

The Application of Comic-Based Learning Media in Elementary School English Subject

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of comic-based learning media on learning motivation and English comprehension of grade 4 students at SDS Permata Bangsa. The background of this study is the students' low interest in learning English caused by lack of motivation and less interactive learning media. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through questionnaires and observation. The research subjects consisted of 12 grade 4 students with the duration of two learning sessions of 30 minutes each. The questionnaire was distributed at the end of session 2. The questionnaire consists of 9 likert scale statements followed by open-ended questions to provide reasons for each statement. The results showed that the use of comic media significantly improved students' motivation and English language skills. Students felt more motivated and enthusiastic in learning, and felt easier to understand the lessons. The comic incorporated two grammar: Simple Past Tense and Comparative along with vocabulary that focuses on names of animals. This study concludes that comic media can be an effective and interesting learning tool to increase students' motivation and understanding in learning English. Further research on the use of comics in inclusive classrooms are also indicated.

Keywords: *Comic based-learning, Motivation, Speaking, Interactive*

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INTRODUCTION

In PP No.19 of 2005 National Education Standards (article 19 paragraph 1) it is stated that the learning process in educational units is organized interactive, inspiring, fun, and challenging, motivates learners to participate actively and provides sufficient space for initiative, creativity, and independence by the talents, interests, and physical and psychological development of learners. This is in accordance with one of the functions of learning media, namely providing a stimulus from educators to students, and learning media can visualize material so that students understand more easily. (Saputra et al., 2021). In line with that, Kahar and Layn (2018) explained that students are generally able to understand the learning they participate in by using learning models effectively both with the help of learning media and with other devices.

Also, compared to adults, children are more likely to acquire communication skills with little effort. This is due to the ease with which they can play, build friendships, or simply start discussions with other children their age. The majority of their conversations center around toys and animated cartoons, which allows them to have fun and let their imaginations run wild (Carlos, 2021). With this in mind, an effort is taking shape where the best way to encourage and improve English language skills among children is through utilizing their interests.

We can see that in this modern era, there are many learning media that have been used besides textbooks. This is used to achieve the objectives or indicators on the material. There are three types of media, namely, audiovisual media, auditive media, and visual media. Auditive media is media that can only be heard, such as radio and sound recordings. Audio visual media is media that in addition to sound also has images that can be seen, an example is video. Visual media is media that can only be seen, without sound. Examples are photographs, paintings, drawings, comics, cartoons, and graphics. Of course the selection of learning media must determine the characteristics of students. Elementary school students like illustrative images with bright colors, such as those found in comics. This can also be encouraged by linking the subject matter with the surrounding life so that it can help students understand it (Marbangun et al., 2020). Which is also explained in Piaget (Budiarti and Haryanto, 2016), students at the age of 7-12 years are at a concrete operational age, namely the media provided in the form of concrete objects so that they can provide a real experience. Therefore COMIC-BASED LEARNING can be a visual learning media that is applied.

Comics are a medium that combines images and text to convey a storyline. Comics usually contain stories that are simple, easy to understand, present images that are easy to understand, and provide more detailed explanations. Not only that, in comics there are also visualized expressions which can encourage the reader's emotional involvement so that they have the desire to read it to the end, therefore these advantages make comics an effective tool in facilitating visual learning so that they are widely liked by children and adults. According to Shomad and Susi (2022) there are several characteristics in comics, including: (a) comics usually consist of serialized story situations, (b) if comics have other characters, they are usually known so that the strength of the comics can be appreciated (c) they are entertaining, (d) readers can immediately identify themselves through the feelings and actions of the main character because the stories in the comics are about themselves (e) comics focus on the environment around the people, (f) comics are usually equipped with action, (h) the making is more alive with the free use of the main colors, (g) the story in the comics is concise and attracts attention.

Comics present an image that is systematically arranged and assembled so that it has a storyline and there is a message in it (Munjiatun, 2020). Comic books were chosen because basically with interesting story images presented, students will read with full seriousness, follow and try to understand the storyline of the action images they see, the image will be one of the drivers to develop fantasy through their imagination and thoughts.

