

EFL Students' Practices in Exploring Digital Comics: Extensive Reading Activities at English Club

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Abstrak

Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris telah menjadi salah satu hal yang penting untuk pembelajaran dalam Pendidikan. Kegiatan membaca ekstensif salah satu cara penting siswa dapat mengembangkan pemahaman Bahasa Inggris. Kegiatan membaca ekstensif bertujuan sebagaimana siswa memiliki perubahan dan peningkatan mereka dalam pemahaman Bahasa Inggris. Selain itu kegiatan membaca ekstensif ini bisa di kolaborasi dengan menggunakan beberapa media baca. Media baca ini dapat menggunakan komik digital, dimana komik digital ini memiliki visual yang menarik dalam kegiatan membaca ekstensif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan qualitatif dengan melakukan Semi struktur interview, dengan diharapkan mampu mendapat hasil yang mendalam terkait pengalaman mereka. Penelitian menyajikan temuan komprehensif yang diperoleh dari serangkaian wawancara mendalam untuk mengidentifikasi praktik siswa dalam mengeksplorasi komik digital dalam membaca ekstensif dan untuk mengidentifikasi manfaat yang dirasakan dari penggunaan komik digital untuk membaca ekstensif di kalangan siswa EFL. Wawancara dilakukan dengan 10 siswa yang merupakan anggota aktif Klub Bahasa Inggris dan secara teratur terlibat dalam kegiatan membaca ekstensif. Dalam temuan ini, kami memperoleh data dari wawancara untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian, untuk mengetahui praktik membaca ekstensif mereka dan manfaat yang mereka dapatkan.

Kata Kunci: membaca ekstensif, *praktek, komik digital, klub bahasa inggris*

Abstract

English language skills have become one of the crucial things for learning in Education. Extensive reading activities are an important way for students can develop their English comprehension. In addition, this extensive reading activity can be collaborated using several reading media. Digital comics can be used for reading media, where these digital comics have attractive visuals in extensive reading activities. This study uses a qualitative approach by conducting Semi-structured interviews, with the hope of being able to obtain in-depth results related to their experiences. The study presents comprehensive findings obtained from a series of in-depth interviews to identify students' practices in exploring digital comics in extensive reading and to identify the perceived benefits of using digital comics for extensive reading among EFL students. Interviews were conducted with 10 students who were active members of the English Club and regularly involved in extensive reading activities. In this study, researcher get data from the interviews to find out their extensive reading practices and benefit from extensive reading activities.

Keywords: perception, speaking, flashcard, ice-breaking

INTRODUCTION

Every student must study and practice reading as an activity that incorporates the reader, the text, understanding information through written language, and constructing meaning based on the reader's past knowledge. Students must be able to read and understand an English text, therefore reading is a crucial ability for them. The English teacher can engage reading as a media to teach other language skills like listening, speaking, and writing, as well as language features like vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. According to Nunan (2003) reading is a fluent process in which readers combine information from a book with their own previous knowledge to construct meaning. The reader is not the source of meaning, and neither is the text. To produce

meaning, the reader's prior information is combined with the text. Nunan (2003) goes on to say that reading is made up of four components: the text, the reader, fluency, and methods. Reading, obliging from Aebersold and Field, (1997), occurs when people look at a text and give meaning to the written symbols in that text. It not only concerns with word interpretation, but also with how the intended meaning is interpreted by the reader. Furthermore, reading is defined as the process through which readers combine information from a book with their own prior knowledge to construct meaning. Reading is inextricably linked to our everyday activity; thus, it must be mastered, and reading is helpful in making a reading simpler to comprehend. If we have mastered reading comprehension, reading a book can help us speed up our reading and comprehension.

Student need acquiring proficiency in English requires access to diverse reading materials. Many Indonesian students lack essential resources such as workbooks, coursebooks, or other English books, as there is no mandatory requirement for them to purchase these materials. The responsibility thus falls on teachers to encourage reading by carefully selecting suitable materials. Gutherie, (2006) said meta-analysis of studies has identified several aspects influencing intrinsic motivation and support for reading. Effective reading instruction has been shown to enhance motivation for comprehending textual content.

