

The Impact of 'WEBTOON' as a Digital Reading Tool for EFL High School Students

El impacto de "WEBTOON" como herramienta de lectura digital para estudiantes de secundaria de EFL

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ABSTRACT

After the pandemic, a palpable learning loss in the classrooms was left while more technological learners and teachers were born. It has led us to seek digital strategies to keep students engaged in the classrooms and one of these is the use of Webtoon. It has been widely gaining attention for its simple but fun interface in the generation Z, besides having different genres, themes, and panels with drawings that can engage users to keep reading in their leisure time. In the following qualitative study, the perspectives of high school students from UEPSMA (Unidad Educativa Particular Salesianas María Auxiliadora) in Cuenca were analyzed. Using three action research cycles with a qualitative method, they engaged in three pop quizzes and a final Google Forms survey at the end of the third. Results showed that students found Webtoon's illustrations and vocabulary satisfying, and they continued reading because of the plot and the illustrations. Their open-ended questions also highlighted how content the majority were at using a digital reading tool in the classroom, boosting their English reading motivation.

Keywords: Webtoon; pandemic technology; digital education.

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RESUMEN

Después de la pandemia, una pérdida palpable de aprendizaje en las aulas fue notoria, mientras nacieron más estudiantes y docentes tecnológicos. Esto nos ha llevado a buscar estrategias digitales para mantener interesados a estudiantes en las aulas clase y una de ellas es el uso de Webtoon. Este ha ido ganando mucha atención en la generación Z por su interfaz divertida y sencilla, además de tener diferentes géneros, temáticas y paneles con dibujos que pueden incitar a los usuarios a seguir leyendo en su tiempo libre. En el siguiente estudio cualitativo, se analizaron las perspectivas de las estudiantes de la secundaria UEPSMA (Unidad Educativa Particular Salesiana María Auxiliadora) de Cuenca. Utilizando tres ciclos de investigación-acción con un método cualitativo, ellas participaron en tres pruebas sorpresa y una encuesta final de Google Forms al final del tercer ciclo. Los resultados mostraron que las estudiantes encontraron satisfactorias las ilustraciones y el vocabulario de Webtoon, y continuaron leyendo gracias a la trama y las ilustraciones del mismo. Además, sus respuestas de las preguntas abiertas resaltaron qué tan contentas estaban la mayoría al usar una herramienta de lectura digital en el aula, lo que aumentó su motivación para la lectura en inglés.

Palabras clave: Webtoon; tecnología pandemia; educación digital.

Introduction

At the beginning of the 2022-2023 scholar year in UEPSMA, it was noticed that some students had lost interest in learning English in the pandemic. They mentioned that back at that time, they did not understand anything because of their internet connection or because they were focused on their household environment more than in their studies. Last school year, 2021-2022, they were still half a year in online classes and the other half physically, which continued their hazardous shared feeling of uninterest for English learning and learning loss in general. Even in the Netherlands, which was a country with a relatively short lockdown, students performed lower in their national examinations according to a quantitative analysis (Engzell et al., 2021).

Going back to our school context, students' four main English skills, speaking, writing, reading, and listening, were assessed in a diagnostic test. It threw some light on how much their English level had deteriorated, not having enough reading motivation, and speaking confidence. The necessity to address these issues was paramount. According to UNESCO (2020), proper communication is one key element to understand students' needs and that is what was applied. Two main concerns were given by the students in a tête-à-tête with the teacher. Most of them felt like they just needed to talk more in English, meaning their speaking confidence had a manageable solution; however, their second concern involved reading motivation. Students stated they despised reading in a conventional way because it was *boring*.

By this time, students were learning the format of the Use of English part 3 of the B2 First Cambridge examination. They practiced in lessons of affixes and parts of speech previously; however, the majority scored under 4 points out of 8. They were asked in a survey why they thought this happened and the majority agreed, once again, they did not read in English and therefore, they did not have enough vocabulary. By this time, Webtoon was already used by the researcher as a leisure reading application, resulting in an emerging doubt; would the application prove useful to increase students' English knowledge and their reading motivation since each chapter of a story takes no longer than 10 or 15 minutes to finish and it has drawings?

Another relevant issue is students' type of intelligence. At the beginning of this 2022-2023 school year, the tutor assessed the students' intelligences, concluding that most had an auditory and visual intelligence. Since students were assessed on speaking after it, part of their reasons to state why some hated reading in English was because they did not have enough visual aids. Therefore, they were eager to combine our current face-to-face education with parts of their pandemic learning in spite of not liking virtual classes. Even if we try to deny it, the pandemic made people more technologically dependent and digital migration was a must (Nguyen, et al., 2020).

