USING COMICS AS A LEARNING MEDIA TO IMPROVE EFL VOCABULARY: MAN 1 LAMONGAN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT In a classroom, educators are required to create or apply creative and innovative media that will influence successful learning outcomes. Comics have long been considered an interesting medium to make students engaged in learning EFL. The existing studies have investigated the effectiveness of comics in increasing students' vocabulary acquisition through a series of tests, yet little information is explored to know how the students' perceive comics as the best media to improve EFL attainment. This research involved 22 students from MAN 1 Lamongan by answering the questionnaire. The aim of this journal is to determine students' perspectives on the use of comics in their learning and to provide knowledge about whether students agree if comics are applied to them. From the finding it can be known that the comic has a positive result from the student perspective to be a learning medium that can improve student vocabulary. The expectation of this study is that teachers can start to use comics as a learning media to improve student vocabulary.

Keywords: comics, learning media, vocabulary, students' perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary has an essential function in EFL Classroom (Nam, 2010). Rokhayani and Utasi (2014) stated that teachers assume all English aspects, the four English skills are more important. It means that vocabulary is not concerned to be taught in the classroom. The teacher just focuses on teaching four English skills without paying adequate attention to students' vocabulary. This case builds less frequency and opportunities of activity to enhance students' vocabulary toward reducing their difficulty in learning English.

In order to solve this serious problem in reading, the researcher decided to conduct research to know the students' perspective toward comics as a learning media to improve their vocabulary. Based on the fact, the writer used authentic reading material from comic strips.

Many studies have proven the effectiveness of comics can improve learning English in many ways. Khoiriyah (2010), on her research that has been conducted revealed that Comic Strips facilitate learners in vocabulary growth through visual media (pictures). This study was conducted by implementing experimental research in which the researcher has 2 different groups of subjects and then the researcher gives a different treatment to them, the experimental class taught using comic stories and the control one without comic. Comic strips are distinguished by the fact that they are made up of a sequence of images. The chronological order of the story allows students to easily grasp the concepts through these images.

This study that has been collected by using action research, it was conducted in two cycles to get the result Additionally, Rokhayani (2014) has proven that comics can be one of the easier media to help teachers convey or deliver the material in English lessons. Therefore, comic strips can be a teaching and learning media which may help the teacher to improve students' language skills.

One of which is the use of comics can improve the students' motivation in their ability to speak English (Erwin, 2009). Others stated that comics can improve students' vocabulary competency in learning reading (Lisa, 2016). In addition, the use of comics also can be one of the easier mediums to teach and deliver the material for English lessons in Junior High

School. Additionally, the study also focused on the strengths and weaknesses of using comic strips as a teaching medium (Atik Rokhayani, 2014).

However, the previous studies had focused on the use of comics as the media to teach English. The previous researchers tend to test the effect of using comics to improve students' vocabulary without studying students' responses toward the comics as teaching media. Even though students' responses and enthusiasm are important to reach the goals of studying. According to Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) as cited in Azwar (2012), there are three components of attitudes that are called tripartite models. The first component is cognitive. This component can be identified by the representation of what someone believes or thought toward something (Azwar, 2012). The measurable dependent variables from cognitive components are based on perceptual responses and verbal statements of beliefs. So this research will focus on describing and analyzing students' perspective towards the use of comics to improve their vocabulary.

This article was conducted by recognizing the importance of student perspective to know the effectiveness of comics to be a learning media that can improve student vocabulary mastery. Realizing that several previous study was conducted by the aims of to find the effectiveness using comic for general English, some of studies conduct some test to prove the effectiveness and some studies focus on the teachers perspective of using comic as learning media.

This study was conducted to determine students' perspectives on the use of comics in their learning, especially vocabulary learning. It aims to provide knowledge about whether students agree if comics are applied to them. Furthermore, their agreement or more referring to their enthusiasm for the comic strip becomes the second focus of this research. Every study that is carried out has differences from one another, then in this study, the researchers hopes: The results of this study will later be used to determine students' views on the application of comic strips to improve their vocabulary, will be very useful for teachers who will use comic strips in their learning because through this study, the teacher will know the students' interests or opinions regarding the use of comic strips. The results of this research can later be used as a reference for future researchers who take similar topics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Comic Strips

Comic is a story idea that contains a combination of text and visuals. Comic strips have a storyline that is interconnected and contains an expression in expressing some dialogue. Comics have a plot and, as a result, a conclusion or, in some cases, a punchline. The reader, in this situation a student, is motivated to keep reading and become more interested in the subject than in the language in this way. Characteristics of the comic itself is a word, expression, or concept followed by a visual in the form of a picture of several characters. The storyline in the comics here guides the reader to continue reading. Visualizations in comics also contain interesting images. From the characteristics of comics, it will be easier for students to learn if they are given logical sentences and a clear storyline. Csabay (2006) also added that vocabulary and language can be learned from it. Because the story is continuous, pictorial, and has a distinctive language style, it will be very suitable if it is embedded in learning. The different languages in each panel will subconsciously add to the learning experience of students.

