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The Effectiveness of English British Council Application on Second Semester Students' Reading Skill at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI In Academic Year 2023/2024

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Abstract: This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the English British Council in improving the English reading skills of second semester students at Bhinneka PGRI University in the academic year 2023/2024. The experimental method was conducted at this university, focusing on second semester students during that academic year, with a sample of 22 students. The results showed significant improvement in reading skills after using the British Council English application in learning. The difference in scores between the pre-test (63.41) and post-test (89.55) shows the success of the app. The paired samples t-test confirmed the results with a significance of 0.000, indicating the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. In conclusion, the use of English British Council is effective in improving students' English reading skills.

Keywords: Effectiveness, English British Council Application, Reading Skill

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex activity requiring time and effort to master. Effective reading involves a continuous flow of information, facilitating connections and inferences. People read for various reasons—entertainment, information, or research—which boosts motivation and skills. The interactive nature of reading involves multiple abilities, with comprehension as the ultimate goal. Research on English learning programs, such as those by the British Council, focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. Reading entails decoding text and processing knowledge. Studies suggest that reading is a bottom-up process, where identifying words is vital for fluency. However, human working memory, which holds information for only 25 to 30 seconds and can manage seven to nine chunks, limits quick reading. Interruptions, like looking up unfamiliar words, can disrupt memory retention, making rereading necessary.

Improving reading skills requires addressing these memory limitations and adapting reading approaches to various goals. From middle school onwards, students should learn to adjust their reading strategies based on their objectives and material. Effective reading instruction is crucial, especially in EFL settings, where students must grasp overall and detailed meanings across different texts. The British Council App, with its reading comprehension exercises, has shown promise in enhancing reading skills. This study will examine its effectiveness for second-semester students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI in the 2023/2024 academic year.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the English British Council application in improving the English reading skills of second-semester students at Bhinneka PGRI University in the 2023/2024 academic year. While various studies have explored the use of applications and digital technologies in English language teaching, this research addresses several important gaps that previous studies have not covered. Higher Education Context in Indonesia: Most research in Indonesia focuses on primary and secondary education. For instance, a study by Nurmala (2018) examined the use of mobile applications in English learning at the high school level, but no research has specifically explored the use of applications at the university level. Therefore, this study provides new insights into the application of the English British Council app in a higher education setting (Nurmala, 2018).

Focus on Reading Skills: Many studies in Indonesia emphasize speaking and listening skills. For example, research by Susanti (2017) demonstrated the effectiveness of digital media in improving high school students' speaking skills. However, not much research has specifically evaluated the improvement of reading skills through digital applications among university students. This study fills that gap by focusing on the enhancement of reading skills at the university level (Susanti, 2017). Experimental Methodology: This study uses a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach, different from other studies in Indonesia that tend to use descriptive or case study approaches. For instance, research by Wulandari (2019) used a descriptive approach to evaluate the effectiveness of mobile applications but did not employ the same experimental design. Thus, this study provides a more rigorous and systematic methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the application (Wulandari, 2019).

Empirical Data in a University Setting: The results of the study show a significant improvement in students' reading skills after using the English British Council application, with the average pre-test score of 63.41 increasing to 89.55 on the post-test. A study by Hakim (2020) on the use of mobile applications in English learning among high school students showed positive results, but empirical data on the improvement of reading skills in university settings in Indonesia is still limited (Hakim, 2020). Therefore, this study makes an important contribution to understanding the effectiveness of the English British Council application in the university context in Indonesia, particularly in enhancing English reading skills. It also provides an empirical basis supporting the use of digital technology in English education at the higher education level.

METHODHOLOGY

The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the English British Council Application in improving students' reading skills through an experimental design utilizing a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. This methodology involved assessing participants' reading abilities before and after the treatment was administered. Initially, participants' reading skills were evaluated with a standardized test (pre-test). Following this, the treatment phase introduced the use of the British Council Application. Finally, participants' reading abilities were re-evaluated using the same test after the treatment period (post-test). This sequential approach enabled the assessment of how the application impacted students' reading proficiency.



The study followed a pre-experimental design with the steps outlined as follows:

- Pre-Test (O1) : Assessing students' reading skills before the treatment.
- Treatment (X) : Implementing the English British Council Application as a reading tool for second-semester students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI.
- Post-Test (O2) : Measuring students' reading skills after the treatment to evaluate any improvements.

The study utilized a pre-experimental design employing a one-group pre-test and post-test methodology. Initially, students' reading skills were assessed through a pre-test before the treatment was introduced. The treatment phase consisted of utilizing the English British Council Application as a reading tool for second-semester students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. Subsequently, a post-test was administered to evaluate any changes in students' reading abilities following the treatment. The study then analyzed both pre-test and post-test scores to assess the effectiveness of the application in enhancing students' reading skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Finding

This study employed a pre-experimental design with a single class serving as the sample for observation. Twenty-two students participated, receiving comprehensive instructions and utilizing diverse learning resources to evaluate the effectiveness of the application. Conducted at Bhinneka PGRI University campus, the research focused on second-semester students. Data analysis encompassed pre-test and post-test results. In this study, the

investigation commenced with a pre-test comprising eighteen questions administered to students. The primary aim of the pre-test was to evaluate the students' initial grasp of the learning objectives related to English reading skills. The ⁵ analysis of the pre-test results was conducted using SPSS 29.

