



Vocational Students' Engagement in Digital Comic Strip Assisted Reading Comprehension

Elih Sutisna Yanto¹, Sopiatal Umah²

^{1,2}Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang

Abstract

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This study aims to determine the involvement of students in understanding English-language digital comic strips at the Sanggabuana Science and Technology Vocational School based on indicators of behavior, cognitive, and emotion. The participants in this study were tenth grade students of Sanggabuana Science and Technology Vocational School with two different genders; girls and boys. Data collection techniques used by researchers are using thematic analysis techniques, and data collection techniques using interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of the study showed that the involvement of Sanggabuana Science and Technology Vocational High School students that digital comic strips are media that are positively received by students at the school, they argue that digital comic strip is understanding medium because its contain pictures and storyline.

Keywords: *digital comic strip, students engagement, reading comprehension.*

(*) Corresponding Author: sopiatalumah22@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a cognitive process in which symbols are decoded to find their meaning. Reading involves actively constructing word meanings. Reading with a purpose assists the reader in focusing their attention and directing information in the direction of a goal (Blakeley, 2022). The primary objective of reading is to comprehend the text, despite the fact that the reasons for reading may vary. Reading is a way to think. It makes use of what the reader may already know, or "previous knowledge". The reader uses strategies to comprehend what they are reading, themes to organize ideas, and textual clues to decipher new word meanings during this information processing (Blakeley, 2022). Reading can be divided into two categories: intensive reading and extensive reading.

Patel and Jain (2008) identify the following categories of reading: 117-123). Reading a whole or a portion of a text is intensive reading. Students read this text in order to acquire knowledge or analysis. Reading shorter texts is the goal of this reading. The purpose of this reading is to acquire specific data. Students learn by reading books. Then, extensive reading is a method for gaining a general understanding of a subject that includes enjoying reading longer discourse texts. The readers are interested in something. After reading, readers have no interest in specific or significant information. Most of the time, people read to stay current.

Reading comprehension is another kind of reading. Reading comprehension is one of the most difficult human endeavors. For instance, in order to comprehend



this sentence, one must visually process the words; Identify their orthographic, semantic, and phonological representations; and comprehend the sentence's underlying meaning by connecting the words using syntax rules (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). However, it is not enough to comprehend the underlying meaning of each sentence. According to Graesser (2015), one must integrate that meaning across sentences, make use of pertinent background information, draw inferences, identify the structure of the text, and consider the authors' goals and motivations.

A theory of reading is needed to describe the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reading comprehension and to make precise, testable predictions because of its inherent complexity. However, we are unable to construct such a theory with the necessary precision due to the inherent complexity (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014).

Through a variety of activities, students are encouraged to comprehend a reading passage in reading comprehension. Most people use skimming and scanning to quickly find and understand a text. According to Hallows et al. (2013), skimming is a reading strategy in which readers skim a passage to locate the text's central idea without considering specific details. In the meantime, it is said that readers scan to find particular pieces of information like names, dates, and facts. According to Sutz & Weverka (2012), skimming occurs three to four times faster than normal reading, which is consistent with previous opinions. When there is a lot of material to read in a short amount of time, readers frequently skim instead of reading every word, a cursory reader only needs to take in the information and, most importantly, the main idea. Brown says that scanning is not the same as skimming. Instead, scanning is the quick search for a specific piece of relevant information in a text. Without reading the entire text, scanning is used to extract specific information.

Students' lack of interest in reading comprehension, however. According to Guthrie, Wigfield, & You (2012), "engagement in reading" is defined as "effort and persistence in a reading task" as well as "time devoted toward the attainment of desired reading outcomes." (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). Students who are engaged in reading are (a) able to self-regulate their learning, (b) invested in the process, (c) socially interactive, and (d) strategic in their approach to a task (Guthrie & Cox, 2001; You, Guthrie, and Wigfield, 2012). However, as students move into middle and high school, their interest in reading decreases significantly (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012). According to Yazzie-Mintz (2007), estimates range from 24% to 40% of adolescents are disengaged. For understudies with understanding hardships, the decrease in commitment is more articulated (Skinner et al., 2008). Engagement in reading is even more important for struggling readers because they typically lack motivation and low self-efficacy in their reading abilities (Wigfield et al., 1998); Additionally, rather than enjoying reading, extrinsic rewards motivate them to read more (Guthrie & Davis, 2003).