Comic Strips as EFL Teaching and Learning Media

ESL and EFL teachers can use comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels to help their students increase their language skills, according to Derrick (2008). They can also be used as a springboard for a variety of activities aimed at motivating students and stimulating meaningful debate. In the study of Paola et al (2018) in terms of language, the number of

students thought the meanings expressed in the dialogues, as well as the illustrations, were simple and appropriate; they also enjoyed the characters and scenery represented in the comic strips. Since it is an entertaining and fun method that encourages grammar and vocabulary learning, use of comic strips motivates students in the learning process. Paola added, teachers agree that comics are unique and useful as a teaching tool for creating a positive classroom atmosphere and engaging students in vocabulary learning. Students' vocabulary has improved by using Comic Strips to teach reading. Students gain understanding of the meaning of words before reading the texts in which they are used by using Comic Strips (Lisa, 2016).

The Role of Comic Strips in Vocabulary Acquisition

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), the basis for how learners speak, listen, read, and write is vocabulary, which is a crucial element of language proficiency. Learners who do not have a large vocabulary or strategies for expanding their vocabulary often lose sight of their potential and are discouraged from taking advantage of language learning opportunities such as listening to the radio, speaking with native speakers, using language in different contexts, reading, or watching television. According to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a specific language or a list or set of words that individual language speakers may use. McCarthy (1990) claims that interaction in an L2 is difficult without the use of words to communicate a broader variety of meanings.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a survey quantitative study that collects the data by questionnaire. Creswell (2012) stated that survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. Therefore, this research used survey quantitative design to investigate the students' perspective toward using comics to improve students' vocabulary.

This study was carried out on 22 students of MAN 1 Lamongan. MAN 1 Lamongan was selected in order to distribute the questionnaire to the right sample who are suitable for using comics as a media in their learning. Moreover, the selected participants were students who had previously received learning models using comics. The respondents are selected randomly from tenth grade students. Questionnaires are designed by the researcher considered to the research question.

The questionnaire consists of five statements. In this research, 3-point Likert scale as rating indicators was used in the survey form to measure the respondent's strength of agreement.The 3-point Likert scale was chosen because it adjusts the ability of respondents who come from junior high school. The researcher avoids the confusion that students might face when presented with a choice of answers to the five levels of agreement, that is why researchers prefer to use only 3-points. A Likert score of 1 indicated that the respondent "agree" with the statement. A Likert score of 2 indicates a "Neutral" position, and a Likert score of 3 indicated a "Disagree" perspective toward comics as a learning medium to improve students vocabulary.

The aspects that were asked in the five questionnaires were about comic visualization, storyline, being more interested than ordinary books, conversations with each character, and increasing vocabulary unconsciously.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Statement 1: Visualization of comics made learning vocabulary more interesting.

The First statement was made with the aim to know how the students' perspective related to visualization in comics, so that they could learn vocabulary easily. Based on 22 students who completed questionnaires, 21 students chose to agree with this number one opinion.

While one person chose neutral to this statement. This shows that 95,5% of students can learn vocabulary more easily when using comics as a medium because the visualization of reading is different from ordinary books.
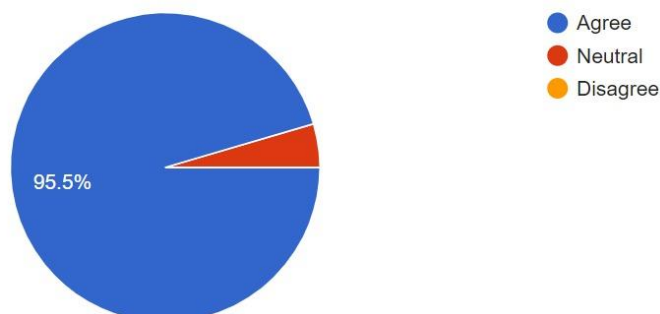

Figure 1. Distribution of average percentage of comics' visualization

Statement 2: The stories presented in the comics make me enjoy reading.

The Second statement wants to know the perspective of students whether they enjoy reading using comics which present the story. Based on the results of the questionnaire, 15 out of 22 students chose to agree with the statement, and 7 students felt neutral with the statement. From these data it can be concluded that 68,2% of children surveyed feel more comfortable reading with the topic in the form of stories, 31,8% feel neutral with the stories presented in the comics. Overall, reading media using comics can make students feel more enjoy reading.
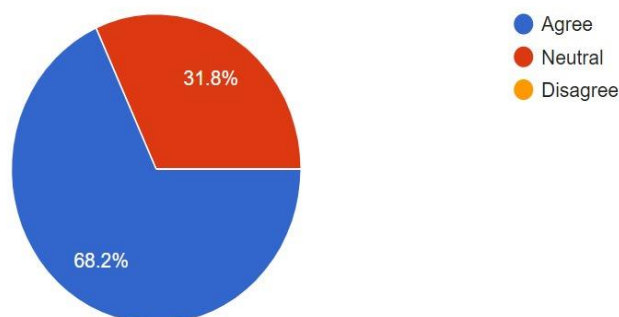

Figure 2. Distribution of average percentage of comics' storyline

Statement 3: Reading a story through comics is more interesting than reading a story through ordinary books.

