

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the general outline of the study. It covers the background, research questions, research objectives, significances of the study, rationale, hypothesis, and previous studies of this research.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Vocabulary is the important part that should be considered in teaching English. Vocabulary is the foundation to build languages, which plays a fundamental role in communication (Hatch & Brown, 1995). Vocabulary as one the importance aspect of English language will make the students easy to communicate to each other and master other aspects of language (Jack and Willy, 2002, p. 225). This statement illustrates that by learning vocabulary as a basic competency in English, an individual is able to master other competencies such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. EFL learners would be difficult to master those competencies if they do not learn vocabulary.

Richard (2005, p. 5) states that vocabulary is core component of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary is important to be learned by the students who wants to master English language.

Considering vocabulary is important to the four skills, vocabulary should be built seriously. Building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level (Williams, 2002). According to Carter and McCarthy cited in Cameron (2002), “now, in recent years, vocabulary has moved to center stage in foreign language teaching backed by substantial and increasing research”. It means that building vocabulary could be through learning and teaching especially in the school (cited in Mastery, Tenth, Of, & Muntok, 2016).

Mastering a large number of vocabularies is very important for foreign language learners because without mastering it, foreign language learners will get some

difficulties in developing the four language skills. Hornby (1995, p. 72) defines mastery as complete knowledge or great skill. The term *mastery* which is defined as complete knowledge is also often called as *acquisition*. The complete knowledge here is the knowledge of the form and meaning the word.

Although learning vocabulary is important, but there are many difficulties faced by learners in vocabulary learning. The difficulties faced by the students were almost in pronouncing the words, how to write and spell, and how to distinguish grammatical form in vocabulary learning (Rohmatillah, n.d.). In addition, the students found difficulties in choosing appropriate words for specific contexts. The last, the students are also still confused when they found idiomatic (Rohmatillah, n.d.).

The main reason why the difficulties faced by students appear is the lack of teacher's creativity in finding the appropriate media and activities for English learning and teaching process, especially in learning vocabulary that may still not be recognized by learners. Teachers facilitate the students using teaching and learning media. The strategy determines the successful process. There will be no interesting teaching and learning process, because students need something new in their process of learning, especially when they are at school (Rokhayani & Utari, 2014).

Comic is one of the alternative media to teach vocabulary (Vol, 2016). The story of Comic Strips made learners understand the information of the story line easily and efficiently (Aceh & Aceh, 2016). Furthermore, one of the characteristics of Comic Strips story builds an enjoyable and comfortable learning environment (Ravelo, 2013).

In order to arise the students attention and motivation in learning English especially vocabulary, the teacher should be able to choose and create a suitable material and method based on the students' condition (Kurniawan, 2009). Vassilikopoulou, Boloudakis, & Retalis (2001) belief is that comic books can be a valuable teaching aid. Gorjian & Branch, (2016) as they describes problem of language teachers: constantly searching for new innovative and motivating authentic material to

enhance learning in the formal classroom. Today, educators at all levels are designing new ways of teaching through comics (Muzumdar, 2016).

Aceh & Aceh (2016) stated that the use of comic strips in reading classrooms improved learners' vocabulary. It gives positive influence which resulted the better vocabulary achievement. The same results are also reported by Vol (2016), the mean scores of students' vocabulary achievement before taught by using English comics is lower than the mean score of students' vocabulary achievement after being taught through reading English comics.

The use of digital technology is an action which can be taken by an English teacher to improve her/his students' learning. The digital comic platform, like webtoon, is a good option, which can be used in teaching vocabulary. It catches from the characteristics of platform webtoon. The research chooses digital comic webtoon platform as one of the media in this study. Webtoon is a new platform that can be used to develop student vocabulary skills by using words and interesting pictures. Moreover, Webtoon is brought up as an example of online materials which seem to catch on among the millennials but also poses long-term consequences for their reading habit, Djiwandono (2018). According to Maldonado & Yuan (2011), the researchers have proved the critical relationships between words and pictures for meaning-making. Students will feel motivated to read a text that completed by a picture. Besides, it will make it easier for students to get the meaning of the vocabulary by looking at the picture.