The digital comic strip is one form of media that has the potential to engage students in reading comprehension. In elementary schools, comic books are a popular teaching tool. By upholding the definition of visual literacy, comics can have a unique and powerful voice in the classroom. According to McVicker (2018), comics are a living, day-to-day representation of real life, frequently depicting the world as it evolves.

Kunzle and David (2021) explain that a comic strip is a series of adjacent drawn images that are intended to be read as a narrative or chronological sequence and are typically arranged horizontally. In this format, the story is typically original. Words may be included within each image or near it, or they may not be included at all. If the image is functionally dominated by words, it becomes merely a text's illustration. The comic strip is essentially a mass media format that is published in a book, newspaper, or magazine.

The child's perception of traditional text structures like narratives (story books), nonnarratives (non-fiction), and poetry is altered when a comic strip is used as an alternative reading structure. Additionally, children who have difficulty reading frequently state that they do not read for enjoyment. According to McVicker (2018), this can be attributed to the difficulty they encounter when attempting to read.

The number of articles and books about comics, literacy, and education that have been published over the course of the past few years is also compellingly supported by this anecdotal evidence revealing the proliferation of comics in the academy. In his article titled "He is not a human, he is not an animal; He is simply distinct: Amine Harbi (2016), for instance, comes to the conclusion that "there is a need to integrate comic books in education, especially when teaching complex concepts" after "exploring the medium of comics in empowering children's critical thinking."

There are features in the digital comic strip that could potentially engage students in the reading classroom. Digitally presented interesting images encourage students to read. They engage emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally as a result. Comics have a number of advantages, including excellent storytelling and visual elements that make them easier to comprehend. According to Cohn (2014), visual expressions can also make the reader feel emotionally invested, encouraging them to keep reading until the end of the book.

Trowler (2010) defines student engagement as the interaction of time, effort, and other related resources with the intention of not only optimizing the students' experiences but also of improving the students' learning outcomes and development. In a broader sense, Guthrie and his colleagues (2020) characterize students engaged in reading as socially and cognitively knowledgeable.

Several previous studies are comparable to and consistent with this one. Ali Merç (2013) conducted research regarding the impact of digital comic strips on EFL students. This study aims to determine how digital comic strips affect Turkish EFL students. He explains that all students, regardless of proficiency or text level, performed better with the comic strip effect than without it.

The results of this study are in line with those of a similar study that Liu (2004) carried out with students from China. However, Liu's study suggests that low-level students performed significantly better when comic strips were used.

Another study by Kobayashi (2011) that used comic strips as visual aids found that the use of comic strips helped students retain the text in a retelling task and reduced learners' cognitive load while reading. Megawati & Anugerahwati (2012) also found that using comic strips to teach writing could help students improve their writing skills (Megawati & Anugerahwati, 2012).

In addition, Saputro and Soeharto (2015) report that several nations, including Japan, have utilized comics to assist students in learning. Digital English comics also add a picture to the story, which can pique students' interest. According to Brante & Holmqvist (2017), the purpose of digital reading material's illustrations is to improve learning ability. According to Brante & Holmqvist (2017), informal interviews with university students revealed that the majority of them claimed that digital English comics assisted them in learning English. They likewise referenced that by understanding comics, they are not disappointed on the grounds that comics give an intriguing story and beautiful picture. The researchers and their friends are interested in using digital English comics to learn English because of their own experience as English learners. When they have free time, they frequently read an online English comic. When teaching reading with comics, students' interest and imagination are cultivated (Roozafzai, 2012). Additionally, students were able to easily comprehend the material presented in the comic (Kamil et al., 2017).

Based on mentioned previous researches, it is clearly accepted that the study about students' engagement in reading comprehension is rarely conducted. In addition, a few research concerns on students' engagement in comic strip-assisted reading comprehension. Thus, this present study aims at studying students' engagement in comic strip-assisted reading comprehension.

METHODS

Research Design

Students engagement refers to how do students engage in language classroom. It needs to study deeper about their cognitive, behaviour, and emotional engagement. To study student engagement, it is appropriate to use narrative inquiry research design.

