Online English Comics as Reading Materials for English Language Education Department Students

A. Syahid Robbani[*] ID
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, INDONESIA

Ulfah Khoirotunnisa ID
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, INDONESIA

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 to increase their reading motivation and English proficiency. The objective of this study is to discuss the benefits of online English comics as reading materials and to discover the applications and websites that are usually used by students to read online English comics. This study applied the descriptive qualitative study supported by interviews as a data-gathering technique. The results of this study showed the benefits of online English comics as reading materials. Those are adding language knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar, enhancing reading comprehension, building critical thinking, increasing creativity, and developing reading motivation. The second finding is about the applications and websites to read English comics that students prefer to read. There are some applications and websites that are usually used by students to read English comics. The applications are Webtoon and Ciayo Comic, and also the websites include Mangakakalot.com, Mangareaderapp.com, Mangazuki.info, and Mangapanda.com.

Keywords: *English language education, online English comic, reading material.*

Introduction

In this era, English is the powerful language that is used by all people almost through the globe. People need to master English to follow a transition of the world. By mastering English, people can easily communicate with the foreigner, going abroad, and receive up to date information from any other countries (Zarrabi, 2018). That is why students need to learn and master the English language well to develop their ability in any aspect.

One of the aspects that can affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English proficiency is reading skills. Reading is a primary thing in the learning process and it can be a way for learners to enhance their English proficiency (Zuo, 2011). Besides, students will get some language input related to English ability like vocabulary mastery. Jinxiu and Zhengping (2016) said that reading activity can be used as a teaching technique to develop students' vocabulary mastery. Siyabi (2017) also mentioned several benefits of reading such as build reading motivation, develop vocabulary skills, enhance reading comprehension, train writing ability, and increase readers' insight.

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

There are three problems cause students to get a low level of reading skill. First is reading materials such as textbooks, journals, or the e-books that are given by the teachers are boring, because of their long text. Many teachers do not realize what their students need in reading. Students' reading pleasure and motivation should be developed by providing them interesting reading material. They can start their reading process by reading online English comic. By providing them reading material like the comic that includes many illustrations and stories, students can be more

---

[*] **Corresponding author:**
A. Syahid Robbani, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia. ✉ syahidrobbani5@gmail.com

interested in reading and their further reading. The second problem is many students do not know about reading material that suits for them and can make them love to read. The lack of reading habit happens because students do not know what reading material that they should read. Teacher and parents can be a helper for students to find out reading material that suits for them. If students have found reading material that they want, automatically their reading pleasure can be developed and their reading habit will be increased. The next problem is about students' reading motivation. Students nowadays may lose their motivation in reading caused by reading material itself. If students are not interested in the reading material, they will be demotivated in the English learning process. Therefore, the choice of reading material affects students' reading motivation and skill.

Students' reading performance holds an important role in the successful learning process. The success of reading itself can be affected by the selection of reading material. Kamal (2018) stated that the choice of appropriate material in reading activity can be a thing that the teacher can do to make the reading process more effective. Based on the researchers' experience, the reading material that is usually used by the student is very diverse. Students are accustomed to reading the novel, textbook, and journal. Reading material that contains 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 the content of the material that they read, and have less interest in reading (Akyol et al., 2014). Several students who are still beginner readers tend to choose reading material such as poems, legends, short life stories, and fables with visual or pictures (Lipp, 2018). Comics also can be used by beginner readers because they need some illustrations to understand the text (Krusemark, 2015).

In this digital era, there are a lot of materials that can be found on the internet. One of the reading materials that can be found on the internet is an English comic. In students' English learning process, many people have no idea about the benefits of online English comics as English reading material such as parents and teachers. They think that online English comic is only reading for 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 the choices to overcome students' reading problem.

According to Saputro and Soeharto (2015), nowadays, the use of comics to support students' learning process has been used by several countries including Japan. Japan is one of the developed countries that uphold a comic as a reading material that is very effective to students. Through online English comics, students do not need to read long texts. Online English comics also provide the story with a picture that can gain students' interest. The purpose of illustrations provided by digital reading material is aimed to increase learning ability (Brante & Holmqvist, 2017). Based on informal interview the researcher with some university students, most of them told that online English comics help them in learning English. They also mentioned that by reading comics, they are not frustrated because comics provide an interesting story and colorful picture.

Based on the researcher's experience as an English learner, the researcher and friends are interested in learning English by using online English comics. They often read an online English comic in their leisure time. Therefore, the researcher would like to explore the use of online English comics as reading material in detail.

