is built on the results of the initial quantitative data. Quantitative data is given greater weight or priority.

A Likert-scale questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. First, it was distributed to students to gain insight into their opinions regarding the digital book application. In the meantime, qualitative data was gathered by conducting interviews with students. The questions posed during interviews were identical to the questions in the questionnaire. As a result, the interview instrument aims to obtain a general understanding of students' perspectives regarding digital books compared to printed books and to elucidate those perspectives further.

This study was carried out in a reading class where students used printed and digital books to learn according to the learning conditions that existed in 2022. This class is guided in two different ways. First, the learning process is carried out both online and offline. The first eight weeks of this class are completed online, and the subsequent eight weeks are completed through direct interaction. This is because there are still limitations placed on offline learning due to the coronavirus outbreak. Students who choose to receive their education via the Internet are typically given access to a pdf version of a digital textbook utilized by the instructor during class. The traditional printed book version has been meticulously recreated as the basis for the digital edition.

The following is the form of a questionnaire distributed to participants to gather information regarding their experiences, perceptions about usefulness and English learning, and preferences. The questionnaire was adapted from (Lin et al., 2020)

Table 1 Questionnaire for Students' Past Experience

1. I am familiar with digital readers
2. I have read digital books on my computer tablet before
3. I have read the digital book on my mobile phone before

Table 2 Questionnaire for Students' Perception of Usefulness of Digital Book

4. I used the (highlighting) colours in this digital book
5. The font size and typeface in this digital book were easy to read
6. I took notes on this digital book
7. I am satisfied with the functions of this digital book

Table 3 Questionnaire for Students' Preferences (digital book versus printed book)

8. Given a choice between an electronic or print version of a particular textbook, I will choose the electronic version
9. It was easier to find important information in the digital book

Table 4 Questionnaire for Students' Perception of digital Books in English Learning

10. This digital book (with multiple choices) has helped me grasp the main idea of the text
11. This digital book has helped find the keywords in detail
12. This digital textbook has facilitated my English Learning in reading class.

3.2 Participant

The participants in this study are students from an Indonesian private university. The selection of participants is based on their experiences with digital and paper books during the past year. Participants include students who have completed the critical reading course. This indicates that the author has consistently interacted with the two types of books available, digital and print. Participants in this study numbered 127 students who used digital books during online learning provided by the lecturer before the learning process and printed books during face-to-face learning.

3.3. Instrument

Students were provided with a perception questionnaire to collect comments and perceptions regarding using digital books. In addition, the items were used to assess the participants' feedback. These items are students' experiences with digital readers, the usefulness of tools on the interface, and comparing paper-based textbooks and e-textbooks (Murphy et al., 2003; Thong et al., 2004). Students' replies were graded using a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was distributed using a Google form to make data collection easier.

In addition, this project involved a semi-structured interview with six students, all of whom were given a pseudonym for the interview. The participants invited to the interview were chosen based on the results of a perception survey regarding their preferred book format when choosing between digital and printed books.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

This research was carried out after the students had passed 16 meetings using digital and printed books. This research was conducted in a reading classroom where lecturers interacted with

blended learning during the teaching process. This was influenced by the limitations of face-to-face learning, which caused students to go through 2 phases of interaction: online-based and offline-based or face-to-face. The lecturer conducted online learning using digital books in the first eight meetings. Then, the lecturer conducted the face-to-face lecture in the next eight meetings using the book's printed version. In this case, the researcher collected data after the learning process had been carried out in as many as 16 meetings by the lecturer. Researchers did not conduct experiments in completing this study, but they investigated students' perceptions using a questionnaire made in the form of a Google form.

3.5. Data Analysis

Pramono et al. (2020) emphasize that data analysis strategies examine field-collected data and draw conclusions about study outcomes. Researchers begin the data analysis process by evaluating all the data acquired from various sources, including the findings of questionnaires and interviews with students. The perception questionnaire was evaluated and presented in percentages using infographics (charts). The thematic thematicysis stage was utilized to examine interview data for reduction, presentation, and generating conclusion (Miles et al., 2019). Qualitative data analysis has three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and developing conclusions (Miles et al., 2019). In the reduction stage, the data classification procedure is followed by simplicity with a concise description by deleting extraneous data, making it easy for researchers to supply a specific image. Therefore, this data reduction stage is essential so data does not build, making the subsequent data analysis stage easier for researchers to complete.

