

The Influence of Reading English Comics on A Student's English Subject Achievement at School

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Abstract

In their age, students tend to spend their spare time to do the things that they are interested in. One of those is reading comics. Comics that students read are not only in Bahasa Indonesia, but also in English. Some of the students love to read English comics. Reading English comics continuously will have influence on the students' English subject achievement at school. The researcher conducted this research to inform the reader about the influence of reading English comics on the student's English subject achievement at school. Hopefully, this research will give input to several parties whom concern. This research is limited to one student who likes reading English comics. Case study research was used to answer the research problem. This type of research was used because the problem was seen as particular cases that were needed to be solved. Through this study, the researcher investigated and explained the influence of reading English comics on the student's English subject achievement at school. This study covered all of English skills, except listening. All those result and discussion can be concluded that English comics have really great effect on the student's comprehension and ability to infer something in reading. Besides that, English comics also have great effect on the student's English vocabulary mastery in composing writing. English comics really help student in reading and writing, but speaking.

Key words: Reading, Comics, Influence, English ability.

Abstrak

Di usia mereka, siswa cenderung menghabiskan waktu luang mereka untuk melakukan hal-hal yang menarik bagi mereka. Salah satunya adalah membaca komik. Komik yang dibaca oleh para siswa tidak hanya dalam Bahasa Indonesia, tetapi juga dalam Bahasa Inggris. Beberapa siswa gemar membaca komik berbahasa Inggris. Membaca komik berbahasa Inggris secara terus menerus akan memiliki pengaruh terhadap prestasi belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa di sekolah. Peneliti melakukan penelitian ini untuk menginformasikan pembaca tentang pengaruh membaca komik berbahasa Inggris pada prestasi siswa dalam bidang studi Bahasa Inggris di sekolah. Penelitian ini diharapkan akan memberikan masukan kepada beberapa pihak yang berkepentingan. Penelitian ini terbatas pada satu siswa yang suka membaca komik berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian studi kasus digunakan untuk menjawab masalah dalam penelitian. Jenis penelitian ini digunakan karena masalah yang timbul dipandang sebagai kasus-kasus tertentu yang perlu dipecahkan. Melalui studi ini, peneliti menyelidiki dan menjelaskan pengaruh membaca komik berbahasa Inggris pada prestasi siswa dalam bidang studi Bahasa Inggris di sekolah. Studi ini mencakup semua kemampuan bahasa Inggris, kecuali mendengarkan. Dari hasil dan pembahasan dari permasalahan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa komik berbahasa Inggris memiliki pengaruh yang sangat besar pada pemahaman dan kemampuan untuk menyimpulkan sesuatu dalam keahlian membaca siswa. Selain itu, komik berbahasa Inggris juga memiliki efek besar pada penguasaan kosakata siswa dalam menyusun tulisan. Komik berbahasa Inggris benar-benar membantu siswa dalam membaca dan menulis, tapi tidak dalam hal berbicara.

Kata Kunci: Membaca, Komik, Pengaruh, Kemampuan Berbahasa Inggris.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the book *Understanding Comics*, Comics are some series of pictures which provide information and produce reader's aesthetic responses that are placed side by side (McCloud, 1993). Comics have pictures as the component which can attract people and help people to understand the story better. Besides having interesting look, comics consist of

some information that are needed by people including students. Comics can help students developing their imagination and creativity. In their ages, almost all students love reading comics, because comic is one of the familiar and popular entertaining books among students (Morrison, Bryan, & Chilcoat, 2002).

Duff (2002 in Ranker, 2007) found that reading popular culture and media can help students in learning not only their first language, but also their

second language. It means that popular media can be used in education to help students in learning English as a second or foreign language. Since, in details, Thorndike (1940) stated that the child who reads a comic book once a month through the school year has more vocabularies. Because of that, educators can use comics to facilitate students, especially to improve students' English subject achievement at school.

Everyone knows that vocabulary is the basis of learning a language. Without having enough vocabularies, everyone including students will have limitations of language use. They will have difficulties in understanding as well. As stated by one of the most influential philosopher in the world, Ludwig Wittgenstein (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 1922), "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world," which means the limitation of language is a barrier to understand the world around.