A previous study showed that the use of comics in teaching reading is more effective than teaching through general material. Students' interest and imagination are developed while teaching reading by using comics (Roozafzai, 2012). Also, the comic used as the material made students easily comprehend the learning content (Kamil et al., 2017). Another study stated that the use of comic strips does not play a crucial role in enhancing students' reading proficiency (Khoii & Forouzesh, 2010).

This research and those previous studies applied the different methods. While the researcher of this study conducted interview with some students of different batches to get information, those related studies implemented the experiment with participants in the classroom, dividing the participants into two groups, and conducting post-test, pre-test, and reading test. Another difference is in the type of comic that is studied. Those three related studies conducted offline comics but the researcher of this study discussed the online one. Through this research, the researcher investigated English Language Education Department students' perception of the use of online English comics as reading material. This study also conducted different research focus, and the focus of this research went to the online English comic which students read including the benefits for students' reading skill.

Literature Review

Reading Skill

In the educational context, reading skills may be a major thing that affects students' educational achievement. Reading skills grasp an important role in people's education. In the learning process, students cannot be separated from reading because reading helps them enhance their academic performance (Daniel et al., 2017). By doing the reading, students will gain a lot of new knowledge from the material that they read. That way, reading skills should be trained seriously to make students get a good achievement in the 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.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is the awareness of sound even the awareness of any sounds heard. Besides, it is a basic skill should be mastered by beginner readers to make their reading better. Zygouris-Coe (2001) stated that children with limited phonological awareness will have trouble acquiring the alphabetic principle which in turn will limit their ability to decode words. From the statement mentioned, beginner readers face a lot of difficulties in reading if they do not care about the phonological skill. Phonological awareness is not developed in short time, but it needs a long time of training. According to Semingson (2011), there are some activities which can develop beginner readers' phonological awareness such as rhyming, singing, hearing syllables, and counting. It can be concluded that phonological awareness is very significant because it contains many aspects that can develop reading skill.

Phonic

Phonic also becomes one of the basic skills in reading. Phonic is identified as how the word is sounded. Liu (2010) explained phonic as a method of teaching reading where the basic component is the relation between letters and pronunciations. One important aspect that must be considered while learning phonic is students as a beginner reader should master alphabet first. Liu (2010) added that in a way to support phonic skill, the students should know all alphabet because it helps them to learn phonic quickly. Besides, students should be able to recognize the sound of the alphabets. If they only know the letter without the sound, it is not phonic because phonic is the sound made by the students while reading. Antunez (2002) asserted that phonic can be used to make students realize how relation between written and spoken language. Lindner (2015) stated that parents and teachers can train students' phonic skill by singing ABC song together. In ABC song, students will recognize alphabets by the way it sounds like.

Vocabulary development

The vocabulary development is very significant for beginner readers. The reason why students should increase their vocabulary skills come up as the basis for learning English (Loraine, 2008). Besides, the mastery of words is the main aspect of enhancing reading skills. Loraine (2008) also said several activities that can enhance students' vocabulary mastery such as encouraging them to read, writing, and talking a lot. By encouraging the students to read, write, and talk about something that they are interested in will make them get a lot of new vocabularies. Likewise, learning strategy plays a crucial role in students' vocabulary development. Alavi and Keyvanshekouh (2012) stated that strategies in enhancing vocabulary are keys to make students know what to read and get meaning from what they read. Some researchers have explained strategies for vocabulary development, one of them is Nation. Nation (2001) said that vocabulary strategies are classified into three aspects, plan, source, and process. In planning, the readers decide the place and time to read and the new vocabulary that they will get. As a source, the students choose to read what material that they are interested in. For processing, the process that students do while-reading until they gain new vocabularies.

Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to recognize words and sentences in reading a text quickly. In the reading process, reading fluency happens automatically while reading process. In addition, the readers do not need to think about the word. Readers can only automatically read what provided in the reading text and get the point from it. Baker et al. (2008) discussed that reading fluency is one of the aspects which affect students' reading performance so that the growth of students' reading skill is affected by the level of reading fluency. Besides, it is very important to become fluent readers because if the reader can read fluently, reading comprehension will be increased (Terry, 2017). Readers still have a low level of reading fluency which will not get the point on what they read. Terry (2017) added the lack of fluency in reading might cause the readers to put full effort to read words, and they do not get the meaning of what they read.

