

# IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY BY USING COMIC STRIPS IN TEACHING NARRATIVE TEXT

**Petrus Gito Budiman, Clarry Sada, Wardah**

English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty

Tanjungpura University, Pontianak

Email: [boediman33@gmail.com](mailto:boediman33@gmail.com)

## Abstract

This research was done to investigate the use of comic strips to improve the students' vocabulary in teaching narrative text. The form of this research is a classroom action research, in which the subject is the eight grade students of SMPN 2 Putussibau in academic year 2017/2018. The subjects of this research were 24 students in VIII B. The data were collected from the students' score in test, observation checklist, and field notes. The students' achievement towards the learning process was gathered by observation checklist and field note. The data of vocabulary mastery was obtained by the test. Based on data, the students showed improvement in the teaching process. There were two cycles in conducting this research. In the first cycle, the students' mean score was 59,79. The result were classified as "poor" level. In the second cycle, the students' mean score was 78, 75. The result was classified as "Average" level. The students were easier in understanding the meaning of the new vocabulary, and also the students are easier in understanding the text. The students' vocabulary of the eighth grade students of class VIII B of SMPN 2 Putussibau in academic year 2017/2018 improved by using comic strips in teaching narrative text.

Keywords : Improving, Vocabulary, Comic Strips.

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the English components that needs to be mastered. When someone learn a new language, they should have enough vocabulary in order to use it into the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening). In other words, if the learners have enough vocabulary, they will be able to produce many utterances easily either in spoken or written form, especially in English. It is difficult for the learners to express their opinions, and ideas with low vocabulary. They will find difficulties in arrange a sentences and also they will difficult to understand the language. Therefore, vocabulary mastery must be the first priority in English teaching.

Based on the writers' observation on 15th January 2018 in SMPN 2 Putussibau, some students have problems in learning English. The English teacher of the school clarifying that the students are difficult in understanding the new words. They are difficult to express their idea and hard to understand the text. As a result, they judge English as a complicated subject to learn. Besides, The media that teacher use only book and whiteboard, so it can not attract the students' interest and also can not help the students to get their learning achievement. There are no visual aids in

teaching process make the students difficult in understanding the teaching material. The teaching process quality is low. The students do not reach their learning achievement.

Teaching vocabulary needs a serious attention from teacher. The teacher should consider about the teaching method, or how many vocabularies that they should teach. There is no best or right way to teach english skill, it depends on the students and the school system, and also the curriculum. It is not enough just presented and repeated some new words to the students. The teacher also should teach them how to use those words in four language skills. they are expected to be able to use those words continously.

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher should create the situation that can encourage students to get some new words. To overcome the problem, the teacher also need to have a teaching media which can help the students to understand the teaching material. To improve the students vocabulary, the writer chooses using comic strips as a teaching media. Using comic strips in teaching narrative text can be applied to improve students' vocabulary. Ravelo (2013) states that the power of words and images in the comic can entertaining the reader. The relevance between the captions and

the pictures in the comic strips create understandable text. It means, the comic strips can help the students to understand the text. Besides, some vocabularies that provided in the comic strips also relevant with the pictures that provided also in the comic strips. It can make the students easily understand some new vocabularies that provided in the comic strips. Words are symbols for ideas, ideas to formulate knowledge, and knowledge is gained through the words. Thornbury (2002:15) states that vocabulary and comprehension have powerful relationship. It means that if the students having enough vocabulary, they will gained some knowledge easily. By having enough vocabulary, they are able to speak and write some utterances in English. In teaching English vocabulary, the language material that given is words.

Words are symbols for ideas, ideas to formulate knowledge, and knowledge is gained through the words. Thornbury (2002:15) states that vocabulary and comprehension have powerful relationship. It means that if the students having enough vocabulary, they will gained some knowledge easily. By having enough vocabulary, they are able to speak and write some utterances in English. They are also understand with the utterances that they read or even listen.