The literacy problem among young children in Indonesia is quite worrying. According to the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey conducted every three years by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), in 2019 Indonesia was ranked 74th out of 79 countries in terms of student literacy. Indonesian students' reading ability scores decreased from 397 in 2015 to 371 in 2018. One of the main factors causing this problem is the low interest in reading among Indonesian children. Data from UNESCO shows that only 0.01 percent of Indonesian children have an interest in reading (Indonesian Writer, 2016). According Kurniasih, (2016), data from the National Library in 2015 revealed that only 10% of Indonesian children over the age of ten were interested in reading. These statistics show that Indonesian children who like to read are a minority group. One of the causes of this low interest in reading is the increasing use of technology. Today, smartphones, computers and video games are available everywhere. Children prefer playing video games and watching videos rather than reading books.

Extensive reading is a way of teaching reading. Many benefits for English learners. Including vocabulary develop, reading skills develop, spelling accuracy, develop writing skills and much more in terms of vocabulary learning. Students often encounter words while reading, as noted by Liu and Zhang (2018), Celik (2017), and Karimpour and Aidinlou (2016). As a result, they learn to understand the meaning of words based on context. As a result, more random words can be recalled. In addition, specialized reading helps improve students' reading skills. As indicated by Endris, (2018) and Al-Nafisah, (2015), active engagement in reading is essential for good reading comprehension.

There is substantial evidence from Elley & Mangubhai (1983) that reading, especially free voluntary reading, makes a major contribution to the development of literacy in both first and second languages. Extensive reading has been shown to offer multiple benefits for language learners. According to Elley (1991), students not only improved their literacy levels in English but also

developed very positive attitudes towards books. This positive change in affect, along with advancements in reading proficiency, has been supported by further research. For instance, Cho and Krashen (1994), found that four adult ESL learners enhanced their reading attitude through extensive reading. Moreover, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) had practice also positively affects writing proficiency, as evidenced by studies involving primary students. There was also research conducted Takase, (2003) where this extensive reading activity provided positive results on the motivation of high school students in Japan.

Poorsoti and Asl, (2016) found that reading words and reading aloud is effective. Through deep reading, students get to know a variety of forms and grammar and increase their understanding of grammar. This support represents general support, which is good for people who read a lot. In addition to the effectiveness of speaking skills, these exercises are also very important to maintain good habits for English learners. In particular, Day and Bamford, (1998) recommend reading a variety of English books appropriate to language school and interests. This makes learning fun and easy to learn. Indeed, travel is a learning experience that increases behaviour and motivation.

In the new era, marked by the increasing prevalence of digital technologies, English stands out as the predominant global language. There is evident improvement in the quality of English text, highlighting the need for EFL students to enhance their proficiency in the language. While progress has been made in the development of these skills, the process of teaching and learning English, particularly in the domain of reading, remains a challenge. According Ninsuwan, P (2015) identifies difficulties arising from comprehension issues related to words, sentences, sentence unity, organization, and a lack of student interest. Overcoming these challenges necessitates the adoption of effective strategies in teaching reading. The teaching approach should aim not only to impart knowledge but also to sustain students' interest in language learning. To enhance students' engagement and motivation, educators must employ creative and innovative teaching methods. By doing so, they can create an environment that fosters a genuine enthusiasm for language learning. Ultimately, the adoption of impactful strategies in teaching reading contributes to a more comprehensive and effective English education, aligning with the evolving demands of the modern, digital world.

In a digital world, we can access anything that we need. We can use digital comics for as a learning media. The digital comics offers a distinctive and compelling solution to the challenges of vocabulary acquisition. This digital platform conveys stories and narratives through visually captivating comics that captivate the reader's attention.

There are lots of online comic books, everyone can access them. In fact, nowadays it's not only on the Internet, now there are also various applications that we can download via Play Store and Appstore.