In the data presentation stage, information is organized using the outcomes of data reduction, making it more comprehensible. This step, executed by the researcher, may involve narrative explanations or visual aids like graphs and charts to aid in drawiconcludinglowing this, the final stage is conclusion drawing, where the researcher interprets the data and its patterns to formulate conclusions, ensuring research results are accurately represented through diagrams, graphs, and narratives.

4. Results

The questionnaire was used to evaluate the responses of the participants. It is made up of several items. These items are students' experiences with digital readers, the usefulness of tools on the interface, and comparing paper-based textbooks and e-textbooks (Murphy et al., 2003; Thong et al., 2004). These intentions indicate whether they intend to increase their digital book reading and whether they are willing to use digital books to help them learn English in the future (Hernon et al., 2007; Lin & Yueh, 2012). The students' responses were graded on a five-point Likert scale, where the overall data in percentage can be seen in the appendix.

4.1 Past Experience

The questions in Figures 1-3 are questions related to past experiences. The presentations of student perceptions regarding student experiences using digital readers can be seen below.

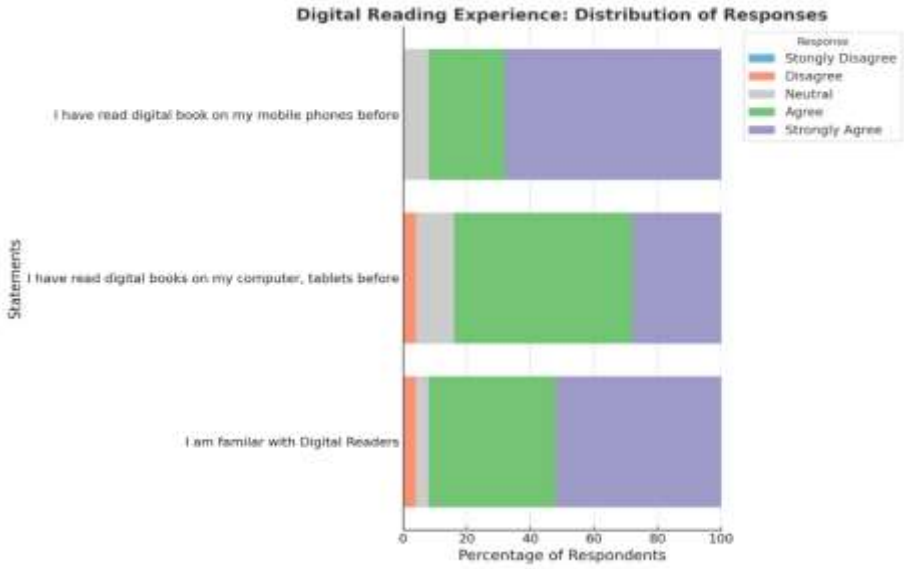

Figure 1. Result of Questionnaire for Students' Past Experience

The chart above is divided into three sections, each corresponding to a statement about digital reading, with respondents' levels of agreement or disagreement shown in bars of different colors.

The first section, "I am familiar with Digital Readers," shows that a significant majority of respondents agree (40%) or strongly agree (52%) that they are familiar with digital readers, indicating widespread awareness or knowledge of digital reading devices. A very small number express disagreement (4%) or strong disagreement (0%), and a neutral stance is comparatively low (4%).

The second section, "I have read digital books on my computer, tablets before," depicts a similar trend, with most respondents agreeing (56%) or strongly agreeing (28%) that they have read digital books on their computers or tablets. The number of respondents who disagree (4%) or strongly disagree (0%) is minimal, and a smaller number (12%) are neutral.

The last section, "I have read digital books on my mobile phones before," shows the highest level of strong agreement (68%), suggesting that reading digital books on mobile phones is the most common experience among the respondents. The agreement (24%) is less than the strong agreement but still significant. Few respondents are neutral (8%), and for disagree (0%) or strongly disagree (0%), indicating that mobile phones may be the preferred device for reading digital books for this group.