Post Pandemic Education

Teaching English in an EFL context after the pandemic has been completely challenging for most teachers who were just getting adjusted to the online life and then had to come back to physical classrooms (Radina, & Balakina, 2021). Not only teachers were affected by this drawback, but also students. Learning loss has been noticed and there is the need to mitigate it (Kaffenberger, 2021). In UEPSMA, this negative impact was seen in almost all the English main skills, but predominantly in use of English and reading comprehension.

The use of digital tools in the classroom has become indispensable because people in general got accustomed to technology in the pandemic and that cannot be avoided. It even affected the way some students perceive traditional reading and physical books. Thanks to that, Kindle, an e-reader, has become a well-known choice for those who seek online books and positive results have been thrown regarding the reading format (Connell, Bayliss, & Farmer, 2012). Notwithstanding, this e-reader would function only for those who like to read already, but about those who started to despise it or changed preferences in the pandemic?

Examination

As UESPMA offers a curriculum that includes taking the Cambridge B2 First Examination in the senior year, it is imperative that students have previous knowledge about the format of the exam, practice it, and are aware of what will happen the day of the exam. As a matter of fact, they also need to consider that for them to sit for the examination, the most pertinent sub skill to master is vocabulary since it is considered the core for mastering the other English skills (Syafrizal & Haerudin, 2018). According to Wallace (2007), building vocabulary is a main component of reading and it is closely related to reading extensively, but how can students develop it if they have lost the interest of learning English and reading in English?

Luckily, UESPMA's high school students realized they need to practice more English regarding vocabulary and reading, and to change their reading motivation, but in a non-traditional way. They already tried with B2 readings and webpages, but the majority mentioned that they did not feel engaged completely, especially when it comes to the visual intelligence they possess. That is why a solution for it was sought, proposing Webtoon as a digital reading tool to use in the classroom.

Webtoon in the EFL Class

Learners in our school context have mentioned the pandemic affected them a lot and that they did not like to be obligated to read one book per year. This is when Webtoon takes place in the current study. It lets users choose the story they want based on the genre and theme they prefer. Since episodes are not considered to have more than a 10-minute reading period, they can be tracked by the teacher in class. Besides that, stories are presented in a comic format with vertical panels, making its drawings and onomatopoeias help readers understand the plot more (Novanti, & Suprayogi, 2021). As a plus, it offers language translations from Korean to more than 30 available languages, such as: Chinese, English, and Spanish. Even though it was created by an Asian company, it has expanded all around the world and lots of people use it as part of their leisure time. Having achieved worldwide fame, its stories are even adapted into soap operas (Jang, & Song, 2017).

To show the change Webtoon can bring into the classroom, several studies have demonstrated positive results of using it. They were related to vocabulary, reading comprehension and even to increasing teachers' creativity. As for vocabulary, findings positively proved that students were capable of creating new words after using the visual cues and dialogues Webtoon offers. The researchers used a Google Forms survey to collect data from 48 English students, who had used Webtoon in the last 6 months. Some users pointed out the free access, simple layout, and clear illustrations as helpful features from Webtoon. Besides, 6 teachers who used Webtoon as part of their curriculum were interviewed (Novanty, & Suprayogy, 2021).

If the objective is to increase vocabulary, we cannot ignore the fact that students need to read and that is how Webtoon was proven beneficial once more. Nowadays, reading comprehension is a skill hard to master because of the use of technology. More students prefer reading on their phones, and that is how 35 university students responded mostly 'strongly agree', 51%, and 'agree', 46%, in a Likert-scale questionnaire that assessed the attractiveness Webtoon could offer for reading activities (Ali, & Emirati, 2021). They were selected randomly at the second semester of Bulukumba Muhammadiyah university and instructed on how Webtoon works, the installation and run process, and how to select the themes and genres they wanted to read. Their positive results in the Liker scale were mentioned to be directly related to the presence of online comics, digital-based learning, and once again, the simplicity of the application received lots of praise.