Understanding has correlation with receiving some information. Information can be received or gained as much as possible by the students through reading or listening. Reading and listening will give not only information that are needed, but also the knowledge of language itself. For example, by reading, students can understand how every word in a sentence works, how every single word in a sentence are combined and well-complemented, and how the conjunctions and punctuations are used. While, in listening, students can understand how the words are pronounced, how the intonation is used, and how the use of juncture is decided. In learning a language, both reading and listening belong to receptive skills which are very useful to help students in the process of learning.

In addition to helping students in learning, using comics is a way to make students understand the words in context, that is better than learn a single word with its meaning (Csabay, 2006). Having good understanding will give students ability to express what they think through sentences in the form of writing or speaking. Those two forms of expression commonly called productive skills in learning language.

Writing is an activity that needs thoughts, ideas, experiences, facts, and impressions in order to deliver the message through words and sentences. It has many aspect of language as its components. Because of that, writing is also considered as the most complicated skill among language skills.

Besides, comics can support students' visual ability which can reduce the students' boredom. In a study comparing comics to texts, Sones (1944) found

that comics' visual quality increases learning. Pictures will help students to remember what they have read. It is supported by McCloud (1993) in his book who stated, "In learning to read comics we all learned to perceive time spatially, for in the world of comics, time and space are one and the same." It means that when a student reads comics today, they will remember what he reads in the other days.

Many researches that have been done show the way to conduct further research about comics in education. Most of them investigate about the use of comics in the classroom and the details of comic itself in education. There are still a few of research that describe about the influence of comics on the students.

Based on those facts and the researcher's observation during the real teaching program, a student of a SMKN 11 Surabaya (now known as SMKN 12 Surabaya) can be a good subject of further research. This student really likes reading English comics and his English is better than his friends. This fact gives the researcher more curiosity to verify how comics really have influences on someone's English ability. Moreover, there is a problem that is needed to be investigated more: What are the influences of English comics on the students' English? In this study, the discussion of comics will be focused on the impact of comics on the students English i.e., the way comics can influence students' English and the aspect that are influenced.

METHOD

This study is a case study which investigates a single phenomenon and instance (Gerrings, 2004). This research belongs to case study because This research focuses on a single unit or particular case (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010), which is the influence of reading English comics on the student's English subject achievement at school and This research considers in depth about the events, environments, and particular situation which leads into a deeper understanding (Prastowo, 2011)

an XI grade student who likes reading English comics in SMKN 12 Surabaya was the subject of this study. He is in the major of multimedia. Because of the subject's hobby of reading comics, he started reading English comics. He did it for pleasure not for learning English. He started to love reading online English comics when he was in the seventh grade of junior high school. He always reads online English comics every day.

This study used interview guidelines and tests to collect the data. The data are in the form of the transcription and description.

The data of the way comics influence the subject's English were collected by interview. To analyze data, the researcher categorized the data into several categories. The influence of reading English comics could be concluded by the results of the tests.

Result

Based on the results of the interview the researcher could point out some conclusions that are considered as the way comics affect the subject's English. First, Comics encouraged the subject to find the meaning of some unfamiliar words. This finding is also supported by Yang (2003) who stated that comics have strength to motivate students to do their tasks. Davis (1997) stated that comics can be used to learn vocabulary and the researcher found that comics enriched the subject's vocabulary as the second result. Based on Sones (1944), Comics have visual strength which increases learning and the researcher found that comics consist of many pictures that helped the subject to understand the storyline as the third result. Fourth, comics give some references of new terms in communicating with others. Davis (1997) also stated that those social matters can be found in comics. Fifth, Comics gave many examples of connected speech.

Based on the results of the tests, the researcher found that the subject's comprehension was the most affected aspect in reading. His ability to infer something was also really good. Comics helped the subject to get some information in the story which helped him to have good understanding too. His results of vocabulary and structure tests did not show good results. His structure was very poor and so was his vocabulary.

In writing, the researcher found five aspects that should be considered. They were content, language, organization, vocabulary, and mechanic. His content of writings fell under the good category. His ability to inform the reader about something was quite good. The purpose of his writings was also clear. in terms of structure, His writings were belonged to fair category. Although he had numerous errors in the use of grammar, his writings were understandable and not confusing.