The school offers multiple programs aimed at enhancing students' skills. Apart from regular classroom teaching, there is English club are one of the extracurricular activities (ECA) which are categorized into the academic domain but there are also non-academic extracurriculars. Educators assert that integrating ECAs into language teaching serves the purpose of fostering both social and intellectual motivations for learning. According to Reva, (2012), language learning motivation comprises three key elements: the effort invested in language acquisition, the individual's eagerness to achieve a goal, and the enjoyment derived from the learning process. From this perspective, participating in diverse language-related activities provides students with additional opportunities to enhance all three motivational elements. As students often take responsibility for organizing ECAs, their involvement prompts reflection on their own interests and preferences.

Several research have explored the role of English club extracurricular activities in various countries, as evidenced by studies conducted by Virgiyanti, (2013), found that this extracurricular activity had a positive impact where students could freely choose the learning materials they liked. Conducted by Yanda, (2014) and Khikmiah, (2011), the English club has an important role in developing the speaking skills of a number of students who join the English Club activities. Data from Park, (2015), the extracurricular activity has several benefits felt by students, one of which is the emergence of students' self-confidence. According to Yildiz, (2016), this extracurricular activity has an impact on improving students' English skills. However, these studies predominantly focus on extracurricular activities in higher education or college settings, with limited attention given to their occurrence in Indonesia. In Indonesia, extracurricular activities are prevalent in formal schools and contribute significantly to the learning process. The researcher aims to address this gap by conducting a study at the senior high school level, where students, being teenagers, are highly motivated and inclined towards learning outside the traditional classroom setting. Beside that there is some research focused on the advantages of employing techniques and media to enhance students' reading comprehension and vocabulary, rather than addressing the potential drawbacks or challenges faced by teachers who integrate these media into their teaching methods. To support this assertion, a study conducted by Fauziah (2017), discovered that using comic strips was found to be more effective and engaging when teaching

eighth-graders. This approach was deemed more appealing because of its ease of use, and it could be seamlessly integrated with gadgets and Wi-Fi connections. Consequently, this approach helped alleviate student boredom. In several previous studies in improving vocabulary, the research still used books. There is also research that improves vocabulary by using online books or online storybooks and their research talk about the effectiveness using digital comic. According Rafida et al., (2023) students can benefit from using Webtoons as digital comics. Furthermore, the research reveals a noteworthy improvement in students' reading proficiency, indicating that digital comic has a significant impact on enhancing comprehension, enabling students to grasp the meaning of words, sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts.

This study aims to determine if students' progress in lengthy reading activities might be impacted by the use of digital comics. This development is intended in terms of student motivation in reading, comprehension and student vocabulary. The use of digital comics is intended as a role where students can form reading habits through extensive reading activities.

METHODS

The researcher used a qualitative approach in this study. According Creswell (2012) the qualitative research is a tool for investigating and grasping the significance that individuals or groups assign to a social human issue. The research process involves formulating questions and procedures, gathering data in the participants' setting, analyze the data inductively by moving from specific details to general themes, and interpreting the meaning derived from the data.

In line with Dawson, (2002) perspective, qualitative research investigates participants' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences, aiming to gather in-depth opinions using specific methodologies. The resulting written report follows a flexible writing structure. The chosen research approach involves employing a case study method, which is a qualitative method. This method entails delving deeper into a specific case to examine various social aspects. The application of this method is reinforced by the utilization of data collection techniques that can be developed and substantiated to address the particulars of the case. The rationale for employing the case study method in this research is its appropriateness for exploring the comprehensive reading activities conducted within the extracurricular English Club. In essence, the case study is employed to scrutinize and understand an event or experience related to an individual.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter delves into the findings and discussion derived from the data presented in the preceding chapter, offering a comprehensive analysis grounded in the theoretical framework outlined earlier. The interpretation process, meticulously aligned with the theoretical guidelines expounded in the second chapter, provides a robust foundation for understanding the nuances of the research. Moving forward, this chapter elaborates on the research findings pertaining to the ways in which students engage in extensive reading activities. It examines the various strategies and approaches they employ, the challenges they face, and the contextual factors influencing their reading practices. Additionally, it highlights the multifaceted benefits that students derive from extensive reading, encompassing improvements in language proficiency, enhanced cognitive skills, and increased motivation for independent learning. Through a detailed exploration of these aspects, the chapter aims to shed light on the integral role of extensive reading in the educational development of students, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