At the same time, Erya and Pustika (2021), surveyed 50 Teknocrat Indonesia University students about the usefulness Webtoon provides to reading comprehension and motivation. They used a qualitative questionnaire containing 7 questions and scales 'agree' to 'disagree'. Most answers were higher than 70%, corroborating the positiveness Webtoon offers to reading comprehension and reading motivation. Finally, we also need to take into account that for Webtoon to be used in class, teachers need to feel it is a practical learning tool (Setialis et al., 2018). Consequently,

three teachers and 37 students were involved in mix-method research, whose findings proved that Webtoon was considered refreshing. Teachers stated that Webtoon was also useful for writing if their illustrations are used for cooperating learning, and retelling stories. As for students, their Likert-scale responses were mostly positive towards Webtoon helping their reading motivation, vocabulary improvement, interesting stories, writing improvement, and so on.

Unluckily, none of the studies mentioned previously was carried out in Latin America, meaning that results in our context could vary. Also, we will not only focus on reading motivation, but also on improving any English skills if it is mentioned by the students. We want to know to what extent Webtoon could affect EFL students' perceptions towards learning English and if it could increase their reading motivation.

Furthermore, based on the results, authorities in UEPSMA may consider the use of electronic reading applications for engaging students to read more in English and improve the target language in general. This is the final aim of this investigation; to normalize the use of more digital tools for reading and not to stick with physical ones only. Nowadays, only physical books are not enough for some learners, who spent nearly two years locked in their rooms learning in front of a computer or digital device.

Affixation

Considering the learners' affixation lessons, they were being taught at the time of this study, and the three AR cycles that used pop quizzes at the end of each, affixation could be mentioned as part of students' answers in the Google Forms survey and results in their pop quizzes could prove Webtoon helps them improve it. Even though studies on practicing word formation with Webtoon were null at this point, a researcher analyzed beauty terms that could be found in the Webtoon 'True Beauty' (Sa'adah, 2023). She wanted to prove that webtoons can help word formation in different settings. Words related to the term beauty were divided into 6 categories, the most prevalent compounding, and even some were not found in conventional dictionaries, such as Cambridge or Oxford, meaning that 'True Beauty' uses innovative vocabulary and goes according to the story from the author's perspective. An interesting finding mentioned that affixation occurred mostly with technological terms.

In our school context, students used Webtoon to read and extract words that they did not understand, found new or just found interesting. They needed to form a glossary of 40 words at the end of the school year, but each word with its corresponding prefixes and suffixes that they could find online. It is noteworthy to mention that before this process, students had one month of practice of affixes and worked on several examples as well. What could prove exciting in this research is if students improved their knowledge of affixes after using Webtoon.

In summary, this paper will answer the two following questions:

- What are EFL high school students' perceptions towards using WEBTOON as a tool in the classroom?
- To what extent does WEBTOON influence reading motivation among EFL students?

The objectives of the following study answer to the two questions listed previously:

General Objective

- To determine the effect of Webtoon as an online reading tool on EFL high school students.

Specific Objectives

- To interpret EFL students' perceptions towards using Webtoon as a digital tool in the classroom.
- To identify how Webtoon influences reading motivation among EFL students.

Instruments and Methods

Instruments

The instruments this study used were; class observations, Use of English pop-quizzes, Webtoon glossaries, check-out surveys, and a final survey.

Class observations

The teacher's online notes from her phone were used to jot down relevant reactions, attitudes, or questions that students did or asked during the session each week. Some reactions demonstrated; engagement when students were taken to the laboratory to read online, puzzlement when they found the computer and phone version of Webtoon drastically varied, and different positive and negative emotions according to the stories they were reading. Joyful screams when their favorite characters kissed or fought, the class screaming *Nooooo!* when the bell rang and the hour was finished, nervous laughter if they found scenes or vocabulary that involved romantic scenes, and more were some of the emotions recorded by the teacher.

Use of English pop-quizzes

To complement the lessons, they were having about affixes at the time of the research, it was considered necessary for students to be assessed each week by a Use of English pop-quiz weekly. After four pop quizzes, the fifth was graded due to the necessity of having grades in their school year. Each graded pop quiz means the end of an AR cycle; therefore, 3 cycles.

Webtoon Glossaries

After the pop quizzes scores in the first AR cycle, it was considered that students could perform better if they kept track of the new vocabulary words they were learning in each session. In their notebooks, they needed to jot down new words they found in the chosen Webtoon stories. To widen their knowledge, they were instructed to look for affixes of those words in the last 20 minutes of the class. This instrument was used only in the second and the third AR cycles.