Reading Comprehension

This is one of micro-skills in reading. The reading process can be successful activity, if the readers understand its content and get the meaning of it (Antunez, 2002). The interaction between students and texts which they read is very crucial because students need to get knowledge from the reading (Jiang, 2015). By doing reading deeply, readers feel connected with text then readings goals will be achieved. In increasing reading comprehension, students should know the techniques. If readers have mastered the techniques of reading, they can face any difficulties that come to their reading process. One of the techniques that can be applied is reading aloud. Jiang (2015) also added that by reading aloud, readers read the whole text, and they will understand the whole important information from the text. Besides, Dempsey (2012) also stated that some aspects that should be paid much attention while reading are highlighting the important information, reading the whole paragraph, reading for pleasure, and choosing interesting material. From the

explanations mentioned above, it can be concluded that reading process is not an easy task. The students need to understand all aspects of reading skill. Those aspects can be learned by practicing reading regularly.

Reading Materials

In the reading process, students have to deal with the document or written text named reading material. Hanifa (2018) said that material is the most important aspect that affects the successful of reading proficiency. Reading success can be determined by how well teacher uses the material in the learning process. The teacher can increase students' reading motivation by providing them interesting reading materials. In order to reach a good level of reading proficiency, students must be accustomed by various kinds of material to get a lot of information (Day & Park, 2005). Javed et al. (2015) stated that from the textbook, the students can also look for reading materials from the internet because the internet produces a lot of reading materials that cannot be found in the textbook. Internet and electronic resources have also become the most popular place to search for reading material among the students (Arthi & Srinivasan, 2018). There are two types of reading materials, non-authentic reading material, and authentic reading material.

Non-authentic reading material is the type of reading material designed deliberately for the English learning process. According to Almi and Bentouzi (2015), by using non-authentic reading material, the reading process becomes more understandable because it is easy to be used, adapted for a certain aspect, created based on the goals of the reading process, and it also connects to students' learning at the same time. Non-Authentic reading material is created through several processes that are very effective to be used in the reading process. "Sort of materials are proposed, revised, and modified to serve pedagogical purposes" (Almi & Bentouzi, 2015, p. 13). Besides, this type of material also has several drawbacks. Material like textbooks often makes students feel demotivated in reading. They cannot find pleasure in reading a textbook and will lose their interest in doing the reading. Islam (2015) argued that non-authentic reading material cannot give pleasure to students, and it is more monotonous, unreal, and lifeless because the purpose of non-authentic material is only for the benefit of the process of English teaching and learning. Examples of non-authentic reading materials are worksheets, textbooks, videos, and others.

Another type of reading material is authentic reading material. This type of material is often used in the reading process. According to Islam (2015), authentic reading material is related to the real-life aspect, and it provides a real context and allows students to deal with the real world. Examples of authentic reading materials are newspapers, brochures, magazines, novels, short stories, offline and online English comics. Berardo (2006) stated that authentic reading material is very beneficial to EFL students because it motivates the students and triggers them for further reading. Febriana (2017) asserted that if students feel motivated to learn, they will involve themselves in the classroom activity. That way, by reading authentic material, students will be more active in the learning process. This type of reading material is very interesting. Berardo (2006) added that the variety of text and presentation of authentic reading material make it more interesting. He also said that the more kinds of text are delivered to students, the more students are interested in it. Hence, it will motivate students to read and increase their English skills.

For the disadvantages, the words and sentences in authentic reading materials are complicated. Also, it makes the students with a lower level of English difficult to understand the content because it is taken directly from the sources without edited by the teacher. Sometimes, the information found in authentic material is from past material, and it has lost its validity (Islam, 2015). Berardo (2006) also argued that the worst thing about authentic material is when the reading process applied the wrong types of text, so the vocabulary is not suitable and relevant to students' needs. Thus, it will make students demotivated in doing the reading.

Methodology

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research was to discover the perception of English Language Education Department students of online English comics as reading materials. The research method used in this research was a descriptive qualitative method. This method is supported by interviews as a data gathering-technique to gain a deep explanation and detailed data about the topic from participants. Besides, the type of interview used by the researcher in this research was the standardized open-ended interview. The standardized open-ended interview is a type of interview that the orders of questions that will be asked are constructed in advance (Cohen, et al., 2011). This type of interview pushed the researcher to not asking questions that did not related to the topic. Besides, this kind of interview made the researcher asked the questions exactly following the sequence created.

