

# USING ONOMATOPOEIA IN COMIC TO IMPROVE READING SKILL

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## Abstract

*In the field of second language teaching, reading has been one of the most neglected areas in the classroom. Teaching reading for some educators is kind of a challenge. They already made plans to teach with great scheme of their lesson plan and fabulous exercises exactly what the curriculum asked them, but in the application, they were failed. This study was meant to find out how to improve reading skill by using onomatopoeic expression in comic and to describe some challenges in using comic as a media of teaching and learning process. This study used a qualitative descriptive analysis. The participants were taken from the students in private classes. The research data is collected by using test (test after the first treatment and test after the second treatment) and by observation for collecting data on the students' motivation in improving reading skill using onomatopoeic expression. The data were analyzed by using the descriptive analysis. The result showed that in the first cycle, the students' average was 65.8, then, on the second treatment, the students' average increase to be 75.9. It can conclude that teaching reading by using onomatopoeic expression in comic can be used as media to improve students' reading skill.*

**Keywords :** Onomatopoeia, Reading, Motivation, Comic

## Introduction

Reading is a great subject, however, too much spending time in a common long reading texts can lead into disasters not only for lecturers but also for students. Most of all academic reading offered the official form of rigid curriculum by ignoring students' need and the lecturers' mood though it is unavoidable that students must read something to make a better understanding. However, the process of that could turn into a nightmare every time they came into the class and lengthen their desperation if they had no strategy at all to cope with that. There were thousands of reading strategies offered to them whether through internet, bookstores or universities, however still in students' mind gathered bunches of thought. Started from the first thought when they saw the first page of the book then continued to see at a glance those very tiny words inside the thick book they must read, if they had to read that book then their eyes would be blurred after 5 minutes then they would travel in their own dream. When they awoke all they remembered that they already ran out of time to finish their reading tasks.

The second thought was the time. If students had a job plus they had to babysit their nephew or their own children, the time often haunted their mind. They already made complicated relationship with their personal life, as students and also as workers. On the other hand, teaching reading for some educators is kind of a challenge. They already made plans to teach with great scheme of their lesson plan and fabulous exercises exactly what the curriculum asked them, but in the application, they were failed. Students just saw their explanation but their mind was busy making affairs with their own other life. Those factors could vanish their inner motivation while motivation itself could help them to reduce their

mind pressure. To order students to read is not so hard but to get their comprehension about the subject will take educators' patience higher. When talking about comprehension, it means students do not just read like that, but they need to understand what it is written in that text they read. As in some cases, for example, people faced complicated situation, something that was out of their capacity to understand the situation. In crime scene investigation, it had no obstacles to solve the mystery for policemen or detective who got used to with that job, but it would be an extraordinary action if common people could track the crime based on what they usually watched or the way they read to connect the mystery to find the answers. Another case as a sample when someone saw the weird car which passed by then suddenly there was shocking shout which asked for help then automatically his or her memory would be reminded of the car's number or any visual clues that dropped in his or her mind that time as the event was so fast. This is what Beale (2008:29) called building bridges of knowledge. When people read about something new, they relate it to some of their existing background knowledge and stick the two together. Those concepts stimulated the idea about Onomatopoeia in Comic Strips as a strategy in teaching reading. Students should use their analytical thinking side by observing and identifying the words that have connection with the sound they hear in real life in reading text in the form of comic strips. In other words, their scope of perspective could be extended as their mind was trained automatically to think faster every time they read any texts.

Comic is considered as one of teaching media. Teachers use comic as both materials and media. Comic consists of a story which describes concrete things which describes daily life activity of the student. The utterances uttered by the characters can be imitated by the students to make their spoken English well. Then, for young learners, comic strips should consist of short and life-like utterances so that the students can understand the meaning without any significant difficulties. Furthermore, in comic there are so many onomatopoeic words that can be found. According to Miyakoda, H., Kaneko, K., Ishikawa, M., and Shinagawa, N (2010) Onomatopoeic expressions refer to words that contain sounds that are similar to the noises they describe such as 'quack' is an imitated word that represents the sound of a duck, buzz, crack, growl, hum, plop, roar, squeak, whizz. These words are named of an object by imitating the sound that produced by the object itself. By employing the onomatopoeic expression in comic as a media in teaching and learning process is expected that the learners can easily memorized new vocabularies by imitating the sound with the onomatopoeic expression. Related to the background of the research, the objective of this research is how to improve vocabulary by using onomatopoeic expression in comic and to identify some challenges in using comic. Based on the purpose of this paper, the writers did classroom action research. In this research, there are procedures which consist of two cycles. Each cycle involves four steps. They are planning, acting and reflecting. In the planning phase, the teacher prepared lesson plan and the instrument of teaching. After doing the planning, it is continued to do action in the class. Then, the last phase is reflecting. Reflection is the analysis and reflection of the data.