The study above illustrates that the use of comic as a medium of English learning vocabulary is a strategy that can help the success of the English learning process.

## **B. The Research Questions**

The researcher formulates the problems of this research as follows:

1. What is students' vocabulary score before using English webtoon comic?

2. What is students' vocabulary score after using English webtoon comic?
3. How effective the use of English webtoon comic to improve students' vocabulary score?

### **C. The Research Objectives**

Based on the background of research above, the study is intended:

1. To find out the students' vocabulary score before using English webtoon comic.
2. To find out the students' vocabulary score after using English webtoon comic.
3. To find the effectiveness of English webtoon comic to improve students' vocabulary score.

### **D. Significances of the Study**

This study provides some significance in two parts, namely theoretical and practical. *Theoretically*, this research can be useful to provide new information and insight for teachers that digital comic can be used as a vocabulary learning medium, not only reading the material. *Practically*, this research is useful for a teacher because it can be applied in English learning process.

### **E. Rationale**

Vocabulary learning plays an important role in foreign language learning, both in the first language and second language (Qian & Schedl 2004). A student who lack of vocabulary will find difficulties in the language learning process. Vocabulary is necessary to bring the language to the real use of communication. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed (Kurniawan, 2009).

According to Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 1), the term vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or a set of words that individual speaker of language might use. Moon (as cited in Schmit and McCarthy, 1997, p. 105) argued that traditionally, vocabulary has been seen as individual words that could be used with

a great deal of freedom. It is the key aspect of learning a language. Vocabulary teaching is not an easy subject. There is much work for us to do in order to make vocabulary teaching more reasonable and more effective (“Yusheng Li-Marko,” n.d.).

Colorfully illustrated comics, its stories and interesting realistic characters can motivate students of all age levels (Sudjana and Rivai, 2009, p. 69). These features of comics are also used for education purposes and many textbooks contain comics to make subject matter closer to children and thus more understandable, especially significant for education of foreign language (Education, 2009). In Addition, comics teaching media increasing student’ vocabulary achievement because comics as other reading. Using comic book is useful to learn English for learners’ second language or foreign language in improving vocabulary (Vol, 2016).

Our English teachers should refresh their minds and learn more about it to improve their teaching activities (“Yusheng Li-Marko,” n.d.). (Schmidt & Hegelheimer (2004), Pazio (2010) also Khazaei & Dastjerdi (2011) pointed that mastery of vocabulary can only be achieved with the teaching strategies that appeal to various learning styles. Recent studies have proven many benefits of different technology-based instructional materials for effective verbal and written communication (Schmidt & Hegelheimer, 2004; Pazio, 2010; Khazaei & Dastjerdi, 2011).

Therefore, Education (2009) stated that many higher education institutions today are using blended learning as a supplementary means in developing students’ vocabulary knowledge. Blended learning approach in teaching foreign language has become a matter of considerable interest to language teachers all over the world (Education, 2009). An optimum blend of methods and tools is likely to optimize learning experiences by impacting positively on motivation, satisfaction, collaboration, autonomy and engagement (Pop & Slev, 2012).

Comic can be defined as the form of cartoon to express the characters and apply story that have a related with the picture. The preference for comics are so high because

it can entertain the reader. It is the reason for making comics as media learning (Wulandari, Lestari & Utami, 2019).

Farah, Syamsul, & Norshuhada (2014) assert that the arrival of digital technology has particularly resolved hassles to maintain the quality of comic papers due to time progression and hundreds of comic files and pages can be digitally shared and downloaded in premium websites with less price compared to printed comics. Since electronic devices derive with built-in reading lights, comic fans have all the time and location flexibility to read comics digitally (Farah, Syamsul, & Norshuhada, 2014).

Webtoon is one of the application to this study because it would be interesting for practicing vocabulary skills with the pictures that will be combined in digital comic. The comic can be access from anywhere and anytime.