Overall, the data suggests that the respondents are generally familiar with and have experience reading digital books, particularly on mobile phones. This could indicate a trend towards mobile phone use as a primary reading device over computers or tablets. The data may inform

publishers, authors, and software developers about the preferred platforms for digital reading and help them tailor their products accordingly.

The questions are: Are you familiar with the digital reader? Have you used a computer or tablet to read digital books before? Have you used a mobile phone to read digital books before?

According to the findings of the interviews that were carried out, it was discovered that the six participants' perspectives on their level of familiarity with digital readers were essentially identical to one another. Every single person who was interviewed had prior experience using digital readers. However, when asked about the devices used to read digital books, such as computers or tablets, or perhaps they only used mobile phones in the past, they responded that they used all three. The variety of responses that were obtained is quite striking. For example, Andi said, "I use my cellphone to read digital books because I do not have a computer or laptop."

Meanwhile, a participant named Lisa said, “I usually use a computer or laptop when reading digital books, but I prefer to use a cellphone because it is easier to carry everywhere.” This statement was supported by a student named Dimas, who said, “I have a laptop, but I prefer to use a cellphone because it is easier and simpler to carry everywhere and can access digital books quickly.” From the statement obtained, students prefer to access a mobile phone because it is easier to carry around even though they have a laptop or laptop, especially for students who do not have a computer or laptop. In addition, a mobile phone is a reliable tool for facilitating their learning using digital books.

4.2 Usefulness

The questions in figure 4-7 relate to usefulness. The presentation of each item can be seen below.

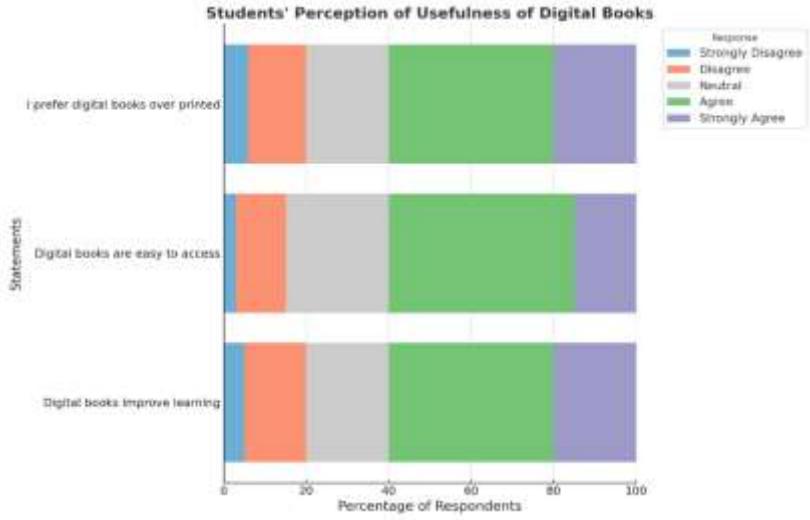

Figure 2. Result of Questionnaire for Students' Perception of Usefulness of Digital Book

This question pertains to functionalities available in the lecture-provided digital textbook. The first section, “I used the (highlighting) colours in this digital book,” shows that 8% strongly disagree, 16% disagree, 28% are neutral, 16% agree, and 32% strongly agree with the statement. This indicates that a majority of users find the highlighting feature in digital books useful, with 48% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

The second section, “The font size and typeface in this digital book were easy to read,” has 0% strongly disagreeing, 4% disagreeing, 16% neutral, 36% agreeing, and 44% strongly agreeing. Overall, the data shows that a majority of respondents (80% agreeing or strongly agreeing) are satisfied with the font size and type in the digital book, indicating well-chosen elements to meet reader needs. Only 4% are dissatisfied, suggesting minimal room for readability improvement. Neutral respondents may not feel font size and type significantly impact their reading experience or may have non-specific preferences. This implies that if the digital book aimed to enhance reading comfort through font choices, it appears largely successful for most readers.

In the third section, “I took notes on this digital book,” 8% strongly disagree, 20% disagree, 44% are neutral, 16% agree, and 12% strongly agree. It appears that note-taking is a moderately used feature, with more than half of the users (56%) taking advantage of this functionality.

The last section, “I am satisfied with the functions of this digital book,” has the highest number of respondents agreeing at 60%, with an additional 24% strongly agreeing. Only a small minority disagree (4%) and no one strongly disagree (4%), and 12% are neutral. This shows a high level of overall satisfaction with the functions offered by digital books among the respondents.