## **Motivation**

Boardman et al (2008:27) said that motivation and engagement make reading enjoyable, increase strategy use during reading, and support comprehension. It is no surprise that those who enjoy reading, read more, or that reading more improves reading outcomes (as cited in Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In their initial study, Gardner and Lambert (1959 as cited in Berns, 2010:168) classified students as integrative or instrumental in their orientation to studying foreign language such as French as a second language based on the reason they ranked as most applicable to themselves. However, through other research, it was shown that both of these motivation were related to each other. The problem of motivating students is one that can be difficult in the context of second language learning if one accepts that such learning involves a construct such as integrativeness. In the socioeducational model (Gardner,

1985 as cited in Berns, 2010:169), integrativeness involves more than just an integrative orientation. It refers to the individual's cultural openness and interest in other communities and languages and favorable attitudes toward the target language group as well as an integrative orientation. Integrativeness is a higher-order construct with many levels. At one level, it can mean simply a willingness or capacity to take on characteristics of another cultural community. At another, it can reflect a full desire to identify and integrate with the other community. Most language learners do not study languages in order to become members of another cultural community (though some might), but at a minimum they must be able to make features (i.e., language) of another community part of their own behavioral repertoire, and there are individual differences in the ability (or willingness) to do this.

## **Reading Comprehension**

Comprehension is not the only thing affected by speed. The faster people read, the more they have to concentrate. Speed reading without comprehension is called speed looking. To learn to speed read, readers need to separate comprehension from speed development. They can use visualization to help create their speed reading mind-set. The more background knowledge they have, the easier it is to read with speed and good comprehension. There are some ideas to create more background knowledge (Beale, 2008): 1. First, before reading, people should think about how much they already know about the topic. 2. Second, they should preview (skim reading) their reading material to get some background knowledge before they jump in. 3. Third, they should ask questions and satisfy their inborn curiosity. 4. Next, they should listen more than they talk, so they can really hear what others are saying. 5. After that, they should travel to new places and experience a variety of transportation means such as bus, train, and airplane. 6. Then, they should engage in stimulating conversations with others learn from them, build a broad vocabulary, regularly experience new things, read widely on topics they enjoy and dip into some areas they have not yet been exposed to. 7. At last, they can get a copy of The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy and read a little everyday.

## **Onomatopoeia in Comic**

Onomatopoeia is a special language expression because its phonological form appears to be more directly associated with its meaning. In short onomatopoeia is a name for an object which is made from an imitation of the sound it produces. Onomatopoeic words can convey imaginative, animated, and picturesque meanings. According to Bredin cited in Dofs (2008) there are three kinds of onomatopoeia, which reflects that the relation between meaning and sound can be expressed and interpreted differently.

1. Direct onomatopoeia, words which are similar to the actual sound they refer to. Some typical examples are zoom, bang, moan, cluck, and hiss.
2. Associative onomatopoeia means that words which are onomatopoeic because of associations, not because they resemble the object or the action they represent. Whip is the sound made by a whip, and cuckoo is the bird's name but the resemblance refers to the song it produces and does not have anything to do with the bird itself.
3. Exemplary onomatopoeia is onomatopoeia based on the amount and character of the physical work done by the speaker in uttering the word. Different words require different muscular effort; words such as nimble and dart require less effort than, for example, sluggish and slothful. The resemblance between the sound and the concept it refers to is to be found in implications

and associated ideas and not in the actual meaning as specified in a dictionary. Dart has a quick darting sound and nimble exemplifies nimbleness since it is itself a nimble sound.

On the other hand Ullman cited in Eliza (2012). He stated that from the semantic point of view, a distinction has to be made between primary and secondary onomatopoeias. The primary onomatopoeia is the imitation of sound by sound. The sound is produced by the object itself. In this case, naming of an object by imitating the sound that produced by the object itself. For example: Car beeping 'horn', Phone 'br-r-r-ring', buzz, crack, growl, hum, plop, roar, squeak, whizz. The secondary onomatopoeia is the sound that occurs caused by there is relation between the sound of an object and its movement (Sound of eating 'chomp chomp', Sound of drinking 'gulp gulp', Collision of other object 'thum/thud', Collision of metals 'clang' or based on the movement only. The form of an onomatopoeia can be found in our daily life. It may derive from the sound of an object, an animal and an action. These onomatopoeic words can be found in mass media, like in a novel, poem, advertisement and comic as well. Among the media, onomatopoeic words are featured heavily in comic.

Mostly comics are created to entertain, since comic itself literally means funny. As in Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary (2003) comic means "to provoke mirth, funny and ludicrous". A comic consist of picture and language expressions. Actually, when students read a comic, they do not only enjoy the images but also deals with the linguistic expressions. One of the linguistic expressions, onomatopoeia, makes comic dialogues become more attractive. On the other hand, onomatopoeic words will help the students easily to memorize the vocabularies.

This research belongs to classroom action research. There are some steps in the action research as follow; plan, action, observation, and reflection. Planning is the process of developing a critical analysis of the information received. Action is the process for taking action to implement the plan. Observation is the process of observation of the impact of information critically to the contexts of the research targets. Reflection is the process of reflection towards the impact that occurs in the future.

