



## Using Comic Strips as Media to Teach Writing in EFL Classroom

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article history:</b> Received: February 18, 2024 Revised: February 29, 2024 Accepted: March 11, 2024</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Comic strips Media Writing skill</p>	<p>Media of teaching applied in the classroom gives an effect on the class atmosphere and the writing result. Comic strips can be used as media in teaching learning process of writing. It is a sequence of history that usually contains, almost all the elements: character, plot, dialogues, conflict and climax. It has a story line which has a conclusion or at times a punch. It also can be used to teach writing for all grade students. This paper aims to promote comic strips as media to teach writing and to present the activities using comic strips. The teaching media, Comic strips and the activities of using comic strips as media in teaching writing will be presented. These sorts of activities are adaptable to students of various levels, but within this paper specific levels are targeted. This paper is expected to be useful in order to give a contribution to the development of educational world especially to the process of teaching writing.</p>
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### INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is very important skill in life, is not only important in educational life, but also very important in people's lives. Writing skill is very important because it is one of the language skills that must be acquired by students. Through writing, students can reveal or express ideas or opinions, thoughts, and feeling they have. Also, it can develop the power of thought and creativity of students in writing.

The government of Indonesia has decided to make English as a compulsory subject to learn by the students from junior high school up to senior high school. Further, since English is tested as the requirement of graduation, the students are supposed to understand both spoken and written English. Students need to know how to speak and write well. It will be more satisfying for them if they know not only how to speak but also how to write what they say. Therefore, the mastery of writing skill becomes important for students to acquire.

Writing in English seems to be a matter of complex issue. To acquire it, students should understand well several sub skills or components namely content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanic and organization. These components of writing will effect on the students' writing skill. Writing is a matter of habit. It needs long time and more practices for students to be good writers. Therefore, teaching learning process has the important role in EFL classroom.

Media of teaching applied in the classroom gives an effect on the class atmosphere and the writing result. The situation of classroom takes effect to the students in following the teaching learning process. Media is a tool used by teacher in explaining, delivering and transferring material in teaching learning process. Media is expected to give the teacher more helps in transferring the materials in a way with a hope that the students will be easy to understand the knowledge. The right choice of media will motivate the students in teaching learning process. The effectiveness a teaching media used by the teacher in the learning process can be seen from the students' motivation in joining

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the learning activities. Consequently, students need attractive media to motivate them in writing. According to Arsyad (2013:27) the functions of media in teaching are as follows: (1) put on the concrete basics to think, so it decreases the verbalism; (2) improve the students' attention; (3) put on the important basics for the development of study, so it makes the lesson more steady; (4) give real experiences to the students, (5) help to arise the ideas and continue thinking, and (6) build understanding that can help the students' language development.

Based on the explanation above, it can be stated that the use of teaching media in classroom activity takes important roles. Media of teaching applied in the classroom gives an effect on the writing result. Media have several functions as a tool to deliver knowledge, create conducive situation of learning, and enhance the students' psychological mood to join the learning activities. Teaching media should be able to cover the components of writing which include content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization. Media used in teaching writing will not be effective if they are not interesting and attractive. One of the attractive teaching media is comic strips. Comic strips are predicted to be able to make the students feel more motivated in the writing activity. It challenges to the students to build motivation, confidence, and ideas toward the story independently. The teacher is less dominated in the learning process. The teacher does not give guidance all the time. This media is appropriate to teach the students who have high motivation

## I. Comic Strips

Comics are an art for using series of static images in fixed sequence. According to Arsyad (2013:116), comic strips mean sequence or series of images compiled and assembled into a short storyline. Comic strips assist the students in generating ideas and retrieving words for their writing. According to Scott McCloud in his book *Understanding Comics* (1993), comics are juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.

Moreover, Liu in Merc (2013: 57) states that a comic strip can be defined as "a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story". As stated by Brown, et al. (1983:294), chronological order is a way of organizing events in the time order in which they take place. Comic strips contain all the elements of a short story: characters, dialogue, plot, conflict, and climax (Wright, 1979). Brocka (1979: 27) provides a strong argument in favor of comic strips: "Comics are a dynamic combination of visual image and written word, of narrative and dialogue. They have just the cohesive and choreographed imagery we need to reach our students". Furthermore, Csabay (2006:25) states that the characteristics of comic strips help to increase motivation (especially when the comics are colored ones); and more importantly, if a word, expression, or concept is accompanied by a picture (a visual image in one's mind), then the learner will memorize and recall it more easily.

