

Online English Comics as Reading Materials for English Language Education

Department Students

Ulfah, Khoirotunnisa

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Abstract

Online English comic is one of reading material that can be used by students. Students should be triggered by interesting and understandable reading material in order to increase their reading motivation and English proficiency. The aim of this study is to discuss the benefits of online English comics as reading materials and to discover the applications and websites that usually used by students to read English comics that usually used by ELED students in fourth year. The findings show some benefits of reading comics such as adding language knowledge and also several websites and application to read English comics such as webtoon and mangakakalot.com that usually used by ELED students

Keywords: Reading material, online English comics, applications and websites to read English comic, benefits of reading online English comic.

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Reading is a very complex process. According to Albdour (2015) in reading process, students should pay a very extra attention to several aspects such as critical thinking, vocabulary mastery, language skills, time management, reading strategies, and concentration. Based on what Albdour said reading is not just following word by word but students have to develop those aspects in order to comprehend text clearly. Students should understand all things included in reading material and relate it to their prior knowledge. Memis and Sivri (2016) argued that in order to develop reading skill, students should identify, criticize, and consider the reading text to their prior knowledge.

Students' reading performance holds an important role for successful learning process. The success of reading itself can be affected by the selection of reading material. Sugiarti (2012) as cited in Kamal (2018) stated that the choice of appropriate material in reading activity can be a thing a teacher can do in order to make reading process more effective. Based on the researchers' experience, reading material usually used by student is very diverse. Students are accustomed to read novel, textbook, and journal. Reading material that contain long text, boring content, and text without illustration will make students demotivated in reading. In this case, it may make students worried, cannot concentrate on what the material that they read and have less interest in reading (Akyol, Cakiroglu, & Kuruyer, 2014). Several students who are still a beginner reader tend to choose reading material such as poem, legend, short life story and fables with visual or picture (Lipp, 2018). Krusemark (2015) stated that comic also can be used by

beginner readers because they need some illustrations to understand the text (as cited in Cary, 2004). Therefore, in the selection of reading material, students tend to choose material that includes some illustration in it.

In this digital era, there are a lot of materials that can be found in the internet. Sarac (2018) has argued that the internet and technology provide educational material such as text, video, and audio in order to support students' learning process. One of reading materials that can be found in the internet is English comic. In students' English learning process there are many people who have no idea about benefits of online English comic as English reading material such as parents and teachers. They think that online English comic is only reading for a joy, but actually there are many advantages that students get by reading online English comic for learning especially language learning. Muzumdar (2016) argued that by reading an online English comic helps students understand learning topic clearly, motivate them for further reading, remember learning material, and make learning process more fun. Online English comic is one of choices to overcome students' reading problem. According to Saputro and Soeharto (2015) nowadays the use of comic in order to support students' learning process has used by several countries including Japan. Japan is one of develop countries that uphold a comic as a reading material which is very effective to students. Through online English comic, students do not need to read a long text. Online English comic also provide story with picture that will gain students' interest. Brante and Holmqvist (2017) argued that the purpose of illustration that provided by digital reading material is aimed to increase learning ability. Based on informal interview researcher to some university students, most of them told that online English

comic help them in learning English. They also mentioned that by reading comic, they are not frustrated because comic provide interesting story and colorful picture.

Literature Review

Reading Skill

In educational context, reading skill may be a major thing that affects students' educational achievement. Osei, Liang, Natalia, and Stephan (2016) discussed that reading skill grasps important role of people's education. In learning process, students cannot be separated from reading because reading helps them enhance their academic performance (Daniel, Esoname, Chima & Udoaku, 2017). By doing the reading, students will gain a lot of new knowledge from material that they read. That way, reading skill should be trained seriously to make students get a good achievement in learning process. They also argued that students who apply reading effectively improve their learning proficiency, understanding of learning material, and memorizing ability. Antunez (2002) stated there are five micro skills in reading namely phonological awareness, phonic, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. For more detailed information, each skill is explained in the following paragraphs.

Reading Materials

In reading process, students have to deal with document or written text mentioned with reading material. Hanifa (2017) said that material is the most important aspect that affect successful of reading proficiency. Students' successful reading can be determined by how good teacher uses the material in learning process. Teacher can increase students' reading motivation by giving them some

kinds of reading materials. In order to reach a good level of reading proficiency, students must be accustomed to read various kinds of material to get a lot of information (Day & Park, 2005). Javed, Eng, and Mohammed (2015) stated that from textbook, the students can also look for reading material from internet because internet produces a lot of reading materials which cannot be found in textbook. Internet and electronic resources also become the most popular place to look for reading material within students (Arthi & Srinivasan, 2018). According to Febriana (2017), there are two types of reading materials, Non-authentic reading material and Authentic reading material. Each type is explained in the paragraphs below in detail.

Websites and Applications from which Students to Read English Comics

Online English comic is one of authentic reading materials. Authentic reading material such as online English comic makes the students feel connected with real life situation based on the story they read. Students will be easier to increase reading skill, if the language that used related with real situation (Febriana, 2017). Besides, the students can find any reading material through internet in order to support their reading skill. Nowadays, people utilize internet for some aspects such as for the benefit of duty, education, entertainment, and information (Holmqvist, Holsanova, Barthelson, and Lundqvist, 2003).