The research design will be used in this research is narrative inquiry. A "profoundly relational type of inquiry" is narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007, p. xv). It is "sensitive to...subtle textures of thought and sensation" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 7) at work in an account of lived experiences, allowing the most important events to emerge in the tales individuals recount. "Not only on individuals' experiences, but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which people' experiences are constituted, developed, articulated, and enacted," according to Cladinin and Rosiek (2007, pp. 42–43). The narrative inquiry method is use to grasp participants to narrate stories about their engagement experiences in digital comic strip-assisted reading classroom. Students' behavior engagement will be carefully investigated through depth interview and observation. Furthermore students' cognitive will specifically investigated through observation. In addition, students' emotional engagement will be taken from depth interview as well.

Research Site and Participant

The research site of this study is in one of vocational school in Babakan Pedes. There are two reasons why researcher will conduct the research. Firstly, it refers to the access. The access to the school is so near from home, so it makes the researcher easier to do research. Secondly, self-experience which contains

experience discussion about reading. The researcher had pre-service teacher training program in this school. Based on observation, it is found that students' engagement and English language skills, especially in reading comprehension were still lacking. It becomes reason of assigning this school as research site.

The research participants will be involved in this study is six students with three girls and three boys, with an age range of 15-16 years. Their English proficiency level is intermediate level.

In order to strengthen reason of assigning participant, here is attached students' demography information:

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Linguistics Background	Educational Background	Length of English Learning Experience (approximately)	English Proficiency
Citra	Female	15	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A2 elementary
Annisa	Female	15	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A2 elementary
Deka	Female	15	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A2 elementary
Rama	Male	15	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A1 Beginner
Azka	Male	15	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A1 Beginner
Rommy	Male	16	Sundanese Indonesian	Undergraduate studies	10 years	A1 Beginner

Adopted from Yanto (2020)

This information is taken from English teacher who taught there.

Based on students' demography information, it describes that all students has same linguistic background, English learning experience, and English proficiency. It assists researcher to conduct this researcher easily.

Technique of Data Collection

a. Interview

Interview is a question and answer activity conducted by two or more students with the aim of obtaining information. An 'interview' is typically a face-to-face conversation between a researcher and a participant involving a transfer of information to the interviewer (Cresswell, 2012). We it will investigate each data collection instrument independently, starting with the interview. In this study, there are two participants category who will be interviewed, an English teacher and the six students of grade students.

b. Observation/Reflective Journal

Observation is a way to gather data by watching people, events, or nothing physical characteristics in their natural setting. Observations can be overt (subjects know they are being observed) or covert (do not know they are being watched). According to Narbuko & Achmadi (2010:70), observation is the tool to collect data which is done by observing and noting down systematically the phenomenon that is inquired. It means that observation is used to collect the data in systematic way to understand and interpret actions, interaction or the meaning

of event. In this study researcher will use observation to observe students' engagement in digital comic strip assisted reading comprehension.

c. Documentation

According to Ary (2010:442) documentation is refers to a wide range of written, physical, and visual materials, including what other authors may term artifacts. The researcher use written documents or other artifact to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study. In a report or research paper, documentation is the evidence provided for information and ideas borrowed from others. That evidence includes both primary sources and secondary sources. Documentation means of this study refers to photograph and recording. Photograph is to capture students engagement in digital comic strip assisted reading comprehension recording will be used to support findings.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation is tool of collecting data that should be valid and reliable. According to Arikunto (2006:126) the device the researcher uses to collect data is called instrument. Instrument has important in this research. Instrument is one of the significant steps in conducting this research. So, there are a few steps that must be reserachers through. The steps are:

a. Interview

The interview will be conducted through interview guidelines. The interview session will be delivered in Bahasa Indonesia to make sure participant fully understood. The interview also has two section, interview for teacher and interview for students. interview for teacher will be implemented before the research and students interview will be implemented after research.

b. Observation

The observation will be conducted through observation checklist. Things which will be observe is students preparation before study, the ready of student, students' engagement in the reading section, and students' comprehension. The observation checklist contain students engagement indicators that assists researcher to identify.

c. Photograph/recordings

Photographs, audio recordings, video recordings are the most common tools used in social and behavioral science research. Photograph is used to capture students' activity in reading comprehension-assisted digital comic strip. This photograph will use to strengthen data of data collection.

Technique of Data analysis

In this research, reseracher uses qualitative thematic analysis as technic of data analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2008), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. However, frequently if goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998).