In summary, the chart indicates a positive reception towards the highlighted features of digital books, with the highest satisfaction reported for the general functions of the digital book. Most users find the highlighting helpful feature and are satisfied with the note-taking capability. However, there's some variability in opinions about the ease of reading regarding font size and typeface. This feedback could be vital for developers and publishers to focus on enhancing these functionalities further.

In addition, the author gains a deeper understanding of the participants' responses regarding the study's usefulness through semi-structured interviews. The questions for this section are:

Do you use the highlighting color and note features on digital books? Why and why not? Are the font size and typeface in this digital book easy to read? Are you satisfied with the function of this digital book? Why or why not?

According to the findings of the interviews, 4 out of 6 interviewees claimed that they were unaware of the existence of a feature in digital books that allowed the user to highlight text with a specific color and that also included a feature that allowed the user to make notes on the text. They were completely unfamiliar with how to use that function.

A student with the pseudonym Lisa said, "I didn't know there was such an application in a digital book. I usually write in an information book that I think is important." Unlike Dimas, who said the same thing but for different reasons "I don't use highlighting color and notes applications on digital books because I can't do that on my mobile phone while I only have a mobile phone to access digital books, maybe when using a laptop or computer, it can be done.” Different from

other participants, 2 out of 6 said that they had used this feature (highlighting color and notes) before, as said by Rudi "I once marked with color on a digital book given by the lecturer. I think that is interesting and makes it easier for me to find the important information I need." The results of this interview are consistent with the graphic data presented above (figure 2), which shows that it is not sufficient for fifty per cent of students to report that they understand the highlighting color and note features of digital books. The data show that there is still a lack of understanding among students regarding the functionality of the features that are included in digital books. Still, more than half of readers think that the font size and typeface make digital books easy to read.

4.3 Comparison between books (Digital book versus printed book)

For questions number 8 and 9 related to "comparison between books."

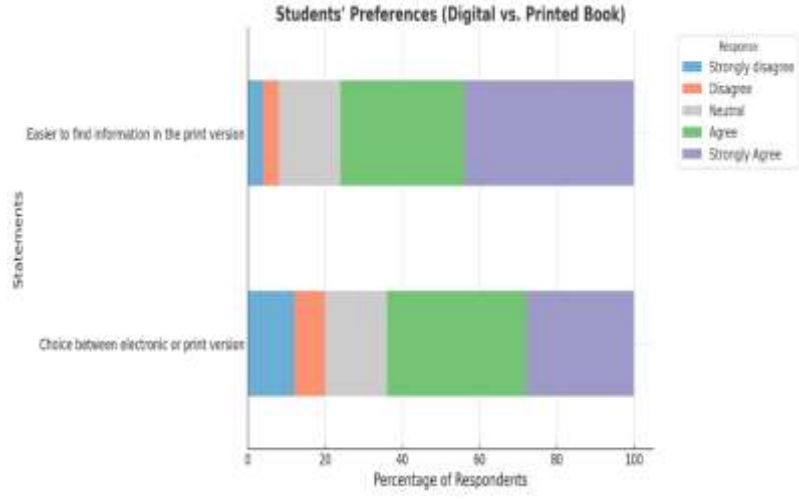

Figure 3. Result of Questionnaire for Students' Preferences (digital book versus printed book)

The above data provide evidence of students' growing interest in using digital instead of printed books. They are given the option of selecting either an electronic book or a traditional printed book to answer this question. According to the data presented above, 12% of students gave the response "strongly disagree," 8% gave the response "disagree," 3% selected "neutral," 36% selected "agree," and 28% set "strongly agree." This suggests that more than fifty percent of students favor the textbook's electronic edition over the book's printed version.

In addition, the statistics shown above also relate to students' impressions of the ease afforded by digital books in terms of locating relevant information inside digital books. It shows that 4% of respondents strongly disagreed, 4% disagreed, 16% opted to be neutral, 32% chose to agree, and 44% selected to strongly agree. Based on these findings, it is safe to assume that more than half of all students believe that digital books are superior to physical books when it comes to how simple it is to locate specific pieces of information within books.