According to Cahyadi (2019) there are some favorite applications that usually used by comic readers to read English comics. Two of them are Webtoon and Mangarock. He added that an application like Webtoon provides many types of genres of comic that can be read. Khoiri and Setiyani (2016) told that the genres that provided by digital comic very diverse and the readers have a chance

to read their favorite one. There are more than hundred of comics provide interesting story that make students prefer to read comics from these applications. Besides, some comics in these two applications sometimes provide music and animations that played during each chapter. Those things also become the reasons why the readers loved to read online English comics from these applications. Listiorini (2017) added that students prefer to read online English comics because it is accessible. They only need a smart phone and an internet connection to read comics. They do not need to spend a lot of money to read comic. Herdiansyah (2017) also added two websites that usually used by comic readers to read English comics such as Mangastream and Kissmanga.com. Herdiansyah (2017) told that comics that provided by Mangastream have a very high quality of both picture and story. It is very important for a website or application to provide good quality of its comic. Most of the readers will be more attractive to the comics that have a high quality of pictures and stories, because picture and story are the important aspect to gain their interesting to read that comic. Besides, this website also will inform the readers if there is any trouble when accessing the website. He added that by reading English comics from Kissmanga the readers can request the story that they want to read that do not provided by other websites. This website also has a presentable appearance that can make the readers look for comics that they want to read easier.

Benefits of Online English Comics as Reading Materials

Online English comic is a very effective way to be a reading material for students in reading activity. Ray (2018) stated that English comic is one of the most popular art forms around the world, it is a perfect tool for English reading

activity and also it is accessible through electronic devices. Online English comic is known as reading material which the texts are explained through the pictures (Novianti & Syaichudin, 2010). That way, online comic demands the students to blend the text and graphic in order to comprehend the content. Online English comic becomes one of the most popular reading materials among students. Reading an online English comic also can make students read for pleasure. Roozafzai (2012) argued that visual aspects of comic give a big opportunity for readers to enhance their understanding because it provides additional contextual information. McVicker (2007) added that humor and simple text of comic also make students feel interested in reading it. Hence, online English comic can be an effective reading material in order to enhance students' reading proficiency because there are many benefits that can students get by reading it.

As cited in Ozdemir (2017), there are several opinions argued by several experts about benefits of comic. Comic is a part of an art that combines creative illustration with interesting story, which can triggered readers concerning the joy of reading (Tatalovic, 2009). Besides, Rota and Izquierdo (2003) discussed that stories in every comic have worthwhile messages which will be obtained by the readers. Besides, comic includes verbal and visual coding which will make students comprehend the text in reading context clearly (Liu, 2004). Tatalovic (2009) also argued that interesting stuffs such as story and pictures might produce pleasure while reading comic.

Methodology

In order to discover the benefits of reading online English comics for ELED students, the methodology that used in this research was a qualitative

research. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), “A qualitative research is a design that is needed when a straight forward description of phenomenon is desired” (p.256). By using this approach the researcher gained a deep explanation about the topic from participants. Also qualitative was enabled the researcher to get the detail data. This research took place at English Language Education Department (ELED) at a private university in Yogyakarta. This research involved by four students of ELED at one private university in Yogyakarta as research participants. For the reason that the researcher chose ELED students, as the researcher knows, there were many ELED students usually read online English comic as reading materials. The second reason came up that the ELED’ students had a computer technology course that helped them to get sources for reading material including online English comic. for analyzed the data, the researcher involved three steps first one transcribing data, then member checking and the last one coding.

Findings

Benefits of Online English Comics as Reading Materials.

Adding language knowledge. there were four parts of language knowledge mentioned by participants as benefits of reading online English comics. Thus, those four parts of language knowledge were vocabulary, grammar, and slang expression. Each part of language knowledge is explained in the following paragraphs in detail.

Increasing vocabulary. . From all the participants’ point of view, they agreed that the vocabulary mastery could be developed by reading English comic. One of participants who had similar statement was Ari. He said that “When I read

English comic, automatically I will find new words”. From the statement mentioned, it was supported by a study from Cimermanova (2014) who asserted that good effect through reading comic not only increase motivation but also develop vocabulary. Based on Ari’ opinion by reading online English comics he could find slang expression that he did not understand before. When he found slang that he did not know the meaning in a comic, he used to seeking for its translation in a dictionary that he had. He did it because he wanted to understand all the text that he read clearly. Slang expression usually comes up in daily communication so that when the readers read comic and see the dialogue between two characters in comics, they learned what the meaning and how to used it properly.