Check-out surveys

After each WEBTOON reading session, students took a 5-minute check-out survey to answer questions related to what the plot was about and what they were reading. It served to record their stories' progress so that students would not get distracted doing other activities during their reading time.

Final Survey

Finally, a Google Forms survey was used at the end of the school year for students to give their perceptions about Webtoon in the classroom. It contained Likert scale items and open-ended questions. The Likert scale items used the options totally agree to totally disagree in their perspective of Webtoon as a digital tool, and very satisfied to very unsatisfied for the application interface. The open-ended questions permitted us to analyze their view on Webtoon as a concept, their first impression, and any additional comments they would like to mention.

Survey Pilot Stage

It is relevant to mention that the qualitative survey was already piloted in three different stages; feedback from the Masters' classmates, coworkers' feedback and answers, and a university student feedback and response. In the first stage feedback, an open-ended question changed its format from open-ended to yes/no since it only involved the answer of students wanting to use the tool again. In the second stage, four coworkers took the test after checking the platform WEBTOON for 10 minutes. Thanks to the feedback of one participant, relevant words were bolded to avoid confusion in certain questions. The other three agreed the questions were well-phrased.

The third and final stage included an English-B1-university student who took the survey. He had previous exposure to WEBTOON as a leisure activity, meaning he could collaborate with the survey content. Once finishing, he mentioned the questions were readable and easy to answer. A positive aspect that was stated by the three parties was time; they said the instrument could be completed in less than 10 minutes, making it feasible for junior high school students who prefer to have shorter surveys.

The final pilot version of the survey remained with the same number of questions, which is 7, based on the feedback of the three stages. They focused on; first impression (1 item), students' definition (1 item), interface (7 sub-items), reading tool (6 sub-items), consecutive use (1 item) and additional comments from students (one item).

Method

The need to apply a qualitative Action Research design with a final Google Forms survey in the third AR cycle was seen. In the online survey, students answered questions regarding their first and final perceptions after using WEBTOON in class. The type of questions included open-ended items to understand their personal insights and Likert-scale items to understand their level of agreement with certain parameters. Besides this final survey, class observations, Webtoon's vocabulary glossaries, check-out surveys, and Use of English part 3 pop-quizzes were used in each cycle.

As we are looking to examine students' lack of English knowledge and reading motivation, the procedure of this paper was based on three action research cycles in the following order: Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection (Burns, 2010). The AR cycle was adapted to our 2022-2023 high school context since the phases it follows vary according to the context and the practitioner (McNiff, 2013). In the first cycle, the planning section issued students' lack of reading comprehension and low English skills, in the action phase class observations while they used Webtoon, a check-out survey, and a pop-quiz were applied. They were followed by the observation phase in which the analysis took place. Finally, in the reflection phase, the experience was reflected on by changing the planning and making students work in pairs for the second cycle.

In the second AR cycle, the planning phase issued students' low scores in their pop quiz. The action phase included more sessions of Webtoon plus class annotations by the teacher, students started writing a glossary of unknown words for them and investigating their affixes, a check-out survey and a pop-quiz in pairs. In the observation phase their pop quizzes were analyzed. In the reflection phase, this experience in pairs was modified one more time to see if students could perform better alone.

In the last AR cycle, the action phase took into account the students' lack of vocabulary as the main issue and their scores at the pop-quizzes even though they were already using more advanced words when speaking. The action phase included the last session of Webtoon in the laboratory, the glossary they built for the teacher to consider words repeated among most students, a class observation by the teacher, a check-out survey, and the final individual pop-quiz. Since it was the last cycle, the phase that was used at the end was the reflection one, which concluded with a Google Forms survey to analyze the students' experience with the digital reading tool.

Based on the short amount of time that was provided for this research, three cycles were found to be sufficient enough to analyze this study's intentions.

Participants

It was planned that 92 female 16-year-old junior high school students from 'UEPSMA' (Unidad Educativa Particular Maria Auxiliadora) participate in the study. However, one excluding criteria was applied since they are minors; if their parents' permissions were not brought because of different matters, they would not participate in the investigation. At the end, 89 responses were taken into consideration for the Google Forms survey and 92 for the pop quizzes analysis.

Results

Data Analysis

A personal finding that I wanted to notice was whether Webtoon could be related to the students' current affixes knowledge. For this, students took three pop quizzes that represented the end of each AR cycle, whose results are listed below.

Pop quizzes

Table 1. Students' AR Cycles Pop Quizzes Results.