In today's world, English is indispensable. Today, English proficiency is required for many jobs. English is an important means of communication used all over the world. It plays an important role as an international language used in various fields. Moreover, job opportunities are also affected by the growth of English proficiency. In its position, English is the language of science and technology, because without the ability to speak English, a person will experience difficulties in world association which is increasingly open, fast, and uncontrollable (Yamin, 2017). There is a policy issued through the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Depdikbud RI) No. 0487/1992, Chapter VIII which states that elementary schools can add English subjects as local content in their curriculum (Kulsum, 2016). Then, Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 issued a policy that English would be a compulsory subject for students in the third grade of elementary school. According to Anidito Aditomo, Head of the Ministry's Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency, the focus is not on grammar, but on using English for effective communication and understanding of information. This policy will take time, hence English will be implemented in elementary schools from the 2027/2028 school year. This gives time for local governments and schools to prepare themselves. Thus, the Permendikbud explains, as of March 26, 2024, English is still included in the category of elective subjects that can be held depending on school readiness until the 2026/2027 school year. Therefore, many schools now require their students to learn English rather than Indonesian. Schools also want to ensure that their students' ability to succeed academically is not hampered by adopting English as the language of instruction. Many techniques are used to improve students' abilities. Using comic-based learning materials is one option.

Motivation plays an important role in learning English. Students with no motivation in learning will find it difficult to achieve these learning goals. Motivation also plays a role in increasing passion in learning, so that motivated students can have more energy in carrying out activities (Anggraeni et al., 2024). Many things have been done to increase motivation to learn English, one of which is games. A game is any activity that has rules and aims to give students fun, satisfaction, and relaxation by using language (Sasrawangi et al., 2021).

SDS Permata Bangsa has applied English learning in general subjects in grade 4. However, the interest in learning English in Permata Bangsa elementary school students is still very minimal. due to a lack of motivation and less interactive learning media in English subjects. Therefore, the research gap in this case is designed to help achieve and create a new learning media for SDS Permata Bangsa in learning English. Therefore, this research aims to analyze its impact on students' learning motivation and English proficiency.

METHOD

The qualitative descriptive approach method, namely by describing and describes the extent to which comic-based learning media can influence increasing student motivation and understanding in learning the material. Creswell (Murdiyanto, 2020)

defines qualitative research as a process of investigating a social phenomenon and human problems.

This comic was used in 2 meeting sessions with a duration of 30 minutes each, in the first session the teacher divided 6 groups consisting of 2 students in each group. In the first session, the application of the comic was led by the field teacher and the researcher. First, the teacher read the title of the comic and asked all students to repeat it after she. Second, The teacher reads the comic story and students listen and pay attention carefully, this is done so that students focus on the content of the comic. Third, students were asked to act out the comic by dialoguing with their group mates. Fourth, the teacher explains the learning material contained in the story. Fifth, the teacher asked the students to repeat the vocabulary read by the teacher. In the second session, the researcher evaluated/remembered what was contained in the comics that had been used in the first session. Then, at the end of the second session, the researcher distributed the survey that had been prepared. As for this, it also emphasizes the survey approach on the use of comics as learning aids, in which data is collected through an open-ended questionnaire that is arranged in a simple manner to be easily understood by children aged 10-12 years. The questionnaire included 9 statements with Indonesian language about the children's perceptions of the lesson comics, the aspects they liked, and how the comics affected their understanding of the subject matter. The purpose of this study is to find out how the use of comic media plays a role in increasing students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning in English subjects. In this study the author used data collection techniques, therefore 12 children consisting of 6 boys and 6 girls who were in the 4th grade of Permata Bangsa elementary school were selected based on the provisions of the learning teacher, this was done to ensure diverse experiences and backgrounds. The media use and learning motivation indicators are the basis of the observation instruments used.

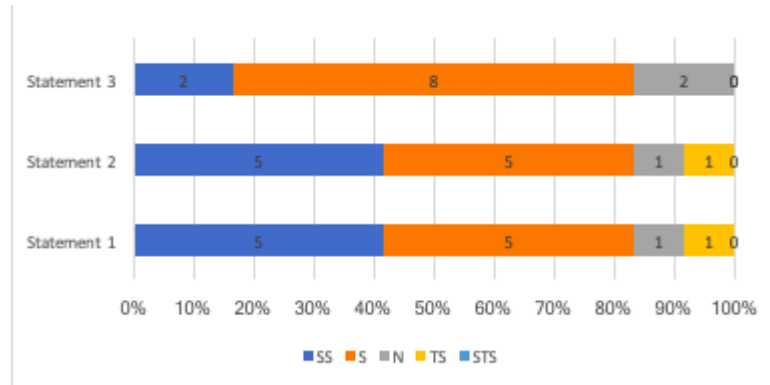
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the responses from respondents when researchers gave statements about experiences related to comic books as learning media that can foster several elements in students' learning, as follows:

Motivation

Figure 2 summarizes responses to statements 1,2, and 3 regarding motivation, they are ***(1) I follow English learning with a happy feeling, (2) I am excited to learn English because the teacher teaches using Comic media, (3) and I pay attention to the teacher when explaining the material with Comic media.*** Figure 2 showed the comics can increase students' motivation. The students felt happy and excited in learning English with high enthusiasm in looking, listening and following the lesson because they felt the lesson was fun and supported by energetic teachers and interesting teaching methods, such as the use of comic media. Comic media is considered a new innovation that increases their enthusiasm and engagement. However, there was one in twelve students who disagreed with this, due to his personal interest in other subjects.

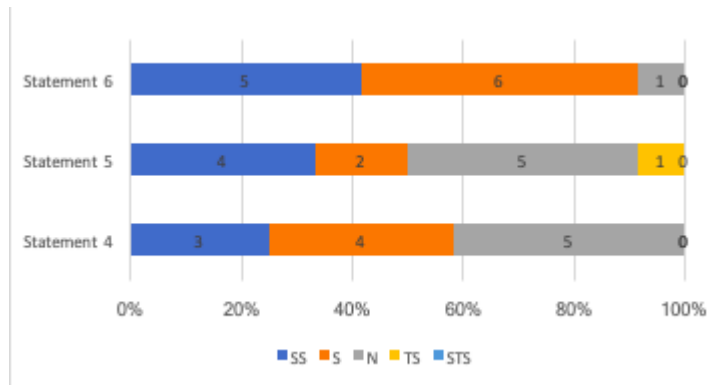
Figure 2
Motivation



Skill

Figure 3 summarizes responses to statements 4,5, and 6 regarding Skill. About Skill there are **(1) Comic Media makes me more interested in reading English dialogs, (2) Comic Media helps me speak English, (3) and Comic Media helps me acquire new English vocabulary.** Figure 2.3 showed The students gained skills in understanding English and speaking through the use of comic media. By reading the dialog in the comics with animated pictures, the students could more easily understand the storyline and new vocabulary, which helped to improve their English comprehension. In addition, the students felt that consistent use of the comics could support them in improving their English speaking, even though they had no prior speaking training. Comic media provided an interesting and effective way to overcome language difficulties and improve their speaking skills.

Figure 3
Skill

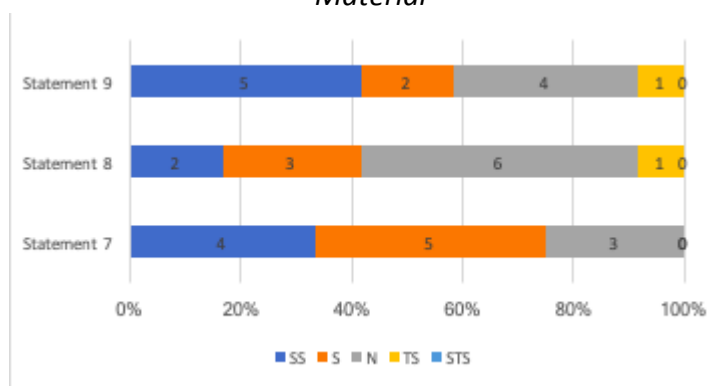


Material Comprehension

Figure 4 summarizes responses to statements 7,8, and 9 regarding material , about material there are **(1) Comic Media makes it easy for me to understand the content of animal-themed English learning, (2) Comic Media makes it easy for me to understand**

simple past-tense, (3) and Comic Media makes it easy for me to understand comparative degree. Figure 4 showed Comic media is effective in helping students acquire new vocabulary and understand various materials in English learning. By looking at the pictures and the accompanying vocabulary list pages, students can learn new vocabulary more easily. The comic also helps students understand the theme of animals through the storyline that includes places such as beaches, zoos and farms, so that students can recognize English terms related to animals. In addition, this comic also facilitates understanding of the simple past tense through stories about past vacation experiences, although for a deeper understanding of this tense, additional explanation is needed from the teacher. Similarly, the comparative degree material is understood through dialog that displays different opinions and points of view of the characters, but a better understanding of this material also requires an initial explanation from the teacher.