Research Participants

This research was involved by four students of ELED at one private university in Yogyakarta as research participants. For the reason that the researcher chose ELED students was as the researcher knew, there were many ELED students who 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. The participants involved two males and two females. Two participants had been read online English comics for three

years, the third participant had been read online English comics since junior high school, then the last participant had been read online English comics since senior high school. They are students of the fourth year in the university. All these participants already had the experiences in reading online English comics for more than six months. Experiencing in reading online English comic at least Six months was one of the criteria that set by the researcher. Another criterion for participants of this research was students who read online English comics at least three times a week. Thus, the researcher got rich and detailed information from ELED' students about the use of online English comics as reading materials.

Data Collection Procedure

In the data collection procedure, the researcher conducted several actions. The first step was contacted participants who have fulfilled the criteria that were determined. Then, the researcher determined the place and time for doing the interview. The last step, it was about the language that was used by the researcher while gathering the data.

The researcher contacted the participants through WhatsApp and asked their willingness to become participants of this research. After the researcher got participants, the researcher conducted the interview on the date that agreed by participants. The researcher conducted the interview at one of the places in participants' university. University was the best place to be used to conducted the interview because both researcher and participants had access to the university easily.

In doing the interview, the researcher used the Indonesian language. By using the Indonesian language as a tool of communication in doing the interview, it made the questions understandable to participants and to make the researcher easier to gain the information from participants. The reason why the researcher used the Indonesian language was that all participants are Indonesian and Indonesian is their first language used in daily life context. Therefore, using Indonesian language, the participants became easier to answer the questions from the researcher. Besides, the researcher also recorded the interview process in order to make the researcher not lose any information from participants.

The interview had conducted approximately in 10-20 minutes for each participant. All participants had explained all the information regarding to this research deeply. Hence, this was very suitable time to conduct the interview for this research.

Analyzing of Data

After the researcher had conducted all steps in gathering data, then the researcher analyzed the data. There were several steps conducted by the researcher in process of analyzing data. Those were transcribing the data, member checking, and coding. In process of interviewing, the researcher had gotten some information from participants regarding the research. The data still in form of recording was transcribed into written text without any changes by the researcher. Mahpur (2017) asserted that in doing the transcribing data, the researcher has to transcribe the information from the recording to the text written exactly as same as the recording. In this process, the researcher used pseudonym for each participant of this research. After finishing the transcribing of the data, the researcher conducted a member checking. This process aimed to make sure that all information from participants were credible. If there were unclear data or information, the researcher has to contact participants again to clarify the answers to the question provided. The way the researcher conduct member checking was contacted each participant through message or phone, talk about participants' leisure time, and ask him/her to meet the researcher to talk about it. In the process of member checking the researcher gave the transcription to the participants and asked them to recheck it. This process is to make sure that the data of this research will be valid. After getting clear information from participants, the data was transcribed by the researcher into written text and continued the next step of data analysis. The researcher conducted member checking right after finishing the transcribing. The result of member checking was all the participants approved the transcript that was made by the researcher. Thus, there were no changes in the transcript. The last step in analyzing the data of this research was coding. Coding is a process of giving a code or a label to a part of the information from the participant. The purpose of coding is to make the researcher gather similar information easily. The types of coding are divided into open code, analytic code, axial code, and selective code (Cohen et al., 2011). In the open coding, the researcher gave a title to each information that was given by participants needed by this research. The second was analytical coding. In this step, the researcher made information that was given by participants into the smaller point. In axial coding, the researcher gave a category for some similar data given by participants. The last one was selective coding. The researcher found a main aspect of the data in order to create categories for similar data. In this step, the researcher made the core category of data to explained the code that has been determined.

Results

The Benefits of Online English Comics as Reading Materials

After interviewing the participants, there were some benefits of online English comics as reading materials. The benefits of online English comics as reading materials could develop the students in language knowledge, language skill, critical thinking, creativity, and reading motivation.

Adding Language Knowledge

Online English comic is one of the reading materials that can allow the readers to enjoy the reading process. The students or readers who read with full of joy automatically their reading interesting could be triggered and they could get benefits from what they had read. Besides, there were three parts of language knowledge mentioned by participants as benefits of reading online English comics. Thus, those three parts of language knowledge were vocabulary, slang expression, and grammar.

The first aspect which automatically the students could get through reading English comics was new vocabulary. From all the participants' points of view, they agreed that vocabulary mastery could be developed by reading English comics. The participants stated that they found new words by reading online English comics. One of the participants said, "When I read English comic, automatically I will find new words". Besides, by reading online English comics the participants could find slang expressions that they did not understand before. The participant said, "Another benefit that I get from reading comics is additional knowledge about slang expressions". When they found slang that they did not know the meaning in a comic, they used to seek its translation in a dictionary that they had. They did it because they wanted to understand all the text that they read clearly.