In addition, the data above is supported by the results of interviews conducted with the question, "If given a choice, would you choose a digital book or a printed book in learning? Please explain!

Comparing digital books to printed books, 4 out of 6 students surveyed prefer digital books. Rudi said, "digital books are easy to carry everywhere, while printed books can be torn and heavy to carry, sometimes forgetting to put them where while digital books can be accessed quickly." While 2 out of 6 people interviewed stated the opposite. They prefer to use the print version than the digital version. An interviewee, Andi, said, "my eyes get tired quickly when reading digital books. My focus can be divided because when I read, there are notifications that interfere with my focus in reading, sometimes when I am engrossed in reading, the scroll feature on the digital book is suddenly pressed, and my reading is scrolled down so I had to find my previous reading again and it bothered me studying. Besides that, using the book's printed version is better because we can mark important information on the book using a coloured pen." In line with Rudi, Lisa stated, "I will use digital books when I am pressed when I don't have a printed version of the book, and there are only digital books, then I will use the digital version, but as long as the print version is available, I prefer to use the printed book, my eyes hurt when exposed to mobile phone light for too long, so it's better if I use the printed version."

Based on the graphic data and the results of the interviews, it appears that the majority of the participants prefer the digital book to the printed version of the book; however, there are still some participants (a small percentage) who prefer the printed version of the book to the digital one.

4.4 Digital Book in English Learning in Reading Class

Questions 10 to 12 relate to students' perceptions of using digital books in English learning.

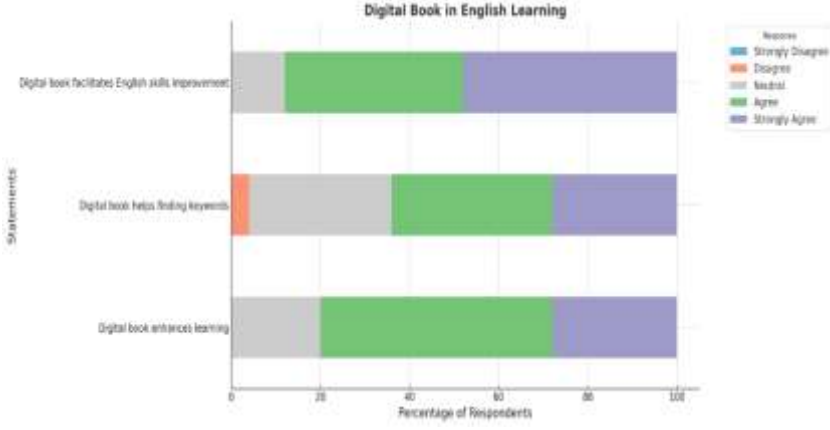

Figure 4. Result of Questionnaire for Students' Perception of the digital book in English Learning

The 10th question probes how well students feel they understood the text in learning English in reading class with the digital book they utilized. There were 20% who did not have an opinion

(neutral), 52% said they mostly or entirely agreed, and 28% strongly agreed. According to the numbers above, more than half of those who read digital books feel that they better understand the material.

In addition, the 11th question above probes the student's impression of the digital book's efficacy in locating the keywords in context. Again, 4% said they strongly disagreed, 32% were indifferent, 36% said they agreed, and 28% said they were exceptionally so.

Moreover, this 12th question is meant to ascertain whether or not the electronic book has aided the student's acquisition of English. Twelve percent of respondents were agnostic. Forty percent picked "agree," and 48 picked "strongly agree." When asked whether or not they felt that this digital textbook helped them learn English. Furthermore, the questionnaire results were validated by the following interview questions:

Has his digital book (with multiple choices) helped you grasp the text's main idea? Did This digital book help you find the keywords in detail? Is This digital textbook facilitating your English Learning in reading class? Explain!

Based on the results of the interview, it was found that 4 out of 6 interviewees said that digital books for learning English immensely helped them. For example, Aysel said, "with digital books, I can increase my English vocabulary from important information obtained in reading material. For example, if there are words that I do not understand, I will copy and then look up the meaning of the words in a digital dictionary so that my vocabulary increases." Furthermore, Andi said, "digital books given with multiple choices are effective in learning English in this subject namely reading comprehension, but when it comes to longer readings, I prefer to use the printed version of the book."