The reason why researcher uses thematic analysis, in order to make researcher easier when process the data. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility. Qualitative analytic methods can be roughly divided into two camps. Within the first, there are those tied to, or stemming from, a particular theoretical or epistemological position. Second, there are methods that are essentially independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2008).

From these definitions, we can assumed that thematic analysis is a flexibe analysis which can do by sources or independently.

The six steps prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to carry out a thematic analysis are guidelines and should not be used as prescriptive, linear, and inflexible rules when analysing data. They should rather be used in relation to the research question and the available data.

The six steps are as follows:

1. Familiarising yourself with your data

This step requires the researcher to be fully immersed and actively engaged in the data by firstly transcribing the interactions and then reading (and re-reading) the transcripts and/or listening to the recordings about students learning in reading digital comic strip-assited reading comprehension.

2. Generating initial codes

Once familiar with the data, the researcher must then start identifying preliminary codes, which are the features of the data that appear interesting and meaningful.

3. Searching for themes

The third step in the process is the start of the interpretive analysis of the collated codes.

4. Reviewing themes

A deeper review of identified themes follows where the researcher needs to question whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard initial themes.

5. Defining and naming themes

This step involves 'refining and defining' the themes and potential subthemes within the data. Ongoing analysis is required to further enhance the identified themes.

6. Producing the report

Finally, the researcher needs to transform his/her analysis into an interpretable piece of writing by using vivid and compelling extract examples that relate to the themes, research question, and literature about students' engagement in digital comic strip-assited reading comprehension.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

General pattern result of this study consists of:

- **Digital comic strip engage students in reading comprehension**

a. Authentic storyline encourages students to comprehend reading enthusiastically

Cognitively, most of students understand the comic content because there is a dialogue that goes directly to their understanding and also storyline that they think are interesting and relate to daily life. It is in line by this section that the participants began to engage in reading comprehension, not only from the storyline, but the messages in them. Students are engaged enthusiastically as the story as the as seem to be real life. It can be traced from interview transcription as follow:

Researcher: In what phase/part of digital comic strip does involve/engage you in reading comprehension?

Rama (P1): From comic two. Because the discussion relates to real life.

Azka (P2): In the third comic, the words of the comic is the most engage my comprehension.

Rommy (P3): In the first and second comic because it's a little bit relate.

Citra (P4): In the second comic cause there's meaning in that comic.

Annisa (P5): In the second comic. Because I found that we must be grateful and don't be complain.

Deka (P6): In Comic 2.

Based on interview transcription, it is clearly stated that almost students admitted that authentic storyline brings about values and reflection as story from real life. So students are enthusiastically and enjoy their learning.

In order to strengthen data about students' involvement in digital comic trip, it is illustrated that in observation data. According to observation data the students very excited and do task enthusiastically, they also experiences to have discussion. It is can be traced from observation data as follow: the students participated collaboratively in while lesson—it occurs at thirty in minutes up to fourty minutes.

a. Digital comic strip is user-friendliness tool in vocabulary learning

Behaviourly, digital comic strips provides easiness to access on various social media such as Instagram, Facebook, or Webcomic or applications such as Webtoon. One of comic strip feature is a pdf form so it is easier to transfer to various media, one of which is WhatsApp media. Thus, students can be active readers from anywhere and whenever.



Figure 01. Digital evidence of comic strips in pdf format.



Figure 02. Digital evidence of comic strips can be sent via WhatsApp and accessed anywhere.

Researcher: How's your perception reading English using digital comic strip? Does make you easy to read? or not?

Rama (P1): No. I prefer Indonesian. But Arabic can too. In English, I prefer movies.

Azka (P2): Oh, obviously that's important, especially if you like it. For example, earlier, Rama likes to watch English films, so he can.

Rommy (P3): Yeah, it's make me understand about the comic digital content.

Citra (P4): It's more easier us to understand the meaning of the comic.

Annisa (P5): Its reasonable. Sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't.

Deka (P6): Yes because it's pictorial.

From the interview transcription, it describes that digital comic strips is useful and easy to be used in reading. It is proven that almost students agreed that digital comic strip made it easier for them to understand English well, with pictures and storylines.