Comic strips are pictures which combined in chronologically order to represents a story. It can also be a continued story. It can be found in magazine or daily newspaper. Sometime this type is humorous story which aimed to entertain the readers. Liu (2004) stated that among visual genres, comic strips catch many writers' attention because they are communicative, popular, accessible, and readable, and they combine aesthetic perception with intellectual pursuit. When the students read comic, they learn new words, as Gordon (1998) states that the relationship between words and pictures in comic strips is complex. There is the relationship that could make students easy to understand words or vocabularies through picture and the story. Comic can contain a little or even no words, and consists of one or more images, which may either illustrate or counterpoint the text to affect greater depth.

Comic attracts students to read even they do not like reading. Ravelo (2013) stated that Reading comics might allow the reader to be completely absorbed in his reading and his imagination can be carried away even against

his will. Comic is not just can get students' interest, it also makes students thinking critically, Sherman and Wright in Liu (2004) introduced a teaching strategy using newspaper comic strips to promote higher level thinking in elementary and secondary students. Another experts Williams in Liu (2004) found using comic strips in second language classroom could guide students to hypothesize about the cartoons' language, raise awareness of pragmatics, and emphasize language's underlying regularity. A method of foreign language teaching is very important, especially in teaching English. It can help the teacher to easily transfer the knowledge to their students. By knowing several method, the teacher can setting the plan of their teaching based on their students variety background. A teaching method or a teaching model can also stated as a planning or a pattern that is used as a guide in teaching in the classroom. In the junior high school, kind of vocabulary that have to be learn by the eighth grade students are noun, verb, adverb, and adjective. English word divided into different kinds of classes, it is called part of speech and also known as word class. Kardimin (2003:152) argues that part of speech derived noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, conjunction, and interjection. There is procedure in teaching by using comic strips. Medina (1992) suggested several steps that teachers should follow in order to maximize the use of cartoons and comic strips as a pedagogical strategy. Here are the steps that Medina suggested : (1) First, teachers must do a kind of assessment needs of their students. It functions as a tools to find out students' previous knowledge and experiences, and also to determine comic strip are appropriate for their age, gender, cognitive level, and socioeconomic status. (2) Second, make sure that stereotypes are not preserved in the resources, that negative aspects of the material are minimized, and that the message is clear and simple. (3) Third, as in all planning, alignment of the topic with state and national standards is highly recommended, as well as ways to evaluate students' learning achievement. (4) The fourth step is the actual teaching of the material using the comic strips. It is the role of the teachers to formative evaluate their presentation, the students' response, and the learning that is going on during the class. (5) Fifth, at the end of the lesson, Feedback questions or a small quiz are just two examples of how teachers can

conclude the lesson while making sure the use of the Comic Strips was pedagogically successful. The writer made the comic strips by himself through the application maker. The writer designed some comic by using local / interlocal folklore such as Malin Kundang, Snow White, Timun mas and Rapunzel. So the students can understand the vocabularies in the comic strips easily, because they already have the mindset about what the story is going to be like. Based on KTSP Syllabus, the junior high school students learn about narrative text in the eighth grade. As Medina (1992) Suggested that following the topic with state and national standards is highly recommended as ways to evaluate the students. 3. Advantages of Comic Strips Comic strips are considered as visual materials. According to Liu (2010), comic strips are good materials because comic strips can motivate students' interest. In addition, Csabay (2006) said that comic is not only amuse and make the students interested in, but also can be used as media in education. Comic can help the students deal with spoken or written language. Comic Strips also help the students in generating ideas and finding words for their writing. Using Comic Strips can stimulate the students' brain and make it easier for the students to find the idea and inspiration about what they are going to write because Comic Strips contain pictures and some dialogues which are put into several panels.