Two participants shared the same thoughts that grammatical skills could be developed by reading English comics. They agreed that their grammatical skill was increased through reading comic. One of the participants said, "Another benefit which I got by reading English comic was my grammatical proficiency getting enhanced".

Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills

Another benefit which the students could get through reading online English comics was enhancing reading comprehension. The participant mentioned reading online English comics was very benefical in increasing reading comprehension skills. She said, "For me, the benefit of reading online English comics can improve my reading comprehension".

Building Critical Thinking

In the learning process, the students' critical thinking should be trained by providing the material that can make them think, analyze, and evaluate the material well. The participant stated that the students' critical thinking could be increased by reading English comics. He said, "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 a mystery comic. He said that he loved to read mystery comic "because it can train my critical thinking". For example, the comic that he used to read was *"Orouborous"*, the story is about a police detective who worked to hunted down the killers and investigated some cases. This kind of comics can make him think and probe any things that related to his education deeply and he gets used to finding a way out of problems that he faced.

Increasing Creativity

The participant agreed that creativity can be trained by reading English comics. It can be seen from his statement "I think by reading English comic I become more creative". For the reason, when the students read comics, the comic delivered kinds of stuff such as picture, color, and the word which could make the reader become more creative and also gain their reading interest.

Developing Reading Motivation

Another benefit which could be increased by reading online English comic was reading motivation. One of the participants mentioned, "Reading an online English comic was a very interesting activity, and it could motivate us for further reading". The students can start their reading activity by reading an English comic. Also, the participant stated that when she read comics it was like she looks at her own life.

To sum up, there were several benefits which could be obtained by the students while reading online English comics. In addition, the students could increase their language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension skill. Besides, some aspects of online English comics such as illustration, color, and story also could make the students improve their critical thinking, creativity, and reading motivation.

The Applications and Websites from which English Language Education Department (ELED)' Students Prefer to Read English Comics

In this digital era, students can utilize the internet to search for any reading materials that they want to read. By using a smartphone with an internet connection, they can install many applications that they need for their education, one of them is the application to read English comics. According to participants of this research, there are two applications that they usually used to read English comics, Webtoon and Ciayo comics.

As the important point, the participant mentioned that "Webtoon provided very colorful comics, which can trigger their interest to read". Reading comics from Webtoon was accessible and could be accessed by using a smartphone. Webtoon also do not spent much money to be accessed. The participant conveyed, "The comics in webtoon could be read for free". Webtoon is very interesting because it has a good quality of illustration. The illustration is one of the interesting aspects that could make students enjoy their reading process. Their reading process can be more fun provided by illustration.

Whereas, Ciayo is the only platform that provides all comics from Indonesia. Ciayo comic becomes one of favorite comics because it gives a chance for all people to not only read the comic but also distribute their comics into this platform. The participant stated, "Ciayo has many categories/genres to be read".

Besides the applications mentioned, there were four websites to read English comics provided by the participants. Those were Mangakakalot.com, Mangareader.app, Mangazuki.info, and Mangapanda.com. These websites mostly black-and-white English comics provided by Japan. The participants stated the comic from Japan have a better story than the other countries, because they had experienced in creating comic from a long time ago.

Mangakakalot.com becomes one of the favorite websites to read English comics because it provides various comics which other websites do not have. The participant also said, "I love to read comics from Mangakakalot.com because the story in Mangakakalot.com gave me some moral values". Another website mentioned by the participant of this study was Mangareaderapp.com that also called MangaAon. The participant said, "I love to read comics from this website because I loved the way its creator drew the picture". The participant added that he loved reading the comic from this website because it had an interesting story. The participant also loved reading comics from Mangazuki.info because sometimes, he could find his favorite comic on this website which was not provided by other websites. Another participant stated, "The storyline on this website is understandable". The participant also added that the comedy comic that he used to read on this website was very entertaining, it can make him happy. The last website that usually used by students to read online English comics is Mangapanda.com. Reading the comic from Mangapanda made the students feel motivated to read other types of reading materials. Also, the comics provided many interesting aspects which could make them motivated to search for other reading materials. It also made them enjoy the reading process.

To sum up, there were two applications that usually used by students to read comics, Webtoon and Ciayo comics and four websites such as Mangakakalot.com, Mangareaderapp.com, Mangazuki.info, and Mangapanda.com that students prefer to read English comics.