To strengthen this data, the researcher conducted light questions to the participants a few minutes before the researcher conducted the study, and the researcher conducted the questions right in front of the class, before the researcher and participants entered the room. The thing that the researchers asked was whether they brought cell phones or not, and the answer was; three of the

participants did not carry a cell phone, and as a solution, one participant lent them a cell phone. Only after that, the research began and the researcher then sent a digital comic strip file to one participant to be distributed to other participants via the WhatsApp application. The evidence is in the observation data: the researcher sent a digital comic strip file to the participants at 15:45, after everyone entered the room.

b. Collaboration and storyline create students interest in learning

Emotionally, the students enjoy learning through comic strips because digital comic strips are interesting media, not boring, and have different sensations that are good for learning, especially in learning English. There are three emotions engaged in their understanding; fun, happy and sad. Just like the results of the interview, the reason why they felt fun because digital comic strips use visuals and images so that participants do not feel bored while reading them. Then they felt happy to be involved in understanding digital comic strips because for them digital comic strips are an interesting media that can be used for learning, besides that refers to other participants, digital comic strip allows him to study with other friends. Then this comic strip also involves feelings of sadness. According to the last participant who was interviewed by the researcher, her feelings of sadness could be involved because of the plot and digital images of the comic strip in the second comic. It can be traced from interview transcription as follow:

1. **Researcher:** Do you enjoy learning english with comic strip? Why?

Rama (P1): Not really. Sometimes I don't like comics.

Azka (P2): I enjoy it, because I read that comic with my friend.

Rommy (P3): I enjoy it because it's interesting.

Citra (P4): I enjoy it cause the sentence is shorts.

Annisa (P5): Enjoy it, it's fun, it's not boring, it's different.

Deka (P6): Yes, enjoy. Exciting. Increase knowledge.

Five out of six participants claimed that they enjoy learning reading through digital comic strips since digital comic strips are interesting media that have short sentences so that they are easy to understand by participants. Futhermore digital comic strips are media that are not boring, fun and different from other media, and also digital comic strips contain messages that participants can imitate.

In the observation data, it is found that students could work on and understand digital comic strips well, this was proven by the observation at 16.00, but a few minutes later they started having difficulties at the fifteenth minute— 16.15.

2. **Researcher:** How do you feel when you read this digital comic strip? Can you explain?

Rama (P1): Fun and interesting to read.

Azka (P2): I feel happy, especially when I read the third comic. I thought the character would fight, but actually no, they are friends.

Rommy (P3): It's fun and interesting cause it used visual. So, it didn't bored.

Citra (P4): It's relatable and has many meaning.

Annisa (P5): Fun, happy.

Deka (P6): There is sadness and fun. The sad thing is in comic 2, there are beggars who are less fortunate.

Participants claimed that when they read digital comic strips they felt happy, relatable, and sad. It derives from digital comic strip features that make students easy to read. It also have interesting visual that attracts students interest to read.

To strengthen this data, there is some evidence that where their emotions are really involved in this study, the evidence is in the observation data, more precisely at 4:45 p.m. when the new study began, especially when they read the digital comic strip, at that time. then their emotions are involved. Their emotions are involved if until 16.27 when the research is about to end.



Figure 03. The students comprehend the digital comic strip through writing

- **Students' preceptions on digital comic strip-assisted reading comprehension**

Perceptionly, when researchers conducted research, digital comic strips were well received by students in research site, the reason was because for them digital comic strips were a medium that was easy to use to understand

an intention or meaning in the comic. Based on interview transcription with six participants, it is admitted that digital comic strips create easiness for them to understand English. Feature story and picture made student easy to reading. In this way, it can be concluded that digital comic strips facilitate students to read well. It can be referred from interview transcription as follow:

Researcher: How's your perception reading English using digital comic strip? Does make you easy to read? or not?

Rama (P1): No. I prefer Indonesian. But Arabic can too. In English, I prefer movies.

Azka (P2): Oh, obviously that's important, especially if you like it. For example, earlier, Rama likes to watch English films, so he can.

Rommy (P3): Yeah, it's make me understand about the comic digital content.

Citra (P4): It's more easier us to understand the meaning of the comic.

Annisa (P5): Its reasonable. Sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't.

Deka (P6): Yes because it's pictorial.

Five out of six participants positively accepted learning to use digital comic strips because for them digital comic strips are a medium that makes it easier for them to understand English reading, not only in the form of pictures, but in the form of stories.