5. Discussion

5.1 Students' Past Experience

The discussion around digital textbooks reveals a significant trend: students are not only familiar with but are also extensively using digital readers, indicating their entrenched role in modern education. A noteworthy 92% of students prefer mobile phones for reading digital books over traditional computers, highlighting the shift towards mobile learning. This preference underscores the demand for educational resources that are compatible with the on-the-go lifestyle of contemporary students.

The data reflects a move towards universal access to digital reading, with mobile devices emerging as the primary medium for engagement with educational content. This trend is shaping the development of digital textbooks and the strategies educators must adopt to meet the evolving needs of their students. The clear preference for mobile phones points to the necessity for educational materials to be not only mobile-friendly but also user-friendly, ensuring that learning can happen anytime and anywhere(Lepp et al., 2015; Mohammadi et al., 2020) .

Such findings signal a crucial direction for the future of educational content delivery, emphasizing the need for adaptability in both design and functionality to align with the prevalent use of mobile technology in education.

5.2 The Usefulness of Digital Book

The survey on digital textbook functionalities reveals a mixed engagement among students. While nearly half of the participants appreciate the highlighting feature, a significant portion remains indifferent or unaware of this functionality. This points towards a potential disconnect between the availability of digital tools and their actual use or visibility to students.

Readability within digital textbooks appears to be a strong suit, with 80% of students satisfied with the font size and typeface, indicating that these critical design elements are meeting the needs of most users. However, the note-taking feature seems underutilized, with most students not actively engaging with this function, which suggests that note-taking habits may still be anchored in traditional methods or that students might not be fully cognizant of the digital options at their disposal.

Overall satisfaction with digital textbook functions is high, with 84% of respondents expressing contentment. This reflects a generally positive reception of the role of digital textbooks in supporting educational objectives.

However, the interviews indicate that awareness and utilization of digital textbook features like highlighting and note-taking are not as widespread as one might expect(Wang & Bai, 2016). The lack of familiarity with these features suggests that there are barriers to practical use, whether due to a lack of training on using these tools or technological constraints, such as those encountered when using mobile devices (Kont & Piirsalu, 2021).

To conclude, the data suggests a positive reception to the core functions of digital textbooks but also underscores the need for improved outreach and education on the full range of functionalities these digital resources offer. Lecturers need to ensure their students know how to make the most of the digital book features available, similar to how we highlight text in traditional textbooks. Addressing these gaps can lead to enhanced student interaction with digital textbooks, potentially enriching the learning experience

5.3 Students' preferences (Digital book vs Printed Book)

In response to the research question about students' perceptions of the use of print textbooks versus digital textbooks, students' self-reports indicated that digital books are popular among EFL learners. The current study provided our participants with equal time to read and learn using both text media, allowing us to compare the benefits and drawbacks of digital and print textbooks. The end-of-semester questionnaire revealed that, while most participants were experienced digital readers and were generally receptive to digital books, they did prefer to read digitally. Still, some prefer to choose the printed book but not a significant number. The findings corroborated (Nopiyanti et al., 2019; Verkijika, 2019). Despite having the same note-taking and highlighting capabilities as print books, roughly preferred traditional paper textbooks.

According to the results of this study, some students believed that having access to digital textbooks in the classroom was problematic because not every student had the appropriate reading materials, which might have affected their choice to utilize e-textbooks. Furthermore, the teacher cannot guarantee that every student can access a digital reader in Indonesian universities. Thus, the type of information technology utilization may differ depending on the socio-economic position. Because of this, the relationship between the outcomes and preference for digital reading may depend on several situations, such as how much exposure kids have to digital readers (Verkijika, 2019).

The research also revealed that some students still prefer traditional study methods, such as printing out a book, marking it up with sticky notes and highlighters, and even using paper to jot down notes. In addition, the presence of distracting items on the screen can make it difficult to concentrate on the text; switching between different programs or browsing the internet can cause the reader to become sidetracked from the primary text, and the brightness of the screen can cause eyes to become tired and cause headaches. It is in line with the research from (Solak, 2014), who claimed that the effects of staring at a computer screen could be both tiring and irritating, which prevents readers from making effective use of reading strategies

Furthermore, Due to the online nature of the learning process, it may be challenging to convince those who have relied on the printed version of the book in learning English for a long time to switch to the electronic book, despite their increased familiarity with electronic books during the outbreak of coronaviruses. While some students may grow accustomed to carrying tablets that enable them to take notes simultaneously, others still enjoy the physical feel of reading a paper book. This was in line with the argument (Mangen et al., 2013) that reading print materials requires different physical movements and tactile experiences than reading digital ones. In addition, print books offer more kinesthetic feedback, giving readers the impression that they can quickly pinpoint events within the text.