Figure 4
Material



The data shows that the comic media is effective in increasing students' motivation and English proficiency, as well as helping them understand various materials such as new vocabulary, animal topics, simple past tense, and comparative degree. Although the majority of students showed enthusiasm, there were 1-2 students who were less interested due to different personal interests.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that comic-based learning media has added value, which can increase several important points, namely learning motivation, speaking skills, and ease of understanding the material. First, comic media are effective in increasing children's learning motivation due to their skill to combine visual elements and interesting narratives. The vibrant and colorful illustrations in comics are able to capture children's attention and make learning material that might otherwise be boring more interesting. Interesting storylines, strong characters and relevant everyday situations also help to increase engagement and facilitate understanding of concepts through tangible visualizations. In addition, comics provide story-based learning, which allows children to see how information can be applied in real-world situations, making learning more

meaningful and enjoyable. Another study, (Budiarti and Haryanto, 2016) shows that learning comic media can have a positive and significant effect on learning motivation and reading comprehension skills of students. They measured those two things by comparing grade 5 elementary school students' performance before and after the use of comic media. The results prove that the use of comic media results in significant improvement. In addition to that, research by Mahendra et al. (2021) found that the use of comics can increase students' learning motivation because it is an innovative way to improve students' thinking skills by presenting knowledge in a form that can be enjoyed. Both studies can be said to have a fairly good influence in increasing student motivation. Therefore, comic-based learning media With strong visual and story elements, comics can inspire and motivate children to learn more.

Second, comics have the potential to improve students' speaking skills in English lessons because they provide a visual context that supports the understanding and use of language more naturally. In line with previous research by Sari and Lestari (2019), picture stories can help improve students' speaking skills because they can develop their imagination by composing their own sentences in telling the story contained in the picture arrangement. Meanwhile, according to Andini et al. (2022), comics are proven to improve students' speaking skills because comics are practical objects to use and are very effective and comfortable to apply in real situations in the classroom, this was found to be a significant difference found between students' abilities before and after the use of comics. This can be interpreted that comics can be interactive media because it can develop students' imagination in the application of real classroom situations.

The third one is the ease in understanding the material. By combining visual elements and text that complement each other, comics can help students understand English subject matter. Comics help students see language concepts that may be abstract through illustrations, which makes the material more concrete and easy to understand. In addition, the stories presented in story form provide a clear context, which helps students understand the use of language in real-life situations.

This study found that *comics can help students understand unfamiliar concepts*. There are fundamental differences in the grammar of Indonesian language and that of English language presented in this comic. The Indonesian language does not have a different grammatical structure between past, present, and future. In Indonesian language, what helps people understand when an event takes place is the adverb of time. Unlike in English language, there are changes made to the verb that will distinct one tense to another. In this study, there are three topics that are incorporated into the comic story: simple past tense, comparative, and vocabulary about animals. From the participants' responses in the questionnaire, 3 students found it easier to understand and remember past tense and comparative study when it is in a dialogue than having to memorize the formula first in isolation. Participant 4 expressed "*Because the material in the comic contains simple past tense that is easy for me to understand*", Participant 8 "*because this comic is about a vacation experience that happened to me too*", echoed similar ideas by

Participant 9 saying *“Yes because comics can teach us that, I can now ask ‘where did you go last vacation?’ without even thinking“.*

This is the same context as the beginning of human speech, namely by listening so that when comic books are read they can learn from listening first, then imitating and implementing. This can also be called natural language acquisition where we speak not because of memorization but because of the sentences we listen to. Therefore, if this is made into a story, it will be easier for students to understand the intended context such as, they will not say *“Where do you go last vacation?”* but they will understand to say *“Where did you go last vacation?”*. So that they know in the form of direct sentences by not just memorizing existing formulas. Repetitive dialogues in Simple Past tense sentences provide enough exposure to students to familiarize themselves with the target language grammar rules according to their respective contexts without being fixated on memorizing formulas.