Webtoon is a form of “website” and “cartoon”. It firstly appeared in Korea before becoming so popular among the world. At first, many difference terms to call these digital comics which was published only on websites. One example is webmic (a compound of “web” and “comics”), which soon lost out to webtoon (a compound of “web” and “cartoon”). In 2000, one of Korean web portal had created a new site for internet comics named “Webtoon”. Then webtoon became the standard term for comics that are created and consumed only through the internet in South Korea. (Cho, 2016)

According to Raulan & Fatimah (2018), There are three things that make Webtoon is more preferable than other digital comic platforms. The first thing is that Webtoon publishes a comic on a long vertical strip in order to make it easier to be read while other digital comic platform presents comic on multiple pages. The second thing is Webtoon is displayed in color rather than black and white since the offline comic is usually published in black and white. The last thing is Webtoon has more gutter space, a space between the panels of the comic, than other usual comic.

New instructional media such as comics are able to enhance the quality of learning process. Teachers should be prepared to successfully apply comics in classrooms in order to meet the complex learning needs of students (EduComic, 2008).

## **F. Hypothesis**

According to Creswell (2012), Hypotheses are prediction that researcher makes about the expected relationship among variable. The relationship between variables should be stated in a clear term. Furthermore, the hypothesis can make clear questions that will be researched.

The hypothesis in this study is an alternative hypothesis (Ha) and the null hypothesis (Ho). The formulated hypothesis is described as follows:

Ha: There is a significant improvement in students' vocabulary score after using English Webtoon Comic

Ho: There is no significant improvement in students' vocabulary score after using English Webtoon Comic

## **G. Previous Studies**

Improving students' vocabulary mastery using English comic as a teaching medium is not a new topic in writing a final project. There have been a number of studies concerning with use of certain media and technique to teach students vocabulary mastery. Related to this study, some previous studies are discussed in the following.

The second research was conducted by Maldonado & Yuan (2011) studied the use of digital comics as an alternative pathway to literary composition. This research describes using digital comics in teaching writing and reading. The use of digital comic creation enhancing student writing abilities. Besides, students are accessible to revised

their comic, choose characters with different facial expressions, body gestures, and backgrounds.

Fauziah (2017) stated that English Comic is effective to teach speaking. There is a significant difference of effect on the student's speaking ability between those who are taught by using English Comic and those who are taught by using a Paper of Narrative. It can be proven from the score result of  $t_{\text{value}}$  (3.660) which is higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  (2.056) or  $t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$ . The students who are taught using English Comic (79.11) is higher than those who are taught by a Paper of Narrative (69.36). It means that the students who are taught by English Comic have better speaking ability than those who are taught by a Paper of Narrative.

Susilawati (2017) pointed that the digital comic has been proven as an effective media to improve students' writing ability in writing narrative text. This result was supported statistically by the computation of independent t-test using IBM SPSS Statistics v.24. Moreover, the experimental group scores in posttest showed that their understanding of narrative text improved, especially in mechanics and content of the text.

In addition, Zahra (2016) stated that English comics has increased the students' vocabulary achievement. This result was supported statistically by an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the gain scores in experimental and control class. There was a significant difference in the scores for experimental class ( $M= 2.02$ ,  $SD= 2.03$ ) and control class ( $M= 0.94$ ,  $SD= 1.32$ ) conditions;  $p= 0.02$  Sig.

The similarities between this research and the three previous study are design of the research. Three previous studies above examined three similar media, namely comics. The kind of comics used are slightly different. Although the three research above examined how the effectiveness of comic media in improving the competence of learners in learning English.



In addition, another difference from this research with previous researches is the use of comics that are digitized and distributed through the webtoon application. In addition, the learning activities carried out are also combined with an online learning process where students will learn independently through the webtoon application.

This activity aims to assist students in understanding vocabulary before receiving a more detailed explanation from the teacher in class, also introducing students to the learning process that combined with ICT. The learning process carried out will be far more interesting and enjoyable for students.