AR Cycle Pop Quiz	Class		
	A	B	C
First	6.89	6.81	4.52
Second	7.4	8.84	7.91
Third	6.45	6.67	5.36
Total	6.91333333	7.44	5.93

Note: 92 responses were collected per pop quiz because all parents agreed to it; in total 148 tests were analyzed for the table. The grades are out of 10 points in total.

From Table 1, it can be seen that students did not really show a significant improvement in their affixes pop quizzes after they started using Webtoon even though the difficulty level was modified according to each performance. Although the second and the third pop quiz were created with word gap spaces they checked in class and the most common ones on Webtoon, we can see that the total grade did not surpass 8 out of 10. A reason for this could be because students had the free will to choose any Webtoon they wanted to read, meaning that probably some of the Webtoons did not contain the words that were part of the pop quizzes. An intriguing finding goes to the second pop quiz, whose modification in the lesson included working in pairs due to the drastic low grades of the first. Even in pairs, the highest class performed an 8.84 out of 10.

Survey

The Google Forms survey responses were divided into two categories for better organization. The first, ‘perceptions’, answers to the first paper’s question, what are EFL high school students’ perceptions towards using Webtoon as a tool in the classroom? Table 2 describes the first impression students had after using Webtoon. Tables 3, 4, and 5 talk about the final perceptions users had. The second category, ‘motivation’, responds to the second question of this research, to what extent does Webtoon influence reading motivation among EFL students? Table 6 guides us through the number of stories students read, table 7 will tell us the level of agreement students felt towards certain characteristics of Webtoon, and table 8 will state the students who wish to use Webtoon for future classes.

Perceptions

Table 2. Students’ First Webtoon Perspectives.

Question	Positive	Neutral	Comparison				Negative		
			Phy- sical Books	Watt -pad	Rea- -ding Apps	Bo- -ring	Diffi- -cult	Dis- -like	Others
What was your first impression of the app WEBTOON when you first used it in class?	43	13	1	3	1	12	5	5	6

Note: 89 responses were collected from junior high school students. Due to the length of the table, some terms are separated using hyphens.

In table 2, 89 open-ended responses were coded into 4 categories. A positive first impression of students when they used Webtoon in the class is displayed with 43 responses. Some comments included key words: intriguing, eye-catching, easy layout, fun way to read. As for a neutral position, 13 students mentioned Webtoon was: confusing because I already used it outside class, no expectations, I don't like anime so I don't know how the stories will be. The latter was puzzling since Webtoon illustrations are usually related to Japanese animation, anime, although artists are from different parts of Asia or even America. It could cause a bias for users who are accustomed to another animation style.

An attractive category, comparison, was created because these 5 answers did not really take a position; but rather they mentioned other digital applications, such as Wattpad, or they mentioned they preferred physical books as far as that lesson went on. The last first impression student had was negative which was the second finding of this table, with 28 students voting for that. Most mentioned the following key words: boring, difficult to use, and dislike.

Table 3. Students' Final Webtoon Perspectives.

Question	Key Words			
	Usefulness for improving English	Extra Reading Features Support	English Reading Motivator	Others
After reading on WEBTOON in class, how would you describe this application to others?	16	16	43	14

Note: 89 responses were collected in total.

In Table 3, it can be witnessed that from 89 responses in the open-ended responses, there is a tie between the categories 'useful for improving English' and 'provides extra reading features' with 16 voters in each. Individual comments for improving English skills included phrases such as: incredible to learn new words in English but in a funny way, and, interesting and fun reading app, good and fun way to learn new words. Personal comments about providing extra reading features were anime-like drawings, use your imagination it isn't for you but if you prefer pictures, it's excellent, or Webtoon is cool and drawings are very well done, they're easy to understand.

As for the category 'motivation for reading', 43 students mentioned opinions regarding it. Some stated the following: I would describe this app as a place to de-stress and learn in a fun way while practicing your reading, and, for me it is a fun way to read something and not get bored because we can choose ourselves what to read and want to keep learning more English in a fun way. In the category 'others', students who had views about Webtoon being a: digital library, download the app -recommended, fun application, or neutral perspectives were included.

Table 4. Students' Satisfaction regarding Webtoon Features.

Features	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Interface	38	31	14	2	4
Story genres	54	26	3	2	4
Themes	48	26	8	3	4
Plots	51	25	7	3	3
Vocabulary	60	19	5	2	3
Illustrations	67	15	3	0	4

Note: 89 responses were analyzed.