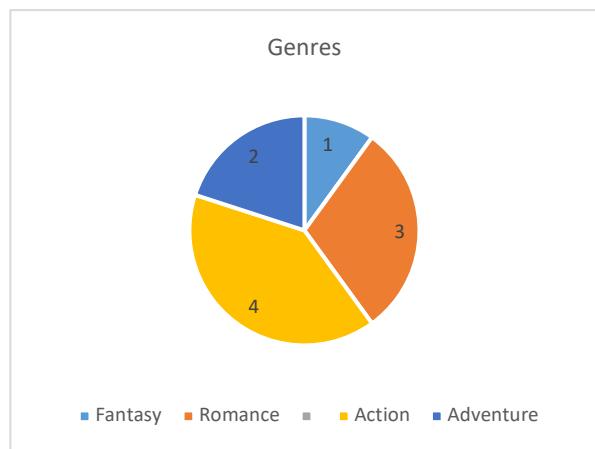
1. The Student Way to Read a Book

There are several crucial aspects to consider when engaging in extensive reading activities. One of the primary considerations is recognizing the diverse approaches students use to undertake these activities. Extensive reading can be integrated into a wide range of activities, whether within the structure of extracurricular programs or during students' personal time outside of formal educational settings. For example, some students may participate in book clubs or reading groups as part of their extracurricular activities, where they discuss and analyze books collectively. Others might engage in extensive reading on their own, dedicating time after school or during weekends to immerse themselves in their chosen materials. This flexibility in how and when extensive reading is carried out underscores its adaptability to different learning environments and schedules, catering to the unique needs and circumstances of each student.

A. The Student Way to Read a Book

Genres

The data obtained by researchers from practice and extensive reading activities carried out by English Club students is how they choose reading material. Many things were gained from collecting data, one of which was that one student said that he chose a reading from a genre they liked.



The writer got the results from interviews he conducted to find out the genres preferred by English Club students. The author found that the English Club students had an interest in reading stories with different genres. On average, students like stories in terms of plot and characters. Before reading the story, they all read the synopsis of the story. After they read the synopsis and they think the synopsis it's interesting, the student read the stories. Sometimes they read stories from their friends' suggestions. Students also don't always read stories of the same genre. But they also won't stray far from the genres they like.

From the data obtained, genre has an important role in students' reading habits. As written by allowing learners to choose what they want to read, students read according to their preferences, and there are several genres that are their favourites. According Day & Bamford, (1998) offering a diverse selection of reading texts covering a wide range of topics, and digital comics offer a lot of genre, fantasy, action, adventure, and romance genres. Of the ten people interviewed, the action genre was the one that students liked the most. Based on these preferences, we can see that liking a certain genre over time can foster a love of reading. Thus, choosing the right genre can be the key to fostering interest in reading among students.

The Platform of Digital Comics

Data obtained from interviews with students who took part in the English Club revealed that they had their own preferences in choosing reading media. The reading media they choose are categorized into two main types: application-based platforms and website-based platforms. Each student has their own preferences in choosing one type of platform. Some students may choose application-based platforms because they are comfortable to use and simpler, while others may prefer website-based platforms because of the ease of access on various devices. These individual preferences highlight the diverse needs and habits of students in an effort to improve their English reading skills.

Student	Website	Application
1		✓
2		✓
3	✓	
4		✓
5		✓
6		✓
7		✓
8		✓
9		✓
10		✓

Table 4.1



Table 4.2

From the data obtained, it can be seen that each student has different reading platform preferences. However, out of 10 students interviewed, on average students use applications more often as a reading medium than websites. This is because applications are considered simpler and easier to use than websites. Reading applications usually offer a more intuitive appearance and various features that make it easier for users, such as reading notifications, offline mode, and display settings that can be adjusted to the reader's convenience. In contrast, websites often require a more complicated process to access and use, especially when accessed via mobile devices. According to Day & Bamford, (1998) regarding extensive reading, students can choose readings that are extensive and comfortable for students to read. According to Kustianingsari et al., (2015), this digital comic is specifically designed in the form of an application that contains a broad overview of digital comics and makes it easier to access them. It is not surprising that many students prefer applications as their main means of reading.