The results of the questionnaire that have been distributed also contain a third statement which states that by using comics, students are more interested in reading than reading ordinary books. The results show that 54,5% responses or 12 of the 22 students who answered agreed with the statement. 27,3% or 6 students chose neutral to this statement. While 4 students or the remaining 18,2% disagreed. It can be concluded that half of the students will be more interested in reading comics than reading ordinary books that do not contain pictures, storylines, and conversations of characters in conveying the material. It shows 54.5% choose to agreed with the statement "Reading a story through comics is more interesting than reading a story through ordinary books". So 27,3% choose to neutral with the statement.
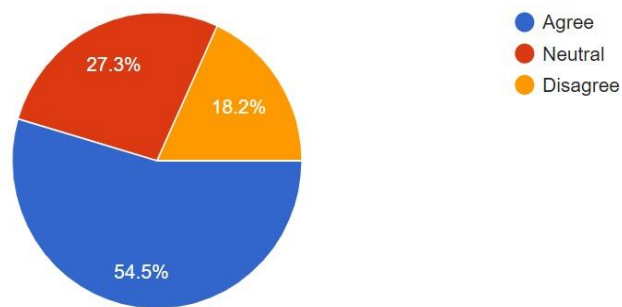
Figure 3. Distribution of average percentage of comics; interest

Statement 4: Conversation with each character in comics makes me understand the meaning of each word easily.

The Existence of conversations between characters that characterizes comics can make students understand words that they may not have known before. Based on the results of the distribution of the questionnaire, most students have the perception that they can understand vocabulary more easily by having conversations between characters. This can be seen from table number 4 which shows data that 59,1% of 22 students said they agreed with the fourth statement, so the others 40,9% students chose neutral.
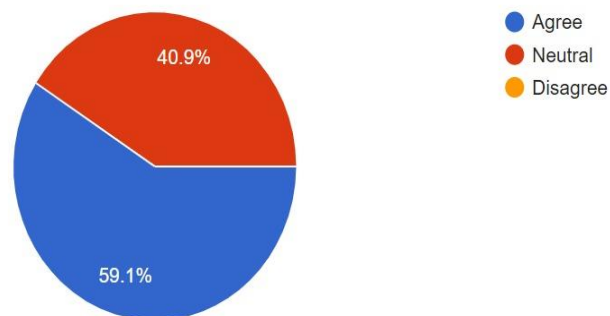

Figure 4. Distribution of average percentage of characters' conversation

Statement 5: Unconsciously reading comics can increase my vocabulary while enjoying the story.

Based on the data shown in Table 5, 15 of 22 students chose to agree with the statement, that means 68,2% of the respondents agreed that by reading comics to enjoy reading the story, they unconsciously may add to the knowledge of vocabulary. Meanwhile, the others 31,8% or 7 students chose neutral towards the statement.
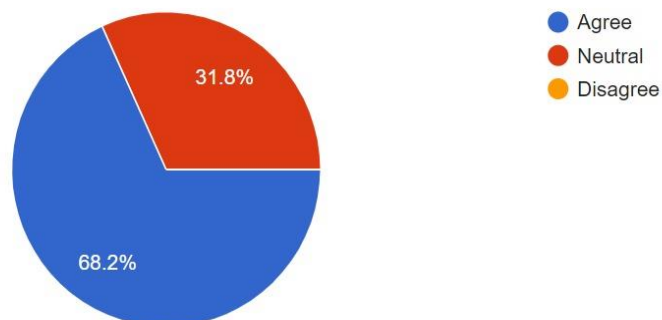

Figure 5. Distribution of average percentage of increasing vocabulary unconsciously

Based on the survey of students, the researchers found that comics are quite effective in increasing students' vocabulary. Results show that most students agree with the positive statements related to the comics usage toward learning media.

Based on the questionnaire, aspects in comics such as visualization, storyline, and conversations with each character can increase students' interest in reading and indirectly students can increase vocabulary knowledge in a fun way.

CONCLUSION

This research study examined the use of comics as a learning media to improve students' vocabulary. The result shows that comics help the reader improve their vocabulary, by reflecting on the data it can be concluded that the story and the visualization of the comic make the reading activity more interesting. The reader felt enjoyed by the presence of its visuals and the story it made them easily understand with the word.

Comic can be one of media that can cope the student which lack in vocabulary, as we can see the result shows that reading comic was very entertaining, interesting and easy to understand the word meaning, it's all because comic contain story and visualization.

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