Discussion

The statement mentioned by the participants that the vocabulary mastery could be developed by reading online English comic was supported by the study from Cimermanova (2014) who asserted that good effects through reading comics not only increase motivation but also develop vocabulary. Besides, online English comics provide many words for the readers who are summed up with an interesting story. That way, the readers could be more motivated to learn vocabulary from English comics. Zsuzsanna (2017) added that learning vocabulary from the comic was better than learning vocabulary from other materials. Besides, slang expression usually comes up in daily communication so that when the readers read the comics and see the dialogue between two characters in comics, they learned the meaning and how to use it properly.

According to the participants' statements that grammatical skill could be developed by reading online English comics were in line with Zsuzsanna (2017) who explained that online English comics are able to support English learning process focus on increasing the grammatical points including tenses and moods. While reading online English comics, the students were treated to read several kinds of sentences. Also, they could read a sentence when somebody angry, sad, and happy. Hence, the readers learn from the sentences in several ways through reading online English comics.

Besides, by reading online English comics, it helps the students to understand the text they read, remember learning material, and make fun learning process (Muzumdar, 2016). From Muzumdar's statement, reading comprehension could be enhanced by reading online English comics. Reading online English comics made the students comprehend all the texts because the comic included understandable sentences. Pictures that provided by online English comic also became one of the aspects that could make students understand the story in a comic that they read. Pictures in the comic gave an explanation about the story that maybe did not be explained in the text. They can be more excited to read material that included many pictures. It was in line with Novianti and Syaichudin (2010) who argued that online English comic was the type of reading material which the texts are mostly explained by the pictures.

The statement mentioned by the participant that the students' critical thinking could be increased by reading online English comic was supported by Anugerahwati (2017) that the reading material like comic can help students train their critical thinking such as solving problems, evaluating points of view, analyzing ideas, and reflecting the decision. Novianti and Syaichudin (2010) asserted that the main characteristic of a comic is being supported by illustrations. Besides, an online English comic is known as a reading material in which the text is explained through pictures. The visual aspects of comics give a chance for the readers to increase their understanding of the content which they read (Roozafzai, 2012). The visual aspect of comics itself also helped the students to strengthen their imagination about the story. It also effected students' creativity because they are able to read good stories with interesting and colorful pictures from comics. Tatalovic (2009) stated that comic is a part of an art, which combines creative and colorful illustration with an interesting story, and it can trigger the readers to concern the joy of reading. According to Cimermanova (2014), reading an online English comic that contained interesting stories and illustrations can trigger students to create their own story and illustration. Also, the students' reading motivation was enhanced if they enjoy their reading activity. McVicker (2007) added that English comic includes humor, simple text, interesting story, and pictures which make the readers of comic interested to read. Accordingly, the students should be supported by reading material like comics 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 novels, textbooks, and journals.

Many students were not interested in doing the reading because reading materials which they used to read were very boring. Hence, the students needed to be given reading material that could trigger their interest like comics. This is what the comic websites provided. They provided many comics from any genres. Those genres provided the readers a chance to read their favorite one (Khoiri & Setyanti, 2016). Herdiansyah (2017) added that some websites to read online English comics give a chance to students to request other comics that they want to read that maybe do not have been provided by other websites. Herdiansyah (2017) also argued some websites to read English comics provided excellent picture and story. The interesting story in the comic brought some benefits for the readers. The stories in every comic have worthwhile messages which can be obtained by the readers (Rota & Izquierdo, 2003). When reading comics, the students read various stories that provided various moral values. Reading comics is not only to entertain the students but also can be a way to develop their attitude. Besides, interesting kinds of stuff such as stories and pictures might produce pleasure while reading comics (Tatalovic, 2009). It was in line with Liu (2010) who said that an online English comic can support the readers' reading interesting by providing an interesting story and picture to distribute message for readers. The students will not be bored while reading online English comics because they did not need to read a long text and the story provided can make them enjoy the reading process. Hence, authentic reading material like the comic is beneficial to EFL students because it motivates and triggers them for further reading (Berardo, 2006).

Conclusion

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 the research participants, reading online English comics could enhance their reading comprehension skills, 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 considerations of choosing those applications and websites. For instance, the readers did not need to spend much money in accessing the comics. It was also very effective and efficient in reading online English comics. The readers only need to have a smartphone and an internet connection to access the comic easily. Therefore, those websites and applications also provided a high quality of illustrations which made the readers interested to read the online English comics as reading material to develop their reading skill.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher proposes some recommendations related to this research: (1) English students can start their reading activity by reading online English comics; (2) English teachers should bring English comics as materials in the English learning process and should aware towards the benefits of reading English comics for their students; (3) In order to build children' reading habit, the parents are suggested to provide their children the interesting reading material like comics since their children were kids; (4) The future researchers are recommended to investigate the difficulties of using English comics for the students.