Table 4 represented 89 students' perceptions about Webtoon's interface in a Likert-scale format. The options ranged from 'very satisfied' to 'very unsatisfied'. Notoriously, the categories 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' were the ones that received more votes, especially for the vocabulary and illustrations Webtoon offers. They both represent more than 60 votes out of 89. One exciting finding was related to the category 'neutral' in the interface option, which had more than 10 votes in comparison to the others. That proves that students might have found the layout a bit confusing or complicated as their open-ended answers for the first impression were stated in table 3.

Table 5. Students' Additional Webtoon Opinions.

Prompt	Key Words				
	Friendly to Improve English Skills	Positive Application Aspects	Motivation to read in English	Neutral Perspectives	No response
Leave any additional comments about your experience with WEBTOON in your reading sessions	27	24	24	13	1

Note: 88 responses were coded to have these categories. One student did not respond to his part, automatically creating the category 'no response' for it.

The last table that represents answers to the first question of this paper, students' perceptions regarding Webtoon, gave 5 categories to be considered after coding learners' answers. The first code was 'Friendly to improve English skills' since 27 students voted that Webtoon helped them improve an English skill or subskill, such as grammar or vocabulary, after they finished their reading sessions. One learner jotted down: I liked it a lot because it helped me learn new words and it taught me to have a good vocabulary and what was most helpful was to pronounce correctly.

Now, an interesting aspect to note is a tie between the codes 'positive application aspects' and 'motivation to read in English' with 24 votes each. In many comments, it was repeated that the illustrations, the background music that some chapters had, and the availability of the application

on the play store were positive aspects for them to be motivated and read in English. The category neutral perspectives, which was created after having 13 responses, relates to the short responses that did not give enough information to be categorized, did not make sense, or gave a definition of Webtoon. Lastly, only one candidate decided not to answer the open-ended question about their experiences with Webtoon.

Motivation

Table 6. Number of Read Stories by Learners.

Question	Options		
	Only the one I chose for class	2-3 stories	4 or more stories
How many stories have you read since we started using WEBTOON in class?	41	32	16

Note: 89 responses collected in total. More than 50% of students read an extra story outside class.

Table 6 gives us the first answer we need for the second question of this research paper, to what extent does Webtoon influence reading motivation among EFL students? We can infer that even though students had to use Webtoon in class only, 48 students decided to read more than the story they chose for their English laboratory classes, with 16 learners reading more than 4 stories outside the classroom. That means that 41 students, which represents a smaller number, read one story only. This result indicates that indeed, students felt motivated to keep reading digital comics using Webtoon for whichever purposes they had. This table gives us a clear hint of a positive answer for the second question of this study.

Table 7. Students' Agreement according to the features Webtoon offers.

Statements	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally Disagree
The story genres made me want to read more	45	32	7	3	2
The themes shown made me want to read more	38	39	8	3	1
The plot of the story/ies made me want to read more	51	28	6	2	2
The vocabulary of the stories was useful for me	49	29	7	2	2
The illustrations of the stories were good visual aids for me	62	22	1	1	3
The app increased my reading comprehension skill	45	30	9	3	2
The app increased my knowledge of affixes	30	31	22	5	1

Note: all 89 responses were quantified for this question.

In table 7 we can observe 89 results from the 5th question, which used a Likert scale from ‘totally agree’ to ‘totally disagree’. The intriguing findings go to the point the plot of the story/ies made me want to read more, which had 51 voters, and to the illustrations of the stories were good visual aids for me, with 62 votes. While the illustrations and vocabulary were voted in table 4 as the satisfying Webtoon features for students, in this table we can notice that what kept them reading was only the former and the plot. As stated in the introduction, Webtoon is considered a comic reading application which aims for teenagers or the adult audience. This fact means that many of the themes found there could be of interest for these two gap ages.

Table 8. Willingness to Continue using Webtoon in class.

Question	Criteria	
	YES	NO
Would you prefer to continue using WEBTOON as a reading application in class?	87	2

Note: 89 responses were recorded for the final question of the survey.

Our last table represents the number of students who wished to continue using Webtoon in the future. From 89 responses, only 2 said they would not prefer to use Webtoon in future sessions or in their senior year. It could be related to the fact that some answers mentioned the unattractive drawing style from their perspectives or that they preferred physical books. This leads us to conclude that 87 students felt motivated to continue using Webtoon in future classes as part of the reading skill activities.