The results of other aspect, organization, were showed that the subject's writings organizations were in fair category. The subject made brief writings with a weak transition and/or sometimes without conclusion. Vocabulary mastery was also being tested. The use of vocabulary in the subject's writings was very good. Although he made some mistakes in the

choice of the words, his writings were still belonged to very good category. The last aspect of writing was mechanics or punctuations. the researcher found that the subject rarely used punctuations. Full stop was the only punctuation he used, because all of his sentences were brief and did not really need any punctuation.

In assessing speaking, the researcher asked the subject to tell about his friends, family, and himself. The subject's speech was recorded, and then the researcher examined the subject's speech. The researcher gave the score based on the rubric assessment of speaking. The rubric was adapted and modified by the researcher from the book *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners* by Michael O'Malley and Lorraine Valdez Pierce in Pearson ELT website (2005).

The researcher converted the score into categories to simplify the explanation. Four points would be given for the subject's excellent speech, three points for good speech, two points for fair speech, and one point for poor speech which was really needed some improvement.

Based on the results of the tests, the researcher could give the explanation of the effects of comics on the subject's speaking. The subject's fluency of speaking was categorized into good category. Although he hesitated in choosing words, his speaking was understandable. The subject's accuracy in speaking was still poor. He needed to practice more. He made many mistakes in his structure. The same thing also happened in his reading and writing tests. The subject could not do his reading test which had correlations with structure perfectly. His writing also had so many grammatical errors. Besides having problems with the structure, the subject also had problems with pronunciation. He made many mistakes in pronouncing the words.

The subject did not have any problems with vocabulary in his speaking. His words choices were good enough. The results showed that the subject had enough vocabularies that were needed to arrange his speaking, although he hesitated to decide the appropriate words in some parts of his speaking. His vocabulary mastery was belonged to good category. Although he did not have any major problems with the other aspect, The subject's performance in his speaking really needed some improvements. His lack of confidence was the root of his poor performance.

Discussion

Comics had some influences in the subject's English. Based on the results of the interview the

researcher could point out some conclusions that are considered as the way comics affect the subject's English. First, Comics encouraged the subject to find the meaning of some unfamiliar words. Second, comics enriched the subject's vocabulary. Third, Comics consist of many pictures that helped the subject to understand the storyline. Fourth, comics give some references of new terms in communicating with others. Fifth, Comics gave many examples of connected speech.

Based on the results of the tests, the researcher can conclude that the subject's comprehension was the most affected aspect in reading. His comprehension was mostly supported by his ability to infer something. Comics helped the subject to get some information in the story which helped him to have good understanding too.

In writing, the researcher found five aspects that should be considered. They were content, language, organization, vocabulary, and mechanic. The results showed that vocabulary was the most affected by comics. The subject's vocabulary had the best results in the test. The subject could be familiar with some words when he read English comics, since comics consisted of some volumes and chapters for one title, the vocabulary used would always be similar.

Although the subject's vocabulary mastery in reading test was poor, his vocabulary mastery in writing was really good. The researcher assumed that in reading, the vocabularies were all given and provided, but in writing, the vocabularies were coming from the subject's own mind and imagination.

The subject's speaking had really big problem in his performance. The researcher found that comics could not help much in the subject's speaking. Most of his speaking tests results were poor. He still needed some improvements and practices.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that English comics really had their own way to influence student's English. English comics had strength to attract the subject so that he can easily get attached to the comics without being forced to read them. Moreover, English comics were really motivating and encouraging him to learn English.

English comics also had influences in the subject's English subject achievement at school. The results showed that some aspects of English skills were really affected by English comics. In reading, the subject's comprehension was the most affected aspects. In writing, comics really affected his

vocabulary. Unfortunately, none of the speaking aspect was influenced by English comics.

Although there were some aspects that were not influenced by English comics, reading English comics helped much to improve the subject's reading comprehension and the knowledge of vocabulary to help his writing. The result also showed that he could write an understandable writing, although it contained some grammatical errors. Since comprehension and understanding were the most influenced aspects, it can be concluded that English comics helped the subject to fulfill the purpose of communication. English comics could be regarded as the help to the subject in written communication.

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