In collecting data, the instruments to be used are: 1) Test consisted of pre-test, post-test, and formative test; and 2) Observation. The writers conducted pre-test to know the ability of the students in mastering English vocabulary. Test after the first treatment and test after the second treatment are administered to find out the improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery, the formative test was administered to measure about the improvement of their vocabulary ability from the cycle 1 and cycle 2. The observation is administered to measure the characteristics of the students towards the application of using onomatopoeic expression in comic through peer work, and questionnaire is administered to support the data of the students' improvement in reading skill.

The activities of the research used the following procedures:

1. The researcher observed the previous students' vocabulary average.
2. The researcher planned the action, constructing the lesson plan for the first cycle using comic.
3. The researcher implemented the first action cycle (giving treatment, using onomatopoeic expression in comic).
4. The researcher observed the classroom while implementing the actions in first cycle.
5. The researcher gave reflection to the results of the observation by using the guide of observation in the form of checklist.
6. The researcher analyzed the result of onomatopoeic vocabularies and then classified them qualitatively.
7. The researcher constructed the lesson plan for second cycle.
8. The researcher implemented the second action cycle.
9. The researcher observed the classroom while implementing the second action cycle.
10. The researcher reflected the results of class observation in the second cycle.

11. The researcher analyzed the results of onomatopoeic vocabularies in the first and second cycle quantitatively and then classified them qualitatively.

In the first treatment, the researcher does some activities related to the using of comic. The first treatment activities are:

Pre-activities:

- Preparing some comics which will have to be chosen by the students and teacher.
- Distributing the comic to the students.
- Reading own comic that has been chosen.

Main Activities:

- Finding some onomatopoeic words and asking students to underline some onomatopoeic vocabularies and making a list of onomatopoeic vocabularies in piece of paper.
- Asking the students to look for the meaning by using dictionary and matching the picture with the onomatopoeic expression. If the onomatopoeic vocabularies are not found in the dictionary, create a model of clue to match the word with its meaning.
- Circle the word that has many meanings. Discussing with students the various meaning and word class classification of those words.
- The teacher drills the new vocabularies related to the pictures. In this case, the teacher can utilize the picture in comic, mimic and gesture as a media to support in memorizing the new word.
- Drilling the new vocabularies in pairs among the students.
- After drilling the new vocabularies, the teacher should teach the student to write spelling of those words. Many of students sometimes do not comprehend how to write the spelling of new word that they have memorized.

Post-activities:

- The teacher asks their difficulty and their problem in vocabulary process.
- The teacher gives motivation in studying and closes the lesson.

From the first treatment, the research gets the problem as bellow:

- For some students comics are not so interesting.
- The students get difficulty in memorizing some of vocabularies which have variety of meanings.
- The researcher needs to pay attention more to the students who are weak in memorizing vocabulary. So the teacher should give much time to the students in drilling process.

Based on some problems above, the researcher needs to pay attention to the problems in the first treatment and solve those problems in implementing the second treatment. The second treatment has similar procedure with the first treatment. Therefore the researcher should help and give more assistance and support to the weak students. Besides, their partner or friend in peer work will help them in memorizing the vocabularies. In the first treatment, the student's average score was 65.8 while on the second treatment, the student's average score increase to be 75.9. It showed that the score was increased significantly.

### **Challenge in teaching comic.**

Comic is one of materials for the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The kind of comics is comic strips. Comic strips have a very exciting potential to help the teachers in achieving the learning objectives. Teachers are able to use comic strips as both materials and media. Good learning media is media that can help teachers and learners to follow the process of learning to achieve learning objectives.

Teacher should be ready for facing many situations and conditions in teaching and learning process even unpredictable situation such as some difficulties and obstacles. There are some challenges will probably occur which should be prepared by the teacher. Sometimes there are some students are not interested in using comic. The students are not able to follow the learning styles of visual media. Then the teacher must adjust to the level of willingness and ability of students. On the other hand, the teacher should find the way how to attract those students. It makes the students keep involving to the process of learning.

Comic is a visual medium which consists of graphic designs and characters. It does not provide pronunciation form because it is not an auditory medium automatically students rely on examples from the teacher. The vocabularies should be pronounced by the teacher. Then, the comics cannot be the additional form of media supported audio conversations with native speakers. Therefore, teachers can use other supported media besides just using the comics as a media of learning in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of teaching English in this action research using onomatopoeic expression in comic as one of teaching strategy could improve student's vocabulary mastery. It can be shown from the student's increasing average in vocabulary score. Comic is effective for teaching media because it gives the easy way for the teachers to deliver the materials especially mastering vocabulary. It also gives effect for the students' ability in memorizing the new vocabularies through onomatopoeic words and the expression of the characters in comics. Therefore the students were able to comprehend and easily memorized new vocabularies. Later on, the use of comic through peer work as another teaching strategy could also improve vocabulary ability significantly. This leads to the conclusion that the use of comic through peer work as a teaching strategy is a need in English language teaching and learning in improving their ability to speak English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and their performance based on the context of situation. On the other hand, some obstacles also occurred and were faced by the teacher in learning and teaching process. The teacher should anticipate it by finding another way to make the students keep involving to the process of learning. The teacher should be creative to find a new strategy to face those challenges.

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