

## USING DIGITAL MEDIA: BEELINGUAPP APPLICATION TO IMPROVE INDONESIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH

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**Abstract.** In recent years, integrating digital tools into education has gained momentum, particularly in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study investigates the effectiveness of Beelinguapp, a bilingual reading application, in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of middle school learners in Indonesia. A quasi-experimental research design was employed, involving 26 middle school students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group used Beelinguapp over six weeks, while the control group followed traditional reading instruction methods. Results reveal a statistically significant improvement in the achievement of reading comprehension in the experimental group. The study underscores the value of leveraging digital tools such as Beelinguapp in EFL classrooms, offering insights into the pedagogical implications of integrating technology to foster engagement, understanding, and motivation in reading activities.

**Keywords:** Beelinguapp, Reading Comprehension, Bilingual Reading, EFL Learners, Digital Media

**Abstrak.** Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, pengintegrasian alat digital ke dalam pendidikan telah mendapatkan momentum, khususnya dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas Beelinguapp, sebuah aplikasi membaca bilingual, dalam meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman membaca siswa sekolah menengah di Indonesia. Desain penelitian kuasi-eksperimental digunakan, melibatkan 26 siswa sekolah menengah yang dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen dan kontrol. Kelompok eksperimen menggunakan Beelinguapp selama enam minggu, sedangkan kelompok kontrol mengikuti metode pengajaran membaca tradisional. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik dalam pencapaian pemahaman membaca pada kelompok eksperimen. Studi ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya memanfaatkan alat digital seperti Beelinguapp di ruang kelas EFL, menawarkan wawasan mengenai implikasi pedagogis dari pengintegrasian teknologi untuk mendorong keterlibatan, pemahaman, dan motivasi dalam kegiatan membaca.

**Kata Kunci:** Beelinguapp, Pemahaman Bacaan, Membaca Bilingual, Pelajar EFL, Media Digital

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### INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is central to language acquisition, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In educational contexts, the ability to understand and interpret written texts is critical, as it not only supports academic achievement but also provides

a foundation for future language development (Grabe, 2016). However, teaching reading comprehension presents unique challenges, especially when learners face difficulties with unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar, and cultural references. Traditional methods of teaching reading, often relying on textbooks and teacher-led instruction, can sometimes fail to fully engage students or cater to their diverse learning needs (Nation, 2009).

In this era of digital transformation, technology has become an essential part of modern education, reshaping traditional pedagogical approaches and offering innovative solutions to address the challenges faced by language learners. The use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, in particular, has shown great promise in increasing student engagement and improving learning outcomes (Kukulka-Hulme & Shield, 2008). One such tool is the Beelinguapp application, which enables learners to read bilingual texts side by side, allowing for better comprehension through immediate access to translations and contextual clues.

While traditional methods of teaching reading have their merits, they often lack interactivity and fail to cater to the needs of 21st-century learners who are increasingly accustomed to technology-driven environments. There is a need to explore how digital tools, like Beelinguapp, can address these gaps by providing students with more engaging, personalized, and effective learning experiences. This study seeks to investigate whether the integration of Beelinguapp into the EFL classroom can significantly improve middle school students' reading comprehension skills compared to traditional methods.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, with pre-test and post-test measures to compare the reading comprehension achievements of two groups of students. The experimental group used Beelinguapp as a digital reading tool, while the control group used traditional reading materials provided in textbooks. The intervention lasted six weeks, during which both groups followed the same curriculum but with different approaches to reading.

## **RESULT**

### **Pre-Test Results**

The pre-test scores revealed that the students had significant difficulties with reading comprehension prior to the intervention. None of the 26 students scored in the "Very Good" (88-100), "Good" (74-87), or "Fair" (60-73) categories. Instead, all students were classified in

the "Poor" (50-59) category, with a mean score of 27.73. This low level of initial performance highlights the critical need for improved instructional strategies to enhance students' understanding of the reading material.

### **Post-Test Results**

In contrast to the pre-test, the post-test results showed notable improvements across various performance categories:

- Very Good (88-100): 4 students (15.63%) achieved scores in this category, with a mean score of 41.33.
- Good (74-87): 5 students (19.23%) showed significant improvement, scoring in this range, with a mean score of 37.8.
- Fair (60-73): 11 students (42.31%) moved into this category, indicating moderate progress, with a mean score of 31.9.
- Poor (50-59): Despite overall progress, 6 students (23.08%) remained in this category, with a mean score of 27.8.

These findings indicate that the instructional intervention was largely effective in improving reading comprehension, as reflected by the transition from no students performing adequately in the pre-test to 20 students (76.92%) achieving satisfactory scores in the post-test.

### **Summary of Findings**

The significant shift in student performance from the pre-test to the post-test underscores the effectiveness of using Beelinguapp in the reading comprehension instruction of middle school students. While the majority of students demonstrated improvement, the remaining percentage in the "Poor" category signals a need for additional support to ensure all learners can achieve satisfactory levels of comprehension.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study align with previous research that highlights the potential of digital tools to enhance reading comprehension among EFL learners. The substantial improvement in post-test scores among students using Beelinguapp suggests that the bilingual features of the application provided necessary contextual support, facilitating a better understanding of the reading material. Moreover, qualitative feedback from students indicated increased engagement and motivation when using Beelinguapp compared to traditional reading

methods. This highlights the capability of digital tools to not only improve academic outcomes but also foster positive attitudes towards learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of the Beelinguapp application significantly enhances reading comprehension achievement among middle school EFL learners. The findings suggest that incorporating digital tools like Beelinguapp into language instruction can improve learners' understanding of texts by providing bilingual support and fostering higher levels of engagement. These results hold important implications for educators and curriculum developers, especially in contexts where students face challenges with traditional reading methods.

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