The Lack of Dictionary

The author discovered compelling data indicating that students who engage in extensive reading activities, particularly when it involves digital comics, rarely find the need to consult dictionaries or use translation tools. This trend highlights a significant aspect of their learning process, suggesting that these

students have developed a strong command of vocabulary. Their impressive vocabulary mastery can be largely attributed to the language used in the digital comics they read. These comics often contain words and phrases that the students encounter frequently, both within the context of the stories and in their everyday lives. This repetition and familiarity with the vocabulary enable them to comprehend the material with ease, fostering a deeper understanding and retention of new words.

From the data obtained after the interview, it is true, as in research by Ninsuwan, P (2015), that language comprehension is related to words and sentences that are not understood. But According Kustianingsari et al., (2015), digital comics offer vibrant images, student have techniques such as associating words with familiar pictures or situations, which helps them understand reading without having to always rely on a dictionary. So, the student rarely uses dictionaries or translate words directly. Instead, they have their own way of overcoming ignorance of unknown words. This ability shows that students have developed effective and independent reading strategies, which not only help them understand stories, but also strengthen their confidence in reading a foreign language. Additionally, this approach can improve reading fluency and make the reading experience more enjoyable and barrier-free. Thus, these strategies not only help in the short term, but also build important skills that benefit their long-term learning.

The Student's Time to Read Digital Comics

Each student develops their own unique approach to incorporating reading into their daily routine. For some people, reading is an important part of their daily schedule, and they always read digital comics. These students often have a structured schedule that includes dedicated time slots for reading, allowing them to immerse themselves in content on a regular basis, be it digital comics, novels, or online articles. They may find that reading daily helps them expand their vocabulary, and improve comprehension.

From the results obtained, it can be seen that students' reading time varies greatly and depends on how busy they are. As written by Day and Bamford, (1998), this extensive reading activity can be done anywhere and at any time. Some students may only be able to spend a little time reading because of busy activity schedules, such as school assignments, extracurricular activities, and other obligations. However, there are also students who always make time to read, even if only for a short time. They may see reading as an important activity that should not be missed, even in the midst of their busy lives. These students tend to have high levels of discipline and good time management skills, so they are able to organize their schedules effectively to include reading time. This attitude shows how important reading is for them, both as a means to improve knowledge and skills, and as personal time to relax and enjoy stories. This variation

in reading time shows that although each student has different activities, they still recognize the importance of reading activities and try to include it in their daily routine.

B. The Benefit from Extensive Reading Using Digital Comics

Vocabulary Mastery

All students hope that this extensive reading activity can increase their vocabulary. During the process, students sometimes encounter vocabulary they don't understand, which can be a challenge at first. However, these meetings also provide valuable learning opportunities. Students who already have a good understanding of vocabulary get more benefit, because they become more adept and accustomed to recognizing and understanding a wider range of words in a variety of contexts. Constant exposure to new vocabulary in books not only improves their language skills but also builds their confidence in using the language more effectively. As a result, extensive reading becomes an important part of their language development and overall academic success.

The extensive reading program that has been implemented has produced positive results for students. Through this program, students have developed the ability to read and understand English words more effectively. Just like several previous studies, taken from Liu and Zhang (2018), the results found that extensive reading activities increased vocabulary mastery. In addition, they acquire new vocabulary, which significantly improves their vocabulary mastery. This improvement in language skills not only increases their confidence in reading English texts but also provides a strong foundation for their overall language proficiency. Continuous exposure to a variety of reading materials has proven to be a valuable component in their learning journey, contributing to their academic growth and linguistic competence.

Reading Attitude

From the results of the interviews conducted, the students found significant changes in their attitudes towards reading and facing various problems in English. They become more motivated to read and more confident in dealing with language challenges previously considered difficult. Apart from that, students also feel greater calm and comfort because their ability in English is increasing. This change is not only visible in their academic achievements, but also in their daily lives, where they are braver to speak and write in English. This shows that the learning process they have experienced has had a holistic positive impact.