The use of comics in English learning in elementary schools can support more student-centered learning. Where students are at the center of the learning process, it is vital to make them fully engaged. The learning media can be one of that supporting factors to contribute to students' active engagement. Comics provide pictures and written stories, teachers read the stories aloud, and students act out the stories to stimulate students' visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning styles. Comics can also help students focus on lessons and learn to think critically, this is because comics can help them learn difficult concepts (Hasibuan et al., 2022). This is also due to its interactive and entertaining approach, so comics are effective for training students' focus and concentration. It is also encouraged by the presence of demonstrations act out by students so that students must understand the context contained in the comic. Comics, which combine text and images, aid students' cognitive development by helping them think symbolically and process information more concretely. It can also help students to focus more on what they are learning because of the illustrative images combined with the narrative that describes the current situation. If used in a good text, comics with their own character design will have great power in conveying information so that it is active in learning (Manalu et al., 2017).

In addition, comics also help students build their own understanding through peer-and-peer interaction and peer-and-teacher interaction. This importance is emphasized in constructivism learning theory. This theory highlights the importance of interaction in learning by creating and building on what has been learned, encouraging students to be active so that their understanding will always increase. Shymansky argued that constructivism learning theory deems learning as an active activity where students can train their knowledge. Suparlan (2019), furthermore, explains that constructivist learning provides a breadth of thinking and demands on how students can apply the theory they know in real life. This is also in line with the theory of behaviorism, where comics provide positive reinforcement that increases students' desire and involvement in learning. Comics are an effective learning medium because they can increase students' motivation, skills, and overall understanding. The application of comics as learning media is also carried out by exploring the knowledge that students already know, the exploration

and investigation of to investigate the problems that occur on students' interest in learning English, processing information that has been obtained through students' understanding and interest, then reflection to find out the extent of students' understanding of certain subjects, the application in a real context, namely by making comics as a learning medium, the assessment or in this study the repetition of incorrect reading or grammar, then reinforcement through surveys to students. Therefore, through the use of comics as English learning media, this study revealed that it is increasing students' motivation, skills, and understanding in learning. This happens because comics are one of the appropriate media and in accordance with children's cognitive abilities to think more complexly. Therefore, comics can also help them to learn the lesson and communicate well in English.

In line with previous studies (Puspitasari et al., 2021) that comics can help students understand the material, which has an impact on improving student learning outcomes in elementary schools, this is because there are stories made by certain characters and flows that can make it easier for students to understand the contents of the story and the learning points in the comic story. This is in accordance with research by (Mikamahuly et al., 2023) who found that comic media with interesting narratives can arouse students' interest to be more active in the learning process because it is straightforward and easy to understand and can provide new elements in learning so that it can increase interest and make it easier for students to understand abstract concepts.

This is also supported by the perspective of the English subject teacher of SDS Permata Bangsa Firdha Silviani, in responding to the use of comics, saying that comics can help in terms of learning so that students can easily understand the material because it is driven by the stories and pictures. She also said that learning comics can be permanent learning media because the effect produced is quite significant. She also suggested that the images in the comics could be further developed to be more concrete and clear about the activities or scenes contained in the story. According to Marinda (2020), cognitive development is the process of life changes experienced by humans that enable them to understand, know, analyze data, and solve problems. In line with previous research findings, the use of learning media is very important at the age of 7-12 years because children at this age need real objects to understand new things and if the media is not assisted, children will face difficulties (Imanulhaq and Ichsan, 2022). Children begin to learn symbolic thinking at this age. For example, they can describe their memories of animals in a zoo or on a farm without the animals being present.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the effectiveness of using comic-based learning media in improving elementary school students' motivation, skills, and understanding in learning English. Comics, which are visual learning tools, align with these principles by providing a stimulating and fun way for students to learn. This study found that comics not only increase students' interest and enthusiasm in learning English but also support their cognitive development by facilitating symbolic thinking and offering concrete

visualizations of abstract concepts. This approach supports both constructivism and behaviorism theories by promoting active learning and reinforcing positive engagement. Ultimately, the use of comics in English language learning proved to be an appropriate and effective strategy for improving students' overall comprehension and language skills, making comics a valuable addition to a student-centered learning environment.

This research underscores the importance of using appropriate media tailored to students' cognitive levels and learning styles, confirming that comics can significantly contribute to the learning process by making complex concepts more accessible and enjoyable.

Further research can explore the extent to which the use of comic books as learning media can help the effectiveness of learning in other subjects and whether comic-based learning media can improve literacy. Given that comic learning media can sustain students' focus, it is also interesting to research how comics can be incorporated into inclusive classes.

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