Discussion

From the data analysis showcased before, the following five points are relevant; Webtoon’s usefulness to teach affixes, the initial and last students’ perceptions, their reading motivation increase, the satisfying Webtoon features, and the type of reading format students prefer. For starters, the way in which Webtoon was used in this paper’s AR cycles does not really improve the knowledge of affixes in students even if it was highlighted that their vocabulary and reading motivation increased in the final survey.

For affixes, another approach should be taken if Webtoon wants to be used. As stated previously in the introduction, the Webtoon ‘True Beauty’ contained different word formations of a single basic word, in this case ‘beauty’ (Sa’adah, 2023). This result can help us infer that students could read the same Webtoon in class to acquire the same vocabulary and practice affixation of the same words. After that, pop quizzes could be about the vocabulary of it; however, it would take out the fun of students discovering new stories, genres, and themes. Also, a qualitative Likert-scale survey could be used that focuses solely on affixes to analyze its responses.

The second finding will navigate us through the study's first question answers, what are EFL high school students' perceptions towards using WEBTOON as a tool in the classroom? Learners' perceptions towards the tool vary according to the exposure they receive. If the application is used for the first time by students who do not like Japanese animation, comics, or digital reading, they could feel overwhelmed and find the application boring or difficult. However, after learners dedicated enough time to the application and found a story and genre they fancied, most students' perceptions positively switched towards the use of the application in class. Also, it is worth mentioning that most students stated using technology in the classroom makes them feel more motivated by having less conventional classes. It could be related to the ever-lasting impact the pandemic left on most people, who have slowly become digital immigrants and natives feel at ease in a classroom that uses ICTs (Illa-Sihuincha et al., 2022). Besides, it gives a hit for the second question's results.

The third and fourth finding answer to the second question of this study, to what extent does WEBTOON influence reading motivation among EFL students? They are related to the elements that foster students' motivation towards reading in English and the elements they find satisfying. Webtoon's illustrations were considered both motivational and satisfying. This outcome tells us that students can learn better by having visual cues when they read. According to Novanti and Suprayogi (2021), visual learners could face a more real experience in this way. On the other hand, the plot was what kept students reading their chosen stories because of the different adolescent themes Webtoon uses. It could imply that this digital tool can foster narrative reading in students who seek to better understand a complex plot or climax in a book (Widiyarti et al., 2021). This represents the beginning for students who do not like to read or for students who prefer to have visual cues in their reading.

Lastly, the fifth finding, which also considers the study's second question, can lead us through the type of reading tools students would prefer to use. More than 50% of the respondents that took part in this study read another story besides the one for classes. They mentioned in their open-ended responses that it motivated them to read in English, to learn more vocabulary and to finish the stories they started since they were more intriguing than they appeared at first. In other words, if students are reading Webtoons outside the classroom, looking at their screens and smiling or laughing, there is a high probability they might be reading their favorite chapter from a Webtoon (Jin, 2015). It represents that one of their hobbies has become reading and that shows progress when it comes to reading motivation at the target language. Noteworthy, this spare time activity in Generation Z's learners is what has caused some Webtoons to be adapted to Netflix series in the last couple of years and the audience it aims for is adolescents.

Conclusions

The use we give to technological devices after the pandemic might affect positively or negatively the learning process of students. In this paper, both ways were proven. The negative aspect of Webtoon, or perhaps the methodology in which the author applied it, was regarding affixes. Students did not really show an important improvement in their affix's comprehension and word formation. For them to improve, it was stated that they need to read the same Webtoon and be assessed in the word formation of that certain vocabulary.

Even though affixes and Webtoon were not positively correlated in this paper, students still found bright aspects on Webtoon, which were displayed in their final Google Forms survey. They highlighted their perspectives towards this online reading application, results that answer the first paper's question, and the increase of reading motivation, outcomes for the second. Learners found satisfying the illustrations and vocabulary they had and continued reading their stories because of the, once again, illustrations, and the plot. Thanks to the latter, a more profound study on narrative reading could be carried out.

Also, it is relevant to emphasize the fact that students in their open-ended final comments about the application, most mentioned they had fun using a different learning tool instead of a physical book. This means that for teachers to catch Generation Z students' attention, different technological methodologies and tools need to be planned and used in class. Likewise, this could lead to a more positive outlook in the UEPSMA high school students' perceptions towards learning and improving their English in general.

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