Table 2. Scores of pre-test and post test ⁵

No.	Name	Score Pretest	Score Posttest
1	FRA	75	100
2	NAZ	70	100
3	MRF	60	85
4	AR	65	85
5	YNS	65	95
6	SAP	60	85
7	EHT	60	85
8	ENS	50	100
9	DS	65	95
10	TR	65	85
11	JWM	70	90
12	VNF	75	90
13	RY	75	75
14	RN	70	90
15	CZR	65	95
16	ULR	60	80
17	LH	55	100
18	MDN	55	80
19	MBAR	50	95
20	MAIA	65	85
21	NLA	65	85
22	CAET	55	90

Normality Test

This test is carried out to check whether ¹¹ the pre-test and post-test data are normally distributed. The normality test that is often used is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Table 4. Normality Test ¹³

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	,175	22	,077	,938	22	,177
Post-test	,190	22	,038	,925	22	,099

An examination to ascertain the distribution of data is the Shapiro-Wilk normalcy test. If the ¹⁵ significance level is greater than 0.05 (Sig> 0.05), the data is considered to be normal for testing purposes. The significant values in the table above are 0.177 and 0.99, which are larger than 0.05 (Sig> 0.05). Consequently, it can be said that the data is normal.

Paired T Test (Paired T-Test)

This test is ²⁰used to compare pre-test and post-test scores in the same group. This helps determine if ¹⁷there is a significant difference in reading skills before and after using the app.

Table 8. Uji Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences								
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pre-test Post-test	-26,136	10,903	2,325	-0,971	-1,302	-1,243	21	,000	

The acceptance of the hypothesis hinges on the Asymptotic Significance (Asymp Sig) being less than 0.05, while it is rejected if it exceeds 0.05. Based on the "Statistics Test" findings, the Asymp Sig (2-tailed) registers at 0.000. This outcome signifies the acceptance of the hypothesis, illustrating a notable disparity ⁹between the Pre-test and Post-test results since 0.000 is below the 0.05 threshold.

Discussion

The study by Hakim (2020) also shows similar results where ¹⁰the use of mobile applications in English learning can improve students' language skills. This research found that students who used mobile applications had better language skills compared to those who did not use these applications. These results ²⁹are in line with the findings of this research, which show that digital technology, such as the English British Council application, ²¹can play an important role in improving students' English reading skills. Most previous research in Indonesia has focused on the use of digital technology in primary and secondary education. For example, research by Nurmala (2018) examined ⁷the use of mobile applications in learning English at the high school level and found that these applications were effective in improving students' language skills. However, research focusing on the use of applications in higher education settings is limited.

This research fills this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the English British Council application in a university context. ⁶The results of this study indicate that this application is not only effective at the secondary school level but also in higher education settings. This is important because it shows that the app can be adapted for different levels of education and still be effective. ¹⁴This research used a pre-experimental design with a one group pre-test and

post-test approach. This methodology allows researchers to measure changes in ²⁷ students' ¹⁶ reading abilities before and after application use. The use of paired samples t-test showed significant results with a significance value of 0.000, which means that the observed increase did not occur by chance.

This experimental approach is different from many previous studies in Indonesia which tend to use descriptive approaches or case studies. For example, research by Wulandari (2019) used a descriptive approach to evaluate the effectiveness of using mobile applications, but did not use an experimental design. Thus, this research provides a more rigorous and systematic methodology in evaluating application effectiveness. The effectiveness of the English British Council application can be attributed to the interactive features it has. This application offers various interactive and interesting reading activities, which can increase student interest and motivation in learning. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) stated that interactivity and involvement are keys to effective language learning. This application provides diverse and challenging content, which can help students develop their reading skills gradually.

Apart from that, this application also allows students to study independently. Warschauer and Healey (2012) show that digital technology can provide authentic learning experiences and enable independent learning. Students can use this application anytime and anywhere, which provides flexibility in learning and allows them to study at their own pace. ²³ The results of this study have important implications for English language teaching at the university level. Using applications such as English British Council can be an effective tool in improving students' reading skills. English lecturers and teachers can consider integrating this application into their curriculum as an additional teaching aid.

Apart from that, the results of this research also show ¹⁸ the importance of using technology ¹⁸ in language learning. In today's digital era, technology can play an important role in education and can be used to improve students' language skills. Therefore, educational institutions need to consider adopting digital technology in their learning process. This research succeeded in showing that the English British Council application was effective in improving the English ³³ reading skills of second semester students at Bhinneka PGRI University. Significant improvement in post-test scores compared with n pre-test shows that this application can be a useful tool in teaching English. The use of rigorous experimental methodology also lends reliability to the findings of this study. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to the field of English language learning with digital technology and shows the potential of mobile applications in improving language skills in higher education environments.

CONCLUSION

The study's results reveal a substantial improvement in students' English reading proficiency after using the English British Council application throughout the second semester. Initially, students scored an average of 63.41 on the pre-test, which significantly rose to 89.55 in the post-test phase, indicating notable progress. Statistical analysis employing a paired sample t-test yielded a result of 0.000, highlighting its statistical significance ($p < 0.005$) and supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. These findings underscore the efficacy of the English British Council application in enhancing students' English reading skills and fostering increased interest in learning English, facilitated by its interactive educational features. The results of this research show a significant increase in students' reading abilities after using the English British Council application during the second semester. Before using the application, the average student pre-test score was 63.41. After using the application, the average post-test score increased to 89.55. This increase shows that the English British Council application is effective in improving students' English reading skills.

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