Then, in his observation, even though two students had different opinions about digital comic strips, in fact they were all able to do the tasks that the researchers had given them well and even in several interview sessions they admitted that digital comic strips were a good medium for learning to understand English reading. (interview data 0.3). The proof of this observation is in the observation data at 16:10, at which time they were working on the task of understanding digital comic strips in writing.



Figure 04. The students comprehend the digital comic strip (2)

DISCUSSION

- **Digital comic strip engage students in reading comprehension**
 - a. **Authentic storyline encourages students to comprehend reading enthusiastically**

Authentic storylines often make some readers feel that the storylines presented by comic artists has something in common with the everyday lives they live. This is not an exception for digital comic strips. Digital comic strips often feature authentic storylines whether it's just for entertainment, to convey a message, or to be satirical. In accordance with the technical research conducted by the researcher on the participants, the first thing they did was understand the contents of the digital comic strip first. According to Baker (2011), students will be drawn in by comics because of their visual appeal, lack of text, and familiar characters, and Baker also argued that comics have the potential to improve literacy and language acquisition beyond their initial appeal.

So, according to what Baker said and according to the research that researcher had done, comics can make it easier for students to understand the comic content, that's because digital comic strip have features in the form of visuals or images so that they can attract students' interest in reading. In addition, digital comic strips can also involve students' understanding because this type of comic has a short, interesting, and easy-to-understand storyline. Especially when they read dialogues that tend to be short, and in general, these short dialogues can be understood well by students. Baker (2011) asserts that the lack of text in comics draws reluctant readers. Muzumdar (2016), also argued that reading an online English comic helps students comprehend the subject matter being taught, inspires them to read more, helps them retain information, and makes the learning process more enjoyable.

Most of students understand the comic content because there is a dialogue that goes directly to their understanding and also storyline that they think are interesting and relate to daily life. Based on Educomics (2019), utilizing comic strips can also assist young students in developing empathy, particularly if the characters are relatable. Again, depending on the comic strip you choose, it can teach older students about cultural issues. They don't be guaranteed to need to concur with the picture that is being introduced, however they are urged to ponder the issue and ideally make consistent contentions that will assist them with getting a handle on the thing they're feeling.

b. Digital comic strip is user-friendliness tool in vocabulary learning

Digital comic strips are a user-friendliness medium and are highly recommended for students who want to understand English reading and learn English vocabulary in a fun and relaxed way. The reason why digital comic strip digital can be said to be a friendly media is that this type of comic can be accessed in various digital media, whether it's on Instagram, Facebook, Webcomic, and also Webtoon.

According to Poai (2018), aside from the pictures, the elements of strips include panel, lettering, balloon, caption, and borders. The panel is the most basic element in comic strips. A panel can be square, round, or triangular. The panel is the place where all the other elements are conveyed. The pictures display the characters' appearance, actions, and facial expressions, while the lettering is any text on comic strips page used to emphasize important words.

According to Poai (2018) and Kohnke (2018), the benefits of using comic books are long-lasting and can be read anywhere. Sinta (2019) says that teaching reading to students with less English language proficiency through the use of digital comic strips seems to be most effective. Not only understanding in the form of content, digital comic strips also have short features, making it easier for students to understand the contents. The comic strip Merc (2014) demonstrated that reading comprehension among students is significantly improved.

Based on Kharbach (2018) digital comic strip can be used with students in different school grades, each different school subjects, ideal teaching tools for teaching a target language, can be used to teach reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Edmunds (2018), a specialist in education, is a firm believer in the educational value of comic books and graphic novels because they require readers to not only passively receive information but also to interact with the text and images in order to construct meaning. "The immediacy of comics can also take what students think is "boring" subject matter and make it interesting and motivating," he said.

He stated that the introduction of comic strips to the class improved the students' reading abilities. The other studies by Anni Widiyanti (2018) and Solano (2018) were related to the use of digital comics in the classroom of English as a foreign language. Their findings revealed that digital comics were excellent resources for teaching English (Solano et al., 2018).

c. Collaboration and storyline create students interest in learning

Emotionally, students enjoy learning English using digital comic strips because digital comic strips can involve their feelings with interesting storyline features, thus making them feel interested in the contents of the comic. Comics usually deal with conceptual content that is communicated in multiple ways. Typically the images in comics are representational (often mimetic) and the textual elements conceptually reference aspects of the story world of the comic, many of which are directly involved in readers' emotional responses to the narrative (Simpson, 2022).