Furthermore, the dialogues that are put in Comic Strips can make the students able to find the words that they want to use in their writing easily. The dialogues contain many words that show what actually happen with the character, so that the students can pick some words that are already stated in the bubbles and put them into their writing by considering the spelling and the grammatical rules of their writing. Besides, Comic Strips also help them to improve their vocabulary mastery. Teaching is a set of transferring information to the students in the classroom. Brown (2000:7) states that teaching is about how the teacher facilitating and guiding the students to learn. While Harmer (2001:114) states that the teaching itself means the interaction between the teacher and the students that occur in the classroom. In addition, Brown (2000:8) states that teaching means any activity of the teacher to show or to help someone to know the knowledge. Based on several statements above, we can conclude that teaching means a process to give instruction to learners by an instructors to gain

knowledge or skill during a teaching and learning process. A method of foreign language teaching is very important, especially in teaching English. It can help the teacher to easily transfer the knowledge to their students. By knowing several method, the teacher can setting the plan of their teaching based on their students variety background. A teaching method or a teaching model can also stated as a planning or a pattern that is used as a guide in teaching in the classroom. In the junior high school, kind of vocabulary that have to be learn by the eighth grade students are noun, verb, adverb, and adjective. English word divided into different kinds of classes, it is called part of speech and also known as word class. Kardimin (2003:152) argues that part of speech derived noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, conjunction, and interjection. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language because it is taught as a school subject. English is included in the curriculum as a compulsory subject for the students of junior and senior high school level, up to university level. Moreover, the teaching english in junior high school has a purpose that by the end of their study, the students are expected to be able to master productive skill (speaking and writing) and receptive skill (listening and reading). They are also expected to be able to understand about the linguistic components such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Based on KTSP curriculum in junior high school, the teacher should prepare the teaching which can make the students motivated, inspired, andchallenged to learn English. Brown (2000:19) states that the series of curriculum activities provides a framework that helps the students to learn efficiently and effectively. Teaching vocabulary needs a serious attention from teacher. The teacher should consider about the teaching method, or how many vocabularies that they should teach. There is no best or right way to teach english skill, it depends on the students and the school system, and also the curriculum. It is not enough just presented and repeated some new words to the students. The teacher also should teach them how to use those words in four language skills. they are expected to be able to use those words continously.

In teaching English vocabulary, the language material that given is words. Words are symbols for ideas, ideas to formulate knowledge, and knowledge is gained through the words. Thornbury (2002:15) states that

vocabulary and comprehension have powerful relationship. It means that if the students having enough vocabulary, they will gained some knowledge easily. By having enough vocabulary, they are able to speak and write some utterances in English. They are also understand with the utterances that they read or even listen. Teacher must uses supportable teaching media in teaching vocabulary. It is able to help the teacher in giving the knowledge for the students easily. The uses of media also can make the students interested in the teaching process. Arsyad (2003:15) states that the use of media can influence the situation in the class. Every language in this world has a list of words. This word is used to express human feelings or ideas in oral and written form. Every word in a language always has specific meaning, both literal and semantic meaning. people use suitable vocabularies to express their feelings or ideas in order to be understood in oral or written text. By using vocabulary people can communicate each other in order to ask or deliver an information. This is why vocabulary has an important role in language use. Nueman and Dwyer (2009: 385) states that vocabulary can be defined as “words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)”. In addition, Hanson and Pandua (2011) states that vocabulary refers to words we use to communicate in oral and printed language. In order to communicate effectively using oral and printed language, the students must be able flexibly to use words that we understand. In other words, vocabulary helps the learners to use a language including English in the form of oral and written language.

Other definitions of vocabulary is stated by Cahyono (2011:153) he says that vocabulary is core component of language proficiency and it provides much of the basic for how well learners listen, speak, read and write. Similarly, Cameron (2001) states that vocabulary as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language. It means that, vocabulary is a set of words known to a person or other entity, or the part of a specific language in the form of oral and written language. From the definition above, the writer concludes that vocabulary is a basic knowledge and useful material in the form of words which are always used by the students in learning a certain language. In context of learning foreign language, vocabulary is a part

of language components including content words such as noun, verb, adjectives and adverb. If the students have already mastered a large amount of vocabulary and can used effectively, it is believe that it easier for them to conduct effective communication with others.