In addition, Sudjana (2002: 64) defines comic strips as a kind of cartoon form expressing character and playing a story in sequences of closely related drawing and designed to give fun to the readers. It contains several continued stories. The stories are brief and interesting, completed with action. Comic strips also appear in newspaper and book. It means that fragments of images compiled and assembled into a short storyline. However, the contents of the story do not have to finish exactly. It may be also be used as a continued story or serial and usually consists of 3 to 6 panels or surrounding. Pieces comics (Comic Strip) is usually proffered role in daily or weekly view in newspapers, magazines and tabloid or newsletter. The presentation of the story can also be a humor farce or serious stories that cool to listened to each period until the end.

From the various definitions above, it can be concluded that comic strips are art work which use a series of pictures inside box in deliberate sequence to give fun the reader by containing all elements of short story; character, dialogue, conflicts, and climax.

Comic strips are one of visual aids that can be used as media in language learning and language teaching. Comic strips also can be used to teach writing for all grade students. It can be applied for all genre of text. Junior high school students or teenagers are categorized into adolescents learners. Most youngest learners love comic, which is why comic can be applied in classroom. Students have motivation from the use of comic strips; they should not be ignored as potential media in classroom.

Comics also can be used to facilitate vocabulary teaching. This way, students will associate the words with a certain context, and they can recall and apply it better than just learning a single word

with a corresponding meaning. Besides vocabulary, new grammatical points can be introduced and practiced, and since these grammar points are embedded in a story with a logical structure, students will be able to better recall them later. Comic strips have interesting feature and friendly so that students will not be bored and will be motivated to write. Students find a media that close to them in their daily life. Using comic strips, students have to be sure that they can develop their ideas, the organizations are in the well-form and the words are eloquent. They will easily brainstorm their ideas and explore the details. It is assumed that using Comic strips as teaching aid is effective for developing and promoting students' writing skill. Further, students get many opportunities and challenges to explore their writing skill. It generates motivation, excitement, understanding, entertaining, and enthusiasm will upon the language learning.

## II. The Activities of Using Comic Strips

There are many activities of using comic strips. These activities are adopted by Csabay (2006: 25), an article from BBC, and an article from Camilo. They are:

a. Activity 1

The teacher cuts apart the individual panels of a comic strip and puts them in an envelope. The students (either individually or in groups) then are asked to arrange the pieces into the proper sequence to tell the story in written form. They can then compose a piece of creative writing that tells a new story that follows the frames they have arranged.

b. Activity 2

This activity is called blank balloon. The teacher removes the speech or thought bubbles of the comic strips, hands out copies of both the comic strip and the text of the bubbles to the students. The teacher asks the students to write new dialogue. They should remember to make the dialogue consistent with the pictures in each panel. Post all the new dialogues and allow your class to vote for their favorites.

c. Activity 3

The teacher hands out a comic strip from which the last panel is cut out. Students are asked to continue the story and come up with an ending. This can be writing or speaking exercise and can be organized as either an individual or a group activity, depending on the needs of the students. This way is more challenging than having to continue a story that already has a conclusion.

d. Activity 4

The teacher organizes students into groups and gives them a written story with missing information. First, the groups should discuss what might be missing from the text. Then the teacher gives them a comic strip version of the text. They must fill in the blanks in the written story by describing what they see in the pictures. After that, they are asked to think of speech and thought bubbles for the comic strip.

e. Activity 5

In writing, there are some components such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, and content. Comic strips can be used in teaching these components, especially grammar. The teacher can use cloze test in balloons of comic strips. The students should complete the comic strips by using word which has been taught. In vocabulary also, the teacher can use the same activity by using cloze test in balloons of comic strips. The students should fill in blank with the appropriate word.

## CONCLUSION

Comic strips are one type of media which can be used as media in teaching learning process. Comic strips seem to be interesting and effective. Comic strips are not only for fun in a language class, but there are also methodological reasons for teachers to use them. Comic strips have a story line and a

logical structure is easier to remember and to recall. Comics strips provide the structure and stimulus to which students respond, and, stories are universal, students from different cultures can understand their structure and can identify with the characters, which helps them to acquire vocabulary, grammatical and communicative competence, and provides them with special cultural knowledge as well. Comic strips allow teachers and students to explore language in a creative way. But in deciding to use this media, we have to choose the cartoons and comic strips that matched with the level of the class. The more the teacher exploits comic strips, the greater chance for students to increase their writing skill practice.

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