According to Sarma (2016) and Syafii (2019), the use of images like those in comic books could create an exciting atmosphere that allows students to express their feelings during the learning process. Megawati & Anugerahwati (2012) and Syafii (2019) say that using comics will help students learn English in more interesting and enjoyable ways. Students can also use comic strips to develop and practice their target language and help them come up with ideas.

Comics are thus a powerful way to explore the possibilities to communicate using “text immersed in image” and “pictures anchored in words,” which “relay meaning back and forth across their boundaries” (Sousanis, 2015, p. 53).

Comic strips are a great medium for developing and practicing the target language without requiring students to read and/or write long passages to access the main idea. The adoption of creativity in language acquisition has several benefits, including effectiveness for practicing and discussing target language use, facility of implementation in class, minimal planning requirements, engagement with the task and other learners, and, more importantly, creative language usage within the framework of the comic (Kohnke, 2018).

Digital comics also encourage students to work collaboratively, as digital comics are a powerful tool for online collaboration. This can subsequently improve students’ language skills. Educators teaching new vocabulary or grammatical structures might instruct students to create a comic strip, in which the characters use the words or constructions that have been learned in class (Yunus, 2016).

- Students’ preceptions on digital comic strip-assisted reading comprehension

Digital comic strips are media that are positively received by students at the school. Budiman et al. (2018) and Cabrera et al. (2018) argue that vocabulary is one of the critical components that the students need to master in language learning. It is because vocabulary is the bridge to use and understand the language and the skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Chaikovska (2018) adds that comic-based activities reinforce traditional grammar and vocabulary tasks. Furthermore, Megawati (2012) states that comic strips are suitable for assisting the students to understand vocabulary. The pictures and the dialogues cooperate toward each other as the representation of the character’s expression. Therefore, it could be said that the use of comic strips gives benefit in vocabulary learning. The benefits are 1) it helps to promote and facilitate vocabulary teaching, 2) it helps to improve vocabulary, and 3) it makes the learning process becomes fun and meaningful. Poai (2018) adds that pictures in comic strips facilitate vocabulary teaching. The use of comic strips containing pictures and simple words matched with the motion makes the students more interested in improving their vocabulary (Poai, 2018). Therefore, comic strips help the students learn vocabulary indirectly through the combination of pictures and words used in the comic strips themselves. Furthermore, it helps the students to memorize and recall words.

Wu et al. (2022) also carried out the same research, they claim that the utilization of digital comics can enhance students' comprehension of lesson material and their desire to investigate and enhance their critical thinking abilities. It is hoped that learning through digital comics will be easier for students to understand so that the learning process becomes more enjoyable. According to the

leading neuroscientist (Le Doux, 2020), digital comics are the ideal alternative medium for learning because readers' emotional involvement will significantly affect their memory.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that digital comic strip is potentially engage students in reading comprehension through cognitive, behavioural, and emotion because digital comic strips have several interesting features that make students easily involved in this reading media, these features include interesting pictures, authentic storylines, and also short sentences in comic word balloons that make it easier for students to understand English reading. By using digital comic strips, they can understand English reading easily with storylines that relate to everyday life. In addition, digital comic strips have a feature that can be transferred to students' cellphones, making it easier for students to read them anywhere, anytime. And again, with this digital comic strip, students enjoy their study time more while reading comics with their friends, not only that, the digital comic strip also makes students who are understanding English happy. In sum up, digital comic strip engages students in comprehending passage/text well.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this paper, the author(s) reported no potential conflicts of interest.

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1. For the Teacher

For the teachers themselves, the researchers hope that the teachers out there can create or find a media that can make it easier for students to learn to understand English reading. That way, students can easily learn it and enjoy the learning process, and can be involved in learning to understand English reading through these media.

2. For the Student

For students themselves, researchers hope that learning to understand English reading using digital comic strips can motivate students in learning to understand English reading. Because after all, understanding English reading is a basic skill that must be mastered by students.

3. For Others Researchers

Here the researcher hopes that other researchers can find or create other media to help students understand English reading. And the researcher hopes that this research will be very useful for other researchers.

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