## **METHOD**

The method that used in this reasearch is Classroom Action Research which focus on improving the students' vocabulary by using comic strips. Mettetal (2001) stated that Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a method of finding out what works best in your own classroom so that you could improve students achievement. The purpose of CAR is to gain understanding of teaching and learning within one's classroom and to use that knowledge to increase teaching efficacy or student learning (Chamot, Barnhardt, Dirstine, 2011). The writer collaborated with the English teacher in conducting the research. The researcher acted as a teacher and the English teacher acted as a collaborator. This study apply the four steps of Class Action research by Kemmis and McTaggart. i.e., planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

### **Planning**

In this stage, there were several things that were prepared by the writer. First, the writer were communicating and discussing with the English teacher about how to use of comic strips as a teaching media should be conducted and what was needed to implement the technique. Next, the writer and the teacher made a lesson plan. The lesson plan completed with learning materials, media and the assesment sheet. Besides, the writer prepared the tools for data collecting such as observation checklist, field note, and the students' test.

### **Acting**

In this research, the writer acted as the teacher applying the technique and the english teacher acted as the collaborator observing the situation that occurs in the classroom. The writer applied the teaching through comic strips to improve students' vocabulary, while the english teacher observe the teaching and learning process. The collaborator, in this case the english teacher took note in the form of observation checklist and field note that has been prepared by the writer.

## Observing

In this phase, the teacher as a observer observed systematically the effect of the action based on the observation checklist and field phase can be called as data collection phase.

## Reflecting

At this point, the writer and the teacher were reflecting, evaluating, and explaining the effect of the action which has been done in order to know what happened and what needed to be solved.

The subject of this research was the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Putussibau in academic year 2017/2018 in VIII B Class which consist of 24 students. The technique to collect the data in this research affected the conclusion made from the outcome. The writer used observation and measurement techniques. The observation technique applied by using observation checklist and field note as a way to recognize students' improvement through comic strips, while the measurement technique implemented through the test to know the student progress. The instrument or tool of data collecting which used by the writer are: (1) Observation checklist, the writer used the checklist which provided some indicators in order to have wider perspectives of outcome, as Burns (2010) stated that observation sheets are used in what is sometimes called systematic or structured observation. (2) field note, the collaborator write down and lists in the field note anything happened when the research being conducted. The field note is very useful to record the progress in the classroom. (3) test, The test used to acquire the students' score of vocabulary. The test form is multiple-choice test with four options, the test will consist of 20 questions. In processing the data, the writer used descriptive analysis. It is to explain the situation of every cycle, and to describe the success of the teaching learning process in using comic strips to improve students vocabulary. In analysis the data, the writer got the data from observation checklist, field note, and the test result. The quantitative data was analyzed in the test process in order to get students' score. The formula that will be analyzed are :

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

M = The average of students' score

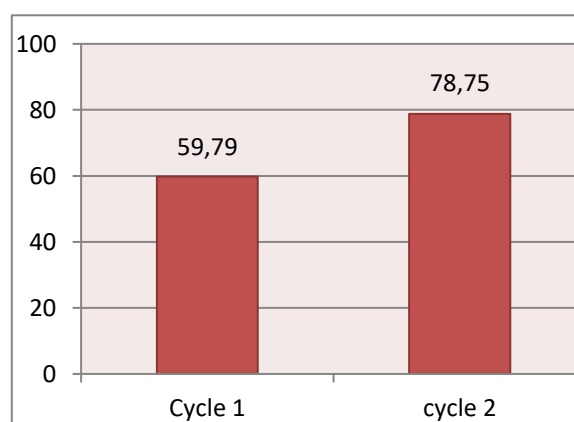
$\sum x$  = The total of students' score

N = The total of students in the classroom

**Table 1**  
**Students' Mean Score Classification**  
**Score Classification**

Score	Classification
80-100	Excellent
70-79	Good
60-69	Average
50-69	Poor
0-49	Very poor

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS



**Graph 1**

### **The Result of Students' Mean Score's Test**

In conducting this research, the writer had applied classroom action research. This research method had solved the problems found in class VIII B of SMPN 2 Putussibau. The writer applied the media while the English teacher observed what were happening in the classroom in order to obtain the objective data by filling the observation checklist and field notes.

