

# Comic Script and Its Effect towards Vocabulary Mastery

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**Abstract:** This research aimed at finding whether comic strip was effective to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Quasi-experimental design was used to conduct the research. The result of independent sample t-test showed that the probability (p) was less than level of significant which was 0.05, it was 0.014. It means there was a significant difference between students taught using comic strip and students taught using dialogue text. The null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) was accepted. It showed that there was a positive effect after applying Comic Strip in the experimental group. A surprising respond gathered from all of students that feel comic strip can increase their vocabulary mastery and persuades them to be more active and enthusiastic during learning process. Thus, it can be concluded that Comic Strip is effective to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary can be regarded as the main ingredient in forming students' ability to do many communication skills, for example, in order to understand language input through sound, ones should recognize and differentiate word by word and its relation. Later, they should give the appropriate respond towards it. Jamaris, et.al (2014) and Nasution (cited in Fatimah, 2016) among other experts confirm the importance of vocabulary in building English competence.

Learning vocabulary covers learning receptive and productive vocabulary. The total number of target vocabulary for grade one is 500 words, for grade two is 500 words, and for grade three is 500 words. So, the total number of target vocabulary that is expected to be mastered by the students when they have completed their study at junior high school is 1500 words. Therefore, English teachers will face a great challenge to help their students master the target of vocabulary.

There are some aspects that have to be discussed in vocabulary. According to Harmer (cited in Febriyansyah, 2015) the aspects of vocabulary are words meanings (synonym, antonym, connotation, and denotation), extending word use such as idioms, word combination or collocation, and the grammar of words which comprises noun, verb, adjective, and

adverb. But here, the students can master the word meaning first, for example, they can learn about synonym and antonym. Pesce (cited in Arast and Gorjian, 2016) in her article describes five best ways to instruct new words to students. They are showing students illustrations, flashcards, posters, synonyms and antonyms, setting a scene situation and the substitute it with a new word or phrase. So, learning the word meaning about synonym and antonym may help students to master the vocabulary.

Students will feel enthusiastic during teaching learning process if the teacher uses interesting strategy to teach vocabulary. One of the strategies to teach vocabulary is using comic. Comic is an aesthetic story containing the image pictures that convey the information to the reader (McCold, 1993). According to Liu (2014:229) comic can be defined as "a series of picture inside boxes that tell a story". Comics are made of three or four pictures in the box that tell a story with one or more characters. Some comics tell different events everyday. In short, comic is story with pictures and some dialogues that are published continuously from the beginning of the story until the end. Comic can be humor story, romantic story, daily life etc. Visual students will get benefit learning vocabulary through it. They can express their imagination and ideas well.

The use of comic or comic strip as a teaching medium has widely spread across various leaning skills. Thus, a number of researchers claimed that comic strip is an effective strategy to improve students' writing narrative text (Megawati and Anugerahwati: 2012), reading comprehension (Merc: 2013), incidental vocabulary (Arast and Gorjian: 2016), and vocabulary achievement (Gorjian: 2017; Ahmadi, Sadighi, and Gorjian: 2017). Meanwhile, Fatimah (2016) conducted her research by using comic book which was *Naruto Book*. Comic books are collection of series that have picture consisting of one or more titles as theme. Arroyani (2010) defines comic strip is defined in this study as series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Thus, comic strip and comic book are different. Therefore, the researchers chose another kinds of comic which is comic strip as the media of this research. By conducting this current research, the researchers expect to expand the body of knowledge of comic strip on students' vocabulary and the researchers chose junior high school students as the subject of the study. Hopefully, this study shed the light on the fact that comic strip might contribute an effect to students vocabulary mastery, especially for lower level students of EFL context and also give them higher motivation to learn English.

## 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers play an important role in building the students' vocabulary mastery, and the students must learn it. Vocabulary mastery here refers to the ability of students to understand and know the meaning of every word both in spoken and written. However, the students find many difficulties in acquiring new words. Based on the researcher's experience during the time of teaching practice, the researcher found the problems in students learning English. First, students had lack of vocabulary. This condition, further, had impacts on students' difficulty in speaking and writing. Also, students are often confused to decide the appropriate meaning of difficult words because they did not have sufficient vocabulary repertoire. Meanwhile, Jamaris (2014) argues that there are a few of common reasons for weak vocabulary, such as the students have poor memory, or forget the instruction from the teacher, sometimes they do not listen when directions are given, or the students have emotion instability, maybe shyness, quick temper, poor concentration, also they speak too fast or speak in one or two words in fragmentary sentences, or they are

passive in group participation, and the students have lack of interest in reading and uninteresting stories told by the teacher. So, the teachers have to try to solve the problem and realize the importance of vocabulary in English language learning. The teacher should help the students to expand their vocabulary mastery by teaching them using suitable strategy because monotonous teaching and learning process will make students fail to comprehend the meaning of words.