As Elley (1991) wrote, this extensive reading brings positive things. The researchers' findings also showed that extensive reading had a big impact on students' reading attitudes. Extensive reading encourages a more positive and enthusiastic approach to reading. When students engage in extensive reading activities, especially in English clubs, they are exposed

to a variety of texts and genres, which broadens their understanding and appreciation of literature. Regardless of their initial level of interest or proficiency, students often become more avid readers as they participate in these clubs. The English club environment, which emphasizes enjoyment and immersion in reading over rote learning or testing, helps foster a genuine love of reading. This consistent exposure and supportive environment allowed students to gradually develop the habit of reading. Over time, this habit becomes ingrained, thereby improving reading fluency and comprehension. This is related to research by Cho and Krashen (1994), extensive reading makes changes to students' reading attitudes. Ultimately, extensive reading changes students' attitudes towards reading, making it an integral and enjoyable part of their daily lives.

Student Motivation

The writer obtained data from interviews which showed that students found their own motivation in carrying out extensive reading activities. This process is very important because every student has a strong desire to improve their comprehension and fluency in reading and comprehending reading material in English. Through this interview, it was revealed that these motivations varied, ranging from the desire to better understand the subject matter, to the aspiration to be able to communicate more effectively in English.

Extensive reading has a big impact on students' reading attitudes. There was also research conducted Takase, (2003) where this extensive reading activity provided positive results on the motivation of high school students in Japan. However, there are things that are different from the results obtained in this research. This research found that students' motivation can be obtained from themselves as well as from the surrounding environment. This encourages a more positive and enthusiastic approach to reading. When students engage in extensive reading activities, especially in English clubs, they are exposed to a variety of texts and genres, which broadens their understanding and appreciation of literature. Regardless of their initial level of interest or proficiency, students often become more avid readers as they participate in these clubs. This is also supported by Galanes and Adams, K (2013), where the English Club makes members more enjoyable, more pleasant and suitable than regular class.

CONCLUSION

In this section, the explanation process is presented as a conclusion, after discovering the results of the research conducted and discussing the results to explore the practice of extensive reading activities with digital comic media. This research was conducted from the perspective of each student in the English Club. This conclusion answered the research question that has been written, which seeks to practice extensive reading activities.

In the first research question, after conducting the interview, they obtained data that when they carried out extensive reading activities, there were several things to pay attention to. Starting from how students choose genres according to what they like. They choose the genre according to their preferences, there are several genres such as romance, fantasy, action, and adventure. The action genre is the most well-liked of them. Students have a method for selecting a tale and the level of reading difficulty in addition to genre.

In terms of choosing stories and the difficulty of choosing stories. This make students choose stories that interest them, but they also have other things. Another thing is that they choose reading that is not that difficult for them. In other words, students choose reading material that is easy for them to understand. It turns out they also find difficulties in words they don't understand. But it turns out they have a way to overcome this. Apart from that, reading time is also part of the practice they do.

Students have different reading times. This reading time is not only influenced by how much they like to read, but there are also several factors. Some of these factors are related to each student's busy schedule, where there are students who have other extracurricular activities, participate in school organizations and not only that, students also have activities at home. All of these things also have the influence of what they get from extensive reading activities using digital comics. Furthermore, the second question raised the topic of what advantages they derived from the activity.

Students get good influences or results after carrying out extensive reading activities with digital comics. One of them got new vocabulary, all students said that they got new vocabulary. Indirectly, students master vocabulary which makes them familiar and not confused when learning. This also changes the reading attitude of every student.

This student's reading attitude received a positive response. Students know that this extensive reading activity has a good influence. From this, students began to develop a love of reading. Over time, this definitely make students more comfortable with reading, both learning books and comics and the like. The emergence of a love of reading does not escape the motivation of students.

Of course, student motivation is different and has several factors that support students to enjoy reading. There are internal factors, where these students know that English is very important because English is an international language. Apart from that, there are external factors, where this is influenced by students reading because of their immediate environment, this factor arises from friends.

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