### **The improvement of students' vocabulary.**

The students are understand about the whole of the text. It means that the comic strips as a teaching media really help the students in reaching their learning achievement. When the writer and the students discussing together about the vocabularies that provided in the comic strips, they are look so enthusiast with the teaching process. They are active than before. They shout a lot in answering the teacher while giving some questions about the meaning of several vocabularies.

### **Using Comic Strips as a teaching media help the students to understanding the text.**

The pictures in the Comic Strips were described with a sentence that related on the pictures. As a result, the students are easier in understanding the text. The new vocabularies also provided in some sentences in the Comic Strips. The students are easier in reach their learning achievement. They are easier in understanding the meaning of new vocabularies, and also easier in understanding the text. The comic make them felt curious. They tend to find by themself the meaning of new vocabularies in order to know the path of the story that provided in the comic. The using of comic strips as a teaching media also create an leisure atmosphere in the class. The students feel easy to understanding the text because of the sentences that related with the pictures situation. The new vocabularies that they found in a sentences are easier to understand. The situation in the pictures represent of the sentences that provided, so it make them easier in guessing the meaning of the new vocabularies.

### **Discussion**

The writer conducted this research in two cycles. The purpose of this research is to improve the students' vocabulary by using comic strips in teaching narrative text. The subject of this research are the eighth grade students of B class of SMPN 2 Putussibau in academic year 2017/2018. The total amount of the students is 24. In order to overcome the students' problems in vocabulary mastery, the writer designed the comic strips uniquely to gain the students interest and to make them easily in understanding the comic. The comic include some words such as verbs, nouns, adjective, and adverb of time to made them easier in knowing some new words. The comic also contains some pictures which related with the exist sentences. the writer and the collaborator observed the result of planning and acting stage. They tried to identify the strengths and the weaknesses about the whole activity and the students' participation in the classroom. The writer and the collaborator found that students' giving some positive respons in

several activity. Such as in pre-teaching activity, they tried to shout out in explaining their opinions. The students felt excited when the writer show them the picture. They were curious with the comic and trying to get the point of the comic. When the writer explaining the topic, some students starts felt confused and still dont get the point. When the writer gave them the comic, they felt curious, but confusing in how to read the comic. For them, it was first the time experience learning with comic as a media. Although the writer explained them how to read it, they still confused. Some student were passive because they still dont understand with several sentences in the comic. They were active after the teacher help them to read. The writer also helped them by letting the students asking something about the comic. The class was not controlling well. There were few students do not pay the attention with the writer. As a result, they took a lot of time in doing the test. The result of students score in the first cycle was unsatisfying. To see the detail, the result of students' can be seen on the following table.

The first cycle was on May 7th, 2018. The teacher started a lesson with stimulus by showing them the pictures in front of the class. The students were asking by the writer to guess the title of the story. Then, the writer explained the teaching material about vocabulary, synonym and antonym. The writer also gave the students the "Snow White" comic. Writer and the students were discussing and analyzing the comic together, especially several words in the comic. The students and the writer analyzed together the Noun, Verb, Adjective, and Adverb of time which consist in the comic. The students also asked by the writer to do the test about the "Snow White" comic. After all done, the students were given the "Malin Kundang" comic by the writer. They needed to read and to do the the task by themself. At the last, the both test were submitted to the writer.