5.4 Digital Book in English Learning in Reading Class

The integration of digital books in English learning, particularly in reading classes, has been a subject of interest and debate. The data from the questionnaire and subsequent interviews offer a multifaceted view of this educational tool's impact on students' learning experiences.

From the survey, a substantial number of students report that digital books have positively affected their understanding of English texts. With over 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that digital books facilitate comprehension, it's clear that the interactive nature of digital media plays a pivotal role in their learning. The ability to instantly look up unfamiliar words and engage with the text in a more dynamic way appears to be a decisive factor for many.

The efficacy of digital books in keyword identification is slightly less pronounced but still significant, with 64% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing on their usefulness in this aspect. The ability to search for terms within the text and to focus on critical vocabulary seems to have resonated well with the students, suggesting that digital books may serve as a powerful tool for building vocabulary and enhancing reading skills (Su, 2022).

When it comes to the overall contribution of digital books to learning English, the response is overwhelmingly positive, with 88% of participants concurring that these resources have aided their acquisition of the language. This suggests that digital books are more than just a convenience; they are an active contributor to the learning process (Amirtharaj et al., 2023).

It's worth noting that the preference for printed materials in certain contexts does not diminish the overall value of digital books; instead, it highlights the need for a balanced approach to reading materials in educational settings. The versatility of digital books is evident, but there remains an irreplaceable quality to printed texts that some students find crucial for deeper engagement with longer materials.

In conclusion, the data present a strong case for the inclusion of digital books in English learning environments, especially in reading classes. They have proven to be an influential factor in improving students' language comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall engagement with the learning material. Nonetheless, the preference for printed books in specific scenarios also speaks to the importance of a diversified approach to reading resources, catering to different learning styles and preferences.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is articulated through a multi-faceted lens, examining students' experiences and perceptions of digital versus printed books, particularly in the context of English learning. The study reveals a robust familiarity with digital readers among students. It is observed that a vast majority have engaged with digital books through computers or tablets (84%), while an even higher percentage (92%) routinely utilizes mobile phones for reading purposes.

The utility of digital books' features, such as highlighting, although beneficial, has not been fully embraced, with only 48% of students leveraging this functionality. This suggests a potential area for educational development in familiarizing students with the full suite of digital tools available. Conversely, the readability of digital texts is widely recognized, with 80% of students affirming the ease of reading due to the adaptable font size. Notably, the practice of taking notes directly on digital books has not been widely adopted, indicated by the mere 28% of students utilizing this feature. Interview findings attribute this to a lack of awareness or proficiency in using these digital functions. Nevertheless, the overarching satisfaction with the digital book's functionalities is high, with 84% of participants expressing contentment.

When comparing digital and printed books, a substantial 64% of students exhibit a preference for digital editions, and 76% acknowledge the efficiency of digital books in facilitating the search for important information. However, interview insights reveal a persistent affinity for printed books among some participants, suggesting a nuanced preference landscape.

The study further investigates the impact of digital books on English language acquisition. A majority of students recognize digital books as instrumental in grasping the main ideas of texts, with over 50% agreement. The ability to identify keywords is enhanced through digital mediums, as evidenced by the 64% agreement among participants. Crucially, an impressive 88% of

students concur that digital textbooks have facilitated their English learning, underscoring the efficacy of digital books in enriching vocabulary, especially within the reading curriculum.

Notwithstanding these insights, the study acknowledges its limitations due the study did not explore the correlation between reading comprehension outcomes and student preferences for digital book usage, presenting an opportunity for subsequent research endeavors. Future investigations could also extend to evaluating student attitudes or perceptions regarding the use of digital versus paper books across other language domains, such as writing, listening, and speaking skills. The current study's conclusions offer a foundation for further inquiry aimed at enhancing a range of linguistic competencies beyond reading.

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