Limitations

This research focuses on ELED students' perception on the benefits of online English comics as reading materials and some types of online English comics that they used to read. The focuses that will be discovered by the researcher lead the researcher to find out the benefits of online English comics and online English comics that are usually read by students as reading materials. Besides, online English comics require an internet connection.

Authorship Contribution Statement

<div align="center">

References

</div>

Akyol, H., Cakiroglu, A., & Kuruyer, H. G. (2014). A study on the development of reading skills of the students having difficulty in reading: Enrichment reading program. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 6*(2), 199-212.

Alavi, S., & Keyvanshekouh, A. (2012). Using the moodlereader as an extensive reading tool and its effect on Iranian EFL students' incidental vocabulary learning. *English Language Teaching, 5*(6), 135-145. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n6p135

Albdour, W. M. (2015). The difficulties that seventh grade students face in comprehensive reading skill for English curricula. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(27), 61-75.

Almi, S., & Bentouzi, F. Z. (2015). The role of authentic materials in enhancing specialized vocabulary acquisition [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla, Algeria.

Antunez, B. (2002). *English language learners and the five essential components of reading instruction.* Reading Rockets. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/341?theme=print

Anugerahwati, M. (2017). *The use of comics to strengthen students' critical thinking skills.* Muhammadiyah University Press

Arthi, M., & Srinivasan, R. (2018). Influence of reading comprehension strategies on English language teaching at the tertiary level. *Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science, 2*(3), 39-41.

Baker, S. K., Smolkowski, K., Katz, R., Fien, H., Seeley, J. R., Kame'enui, E. J., & Beck, C. T. (2008). Reading fluency as a predictor of reading proficiency in low-performing, high-poverty schools. *School Psychology Review, 37*(1), 18-37. https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2008.12087905

Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The Reading Matrix, 6*(2), 60-69.

Brante, E. W., & Holmqvist, M. (2017). Reading from multimedia materials: benefits of non-congruent pictures on reading comprehension for dyslexic readers. *TOEJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Education Technology, 16*(1), 101-114.

Cimermanova, I. (2014). Graphic novels in foreign language teaching. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education 2*(2), 85-94.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education.* Routledge.

Daniel, O. C., Esoname, S. R., & Chima, O. O. D. (2017). Effect of reading habit on the academic perfomance of student: a case study of the students of Afe Bablola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies 2*(5), 74-80. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.tecs.20170205.13

Day, R. R., & Park, J.-s. (2005). Developing reading comprehension questions. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 17*(1), 60-73.

Dempsey, B. (2012, June 22). *10 tips to improve your reading comprehension* [Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgbG5lo5Usg&t=3s

Febriana, W. (2017). Authentic vs non-authentic materials in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia: which one matters more? In the proceedings of the Asian Conference on Education 2017*: Educating for Change* (pp. 731-742). The International Academic Forum (IAFOR).

Hanifa, R. (2018). EFL published materials: an evaluation of English textbooks for junior high shcool in Indonesia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 9*(2), 166-174. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.9n.2p.166

Herdiansyah, F. (2017, July 13). *8 situs manga terbaik untuk membaca manga online gratis* [8 best manga sites to read manga online for free]. Download Software Gratisan. https://bit.ly/352aqaq

Islam, T. (2015). A comparative study on the use of authentic and non-authentic material for language classroom at tertiary level [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. BRAC University, Bangladesh.

Javed, M., Eng, L. S., & Mohamed, A. R. (2015). Developing reading comprehension modules to facilitate reading comprehension among Malaysian secondary school ESL students. *International Journal of Instruction, 8*(2), 139-154. https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2015.8211a

Jiang, Y. (2015). Chinese college students' English reading comprehension in silent and loud reading-mode. *English Language Teaching, 8*(4), 24-30. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n4p24

Jinxiu, J., & Zhengping, Z. (2016). Principles and implementation of reading activities in primary school English class. *English Language Teaching, 9*(12), 74-78. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n12p74

Kamal, D. B. (2018). *Peningkatan keterampilan membaca pemahaman melalui media ikan arat pada siswa kelas tinggi sekolah dasar* [Improving reading comprehension skills through arat fish media in high-grade elementary school students]. Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi/ Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Muhammadiyah University of Sukabumi.

Kamil, A., Komariah, E., & Yuliana, Y. (2017). The use of comic to improve students' reading comprehension skill ar junior high school. *Research in English and Education, 2*(3), 1-7.