The result of first cycle was unsatisfying. The class were uncontrollable. The students were confused with the material. The students took a long time to read the comic and to do the test. Also the mean score of their test was classified as "Poor", it was 59,79. Based on the situation, the writer and the collaborator decided to do the next cycle.

The second cycle was conducted on May 14th, 2018. The writer asked the students to sing a song together before the class start. The comic design had been fixed so the students will understand more the comic. When the writer explained the material to the students, the writer used communicative way. The writer also explained the material shortly-continously, so it made the students understand more the teaching material. The writer also controlled the class, so there is no chance to students to not to paid attention with the writer explanation. As a result, they understand the material. When the students and the writer were discussing and analyzing the "Rapunzel" comic, the students were so enthusiast than first cycle. They answer quickly the question that the writer gave. The question was guessing which were the Verb, Noun, Adjective, and Adverb of time which consist in the "Rapunzel" comic. In this cycle the students also got Vocabulary list in a paper that given by the writer. Most of students were active because they understand the topic and the material that the writer gave. After that the students do the test of "Rapunzel" comic. After they were done, the teacher gave them the "Timun Mas" comic and do the test by themself. The both of test were submitted after the class.

The result of the second cycle was satisfying. The writer solved several problems which occurs in the first cycle. The mean score of the test also improved, it was 78, 75. The students mean score classified as "Average". The previous research that has conducted by Yulia Ratnasari (2014) has found that the using of comic in teaching English made encourage the students' curiosity. In this research also found the same finding. By using comic, the students were curious about what the content of the comic about. Liu (2004) stated that teaching by using comic strips can catching the reader attention. Comic are served communicatively and easily readable. in this research, the students were easily understand with the content of the comic. The students also know the meaning of several vocabulary in the comic. It means, using comic as a media in teaching

English can help students in reach their learning achievement.

In conclusion, the vocabulary of the eighth grade students of B class of SMPN 2 Putussibau in academic year 2017/2018 improved by using comic strips in teaching narrative text. The media could get the students' interest in learning vocabulary. The comic also made the students easier in order to know the meaning of some several words. They also easier in understanding the text. Students' mean score increase and teaching and learning process became better. Thus, the prediction of the action hypothesis was accepted.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The using of Comic Strips as a teaching media were improving the students' vocabulary in teaching narrative text. The mean score of the first cycle was 59,79 with "Poor" level of score classification. In the second cycle, the score were improving to 78,75 with "average" level score of classification.

Teaching vocabulary by using comic strips in teaching vocabulary made the students interested in learning vocabulary. The relation between the pictures and the caption in the comic helped the students to understand the meaning of some new words. The teaching media also made the students easier in order to know the meaning of the new words. The comic strips also help them, in understanding the text.

### **Suggestions**

The writer suggest that the English teacher applies the using of comic strips as a teaching media in order to get the students interested in learning vocabulary. The writer also suggest that the comic design should attract students' interest. The comic should design communicatively to make the students easier in understanding the comic.

The use of comic strips can be applied for all genre of the text with different topic in teaching English. The main purposes of this media is to help the teacher to teach. The using of media in

teaching process are more helpful in order to deliver the teaching material for the students.

## REFERENCES

- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Chamot, A, et al. (2011). "Conducting Action Research in The Foreign Language Classroom. National Capital Language Resource Center.
- Liu, J. (2004). "Effects of Comic Strips on L2 Learners' Reading Comprehension." TESOL QUARTERLY.
- Medina, L.E. (1992). *Comunicación, humor e imagen: Funciones didácticas del dibujo humorístico*. Mexico: Editorial Trillas.
- Mettetal, G. (2001). "The What, Why and How of Classroom Action Research. "The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
- Ratnasari, Y. (2014). *The Effectiveness Of Using English Comic Strips In Teaching Writing Of Narrative Text*. Jakarta: Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah.
- Ravelo, L. C. (2003). "The Use of Comic Strips as a means of teaching history in the EFL class. "Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning.
- Thornburry, Scott. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Oxfordshire : Longman PearsonEducation.