According to Simon (2007) there are some types of comic. One of the type of comic is comic strip. A comic strip is described as a series of the pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Furthermore, comic strip is a piece of picture combined which has a plot of story. It can be a continued story. Comic strip can be found in magazine or daily newspaper. Besides, comic strips catch many researchers' attention because comic strip is communicative, popular, accessible, and readable (Liu, 2004, as cited in Arast and Gorjian, 2016). Also, comic strip is useful for introducing language learners to the culture and humor of English-native speakers. It is not only to make students laugh but also demand them to be productive in the second language classroom (Derrick, 2008). On the other hand, comic strip can teach students to get the meaning from the visual first. According to Hanies (2012) the benefits of using comics in the classroom are certainly great, both in increasing literacy and in addressing the educational needs of differentiated learners. So, comic strips is one of the best media to increase students' enthusiasm in learning English.

## 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this research was to investigate whether there was any effect of comic strip on students' vocabulary mastery that was conducted in the classroom. In this research, the researchers used one kind of experimental research design proposed by Ary, Cheser J, Sorensen and Razavieh (2010:316) which is quasi-experimental design. There were two equal groups of students involved in this research. This research was implemented to junior high students. The researchers asked the students in the experimental group to finish the assignment from the researchers by using comic strip. Then for control group the researchers asked them to finish the assignment by using dialogue text. In this research, the researchers applied a vocabulary test for both groups, they were pre-test and post-test, followed by a questionnaire. The vocabulary test had been

checked for its validity and reliability. The reliability value showed 0.645 out of 1 for perfect reliability. Meanwhile, the questionnaire is needed to support the final result of the study by analyzing the answer from the participants.

#### 4 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As this research was quasi-experimental research, the main data were gained through test given to the students after they got treatment. The result score of both groups shown by independent sample t-test analysis indicated a significant difference. It showed that there were significant differences from both groups in the scores because the probability ( $p$ ) was smaller than the significant level ( $0.014 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be said that Comic Strip gave a positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery. Meanwhile, the control group which was given treatment by using dialogue text got an improvement but it was not significant.

There were some reasons why comic strip had positive effects on students' vocabulary mastery. The first factor was comic strip could help students comprehended the meaning of word. Then, comic strip could increase students' vocabulary. The last was comic strip persuaded students to be more active and enthusiastic during learning process. Based on those factors, it was concluded that comic strip was effective to help the students to learn vocabulary.

In this research, the researcher found that comic strip could help students comprehend the meaning of words easily. The result of this research is supported by the research result from Arast and Gorjian (2016) and the study from Ahmadi, Sadighi and Gorjian (2017). Those researches showed that there was a significant effect of applying comic strip on Iranian EFL learners. Students could comprehend the meaning of some words on the comic without finding the meaning on the dictionary because comic strip could teach students to get the meaning from the visual first. It was reflected on their questionnaire that 80% of the students in experimental group stated that comic strip could be used to help to comprehend the difficult words. Hence, using comic strip which was series of pictures could help students to comprehend the difficult words on the text.

The second factor why comic strip had positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery was students feel that comic strip helped them to increase their vocabulary. It was proven from the questionnaire that all of students or 100% of the participants felt comic strip could increase their vocabulary and it was shown

from the mean score of pre test and post test from experimental group. The mean score of pre test was 64.33 while after being given treatment the mean score of post test was 73.50. It meant that students taught using comic strip has improvement in their vocabulary mastery. Thus, it could be said that teaching using comic strip could increase students' vocabulary.

The last reason was that students were more active and enthusiastic during learning process. The students' interest on picture will make them enjoyable when they learned English using comic. This was supported by Megawati and Anugerahwati (2012) who stated that the use of comic strip made the students give full attention to the learning process and motivated students since it brought a cheerful atmosphere into the class. It was also supported from the questionnaire that 87% of the participants were enthusiastic in learning vocabulary. So, comic strip was one of the best media to make students more active and enthusiastic in learning vocabulary.

In contrast, comic strip had several weaknesses during teaching-learning process in the classroom. When the researcher divided students into groups, the classroom became noisy because of the students voice. Then, if each group had one comic strip, it could not be effective to teach them well because some students would feel bored and did not focus. The research question could be answered based on the finding. The results revealed that the students who were treated by Comic Strip were better and got positive effect in their vocabulary mastery. Yet, to make the application of Comic Strip better, the English teacher should be aware of the students' situation so that the teacher can apply the media well.

#### 5 CONCLUSION

Considering the data that have been discussed, the implementation of Comic Strip gave a positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery. The result showed that experimental group got greater mean score than the control group. This study confirms that comic strip can help students comprehend the meaning of words in the text of comic strip well, can increase students' vocabulary mastery because students find some new words in the text of comic strip. Moreover, comic strip persuades the students to be more active and enthusiastic during learning process. As this research focused on synonym and antonym, it is suggested for further researchers to investigate on different vocabulary areas, such as collocation and phrases.

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