Khoii, R., & Forouzesh, Z. (2010). Using comic strips with reading texts: Are we making a mistake? *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal, 1*(3), 168-177. https://doi.org/10.20533/licej.2040.2589.2010.0024

Khoiri, A., & Setyanti, C. A. (2016, August 13). *Era komik digital, bagaimana nasib komik cetak?* [In the era of digital comics, what will happen to printed comics?]. CNN Indonesia. https://bit.ly/3iwvlui

Krusemark, R. (2015). The role of critical thinking in reader perceptions of leadership in comic books. *SANE Journal: Sequential Art Narrative in Education, 2*(1), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.17062/cjil.v2i1.32

Lindner, P. (2015, October 31). *What is phonics?* [Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbCtbECROmc

Lipp, E. (2018). *Activities to Support Students' Out-of-Class Reading*. English Teaching Forum, https://www.gutenberg.org/

Liu, C. K. (2010). *Phonics: Theory and practice*. National Taipei University. https://web.ntpu.edu.tw/~language/workshop/phonics.pdf

Loraine. (2008). *Vocabulary Development*. Super Duper Publications. https://bit.ly/3v9of1s

Mahpur, M. (2017). *Memantapkan analisis data kualitatif melalui tahapan koding* [Strengthening qualitative data analysis through coding stages]. Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Islam Negeri Malang/ Faculty of Psychology Malang State Islamic University.

McVicker, C. (2007). Comic Strips as a text structure for learning to read. *The Reading Teacher, 61*(1), 85-88. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.61.1.9

Memis, A., & Sivri, D. A. (2016). The analysis of reading skills and visual perception levels of first grade Turkish students. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 4*(8), 161-166. https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v4i8.1663

Muzumdar, J. (2016). An overview of comic books as an educational tool and implications for pharmacy. *Innovations in Pharmacy, 7*(4), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.24926/iip.v7i4.463

Nation, I. S. (2001). *The goals of vocabulary learning.* The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759

Novianti, R. D., & Syaichudin, M. (2010). *Pengembangan media komik pembelajaran matematika untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bentuk soal cerita bab pecahan pada siswa kelas v SDN Ngembung* [Development of comic learning media for mathematics to improve understanding of the fraction chapter story question form in grade v students with bloating], Universitas Negeri Surabaya/ Surabaya State University.

Pikulski, J. J., & Templeton, S. (2004). *Teaching and Developing Vocabulary: Key to Long-Term Reading Success.* Houghton Mifflin Company.

Roozafzai, Z. S. (2012). The role of comic reading materials in enhancing the ability to read in EFL. *I-manager's Journal on English Language Teaching, 2*(3), 7-15. https://doi.org/10.26634/jelt.2.3.1959

Rota, G., & Izquierdo, J. (2003). Comics as a tool for teaching biotechnology in primary schools. *Electronic Journal of Biotechnology, 6*(2), 85-89. https://doi.org/10.2225/vol6-issue2-fulltext-10

Saputro, H. B., & Soeharto, S. (2015). Pengembangan media komik berbasis pendidikan karakter pada pembelajaran tematik-integratif kelas IV SD [Development of comic media based on character education in thematic-integrative learning for fourth grade elementary school students]. *Jurnal Prima Edukasi/ Prima Edukasi Journal, 3*(1), 61-72. https://doi.org/10.21831/jpe.v3i1.4065

Semingson, P. (2011, January 20). *Phonlological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, and Phonics* [Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McJldIFIpC8

Siyabi, M. S. (2017). Integrating true short stories into english classes: The Case of foundation students in Oman. *English Language Teaching, 10*(3), 164-170. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n3p164

Tatalovic, M. (2009). Science comics as tools for science education and communication: a brief, exploratory study. *Journal of Science Communication, 8*(4), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.22323/2.08040202

Terry, B. (2017, April 11). *What is fluency? How to improve reading skills* [Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dkb7_U06hfE

Zarrabi, F. (2018). English in an EFL context: Teachers' and learners' motivations for English language learning. *English Language Teaching, 11*(9), 17-25. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n9p17

Zsuzsanna, K. (2017). The possible benefits of using comic books in foreign language education: a classroom study. *Training and Practice. 15*(1-2), 243-260. https://doi.org/10.17165/TP.2017.1-2.14

Zuo, W. (2011). The effects of cooperative learning on improving college students' reading comprehension. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(8), 986-989. https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.1.8.986-989

Zygouris-Coe, V. (2001). *Phonemic Awareness.* Florida Literacy and Reading Excellent Center.