Developing grammar skill. Ani and Sasa agreed that their grammatical skill was increased through reading comic. From the statement mentioned, it could be seen from Ani’s argument; she said “Another benefit which I got by reading English comic was my grammatical proficiency getting enhanced”. The statements mentioned was in line with Zsuzsanna (2017) who explained that English comic is able to support English learning proses focus on increasing the grammatical points including tenses and moods. While reading English comic, the students were treated to read several kinds of sentences. Also, they could read a sentence when somebody gets angry, sad, and happy. Hence, the readers learn form of the sentences in several ways through reading online English comic. Enhancing reading comprehension skill. Sasa was a participant who mentioned the benefit of English comic was for reading skill. Sasa said that maybe, Reading online English comic was more crucial in increasing reading comprehension skill.

Besides, the statement mentioned was in line with Muzumdar (2016) who argued that by reading online English comic, it helps the students to understand the text which they have read clearly, remember learning material, and make fun learning process.

Building critical thinking. Ari stated that the students' critical thinking could be increased by reading English comic. It can be seen from his statement "Reading online English comic can make us become more critical". There are many genres that can be chosen by the students while reading online English comics. One of them is mystery comic. As what Suki told that he loved to read mystery comic because it can trained his critical thinking. The statement mentioned was supported by Burmack (2002) as cited in Anugerahwati (2017) reading material like comics can help students to train their critical thinking such as solving problems, evaluating point of view, analyzing ideas and reflecting decision.

Increasing creativity. Sasa told that "I think by reading English comic I become more creative". For the reason, when the students read comic, the comic delivered kind of stuffs such as picture, color and word which could make the reading way to more creative and interesting to read. From the statement mentioned, it was in line with a study from Novianti and Syaichudin (2010) who asserted that the main characteristic of a comic is being supported by illustrations. Besides, online English comic is known as a reading material which the text is explained through the pictures. It also had an effect on students' creativity because they are able to read good stories with interesting and colorful pictures from comic.

Developing reading motivation. Ani stated that when she read comics it was like she look at her own life. The students' reading motivation was enhanced if students enjoy their reading activity. McVicker (2007) stated that English comic includes humor, simple text, interesting story, and picture which make the readers of comic interested to reading. Accordingly, the students should be supported by reading material like comic in order to build their reading motivation. Also, the students who had found their interest in reading comic can continue their reading process by reading other materials such as novel, textbook, and journal.

Applications and Websites that Students prefer to Read. There are two applications that used by students, Webtoon and Ciayo comics and four websites that usually visited by students including mangakakalot.com, mangareaderapp.com, mangazuki.info, and mangapanda.com

Webtoon. As the important point, webtoon provided very colorful comics, which can trigger their interesting to read. The statement mentioned was in line with Tatalovic (2009) who stated that comic is a part of an art, which combines creative and colorful illustration with interesting story, and it can trigger the readers to concern the joy of reading. Reading comics from webtoon was accessible and could be accessed using smart phone. Webtoon also did not need much money to access. The statement mentioned was added by Sasa who conveyed "The comics in webtoon could be read for free". From the statement mentioned, it was line with study from Setiyadi (2017) who maintained that by utilizing internet as media to find out reading material, the waste of money and time can be minimized.

Ciayo comics. Ari was the only participant who read comic form Ciayo because it had excellent illustrations that made him interested in reading the comic through this application. Regarding the statement mentioned, it was supported by Roozafzai (2012) who stated that visual aspects of comic give a chance for the readers to increase their understanding of the content which they read. Besides, there were many students who were not interested in doing the reading because reading materials which they used to read were very boring. Also, the students needed to be given reading material which could trigger their interesting like comics. Ari also said that he loved to read comics from Ciayo comics because it provided many comics from any genres. This is supported by Khoiri and Setiyani (2016) the genres that provided by digital comic very diverse and the readers have a chance to read their favorite one.

Mangakakalot.com. according to Ani it provides various comics which other websites do not have. This was in line with Herdiansyah (2017) who said that some websites to read English comics give a chance to students to request other comics that they want to read that maybe do not provided by other websites. Ani also added that “I love to read comics for Mangakakalot.com because the story in Mangakakalot.com give me some moral values”. This statement supported by Izquierdo (2003) who argued that the stories in every comic have worthwhile messages which can be obtained by the readers. When reading comic, the students read a various stories that provided various moral values. Reading comic is not only to entertain the students but also can be a medium to develop their attitude.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to discover ELED students' perception on the use of online English comics as reading materials. By conducting this research, the researcher discussed benefits of online English comics as reading materials and applications and websites to read English comics that students prefer to used. In conducting this research, the interview was used as an instrument in collecting the data. The interview was conducted by involving four ELED students at a private university in Yogyakarta.

In addition, the researcher had discovered some benefits of online English comics as reading materials. By reading online English comics, the readers learned some language knowledge such as vocabulary, and grammar. Regarding the results of the research from four research participants, reading online English comics could enhance their reading comprehension skill, critical thinking, creativity, and reading motivation.

The researcher also found out two applications and four websites that ELED students prefer to read English comics. The participants of this research had stated all the consideration of choosing those applications and websites. For instance, the readers did not need to spend much money in accessing the comics. Also, it was also very effective and efficient in reading online English comic. The readers only needed to have a smart phone and the internet connection to access the comic easily. Therefore, those websites and applications also provided a high quality of illustrations which made the readers interested in reading the online English comics as reading material to develop their reading skill well.

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