

# Improving Reading Skills through Digital Islamic Comic Strip: Students' Perspective

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**Abstract:** This study purposed to reveal the students' perspective about comic strip in order to improve their reading skills. A comic strip is a sequence of drawings that tells a story. Digital islamic comic strip was choosen as the media in this study and it was taken from <https://islamiccomics.org/>. A descriptive quantitative method through a questionnaire was used as data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to thirty six of high school students to get the feedback of their perspective and feeling after reading a story through the comic strip. The result findings revealed that the students' perspective was positive to the using of comic strip. They found that it was a new way to read and comprehend a story. It was also fun, interesting and easy to understand the story through the sequencing pictures. They stated that they would continue to learn English especially reading text or story through comic strip.

**Keywords:** Reading Skills, Comic Strip, Students' Perspective.

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## Introduction

Since university students are learning in higher education, English is considered the primary language that they should master. University students must participate in any scientific activities, such as writing scientific articles, participating in debates, applying for scholarships or student exchange programs, and so on (Losi & Nasution, 2022). Many students claimed that speaking and reading skills are the most difficult skills to learn. The speaking skill is difficult to learn because they are not confident enough to speak and they are lack of vocabularies to build sentences. While reading skill is considered difficult because they can not comprehend the text or any sources because they are lack vocabularies and curiosity to read the text or any sources.

Reading is a type of activity that involves receiving messages through written text. In order to comprehend information obtained from a written source, people must have strong reading comprehension skills. Reading is the process of looking at and comprehending what has been

written. The key word here is comprehend or understand; simply reading aloud without comprehension is not considered reading. Reading is the process of making sense of written text. It is a complex skill that necessitates the coordination of several interconnected sources of information.

Reading is the process of creating meaning by interacting dynamically with the reader's prior knowledge, the information suggested by the text being read, and the context of the reading situation. Reading is the process of reducing uncertainty about the meanings conveyed by a text. The process is the result of a meaning negotiation between the text and its reader; the reader's knowledge, expectations, and strategies for uncovering textual meaning all play important roles in how the reader negotiates with the text's meaning (Manik, 2019).

Listening and reading are receptive skills because learners receive language through conversation, music, and video, as well as reading comprehension, newspaper, poem, book, and so on. Reading comprehension, as one of the receptive

skills, is critical for students to extract as much information as possible from a text. As a result, by employing the ability of reading comprehension, one will gain a better understanding of the text. Reading without understanding the actual meaning of the text results in the reader completing the recitation but receiving no information from the text. As a result, reading comprehension assists the reader in determining and comprehending the meaning or main point of the text. Reading comprehension is an important skill to have when learning English. Reading comprehension is tested on the national final exam. Reading comprehension is an important skill to have when learning English (Maulana & Fitrawati, 2018).

Some students found that reading a text is a boring activity since they are just asked to translate the whole text. After that, they are asked to answer the questions given. This way makes students think that reading is just tiring to be learned. Besides, the teacher can teach reading skill by using some medias to attract students interest and motivation.

There are several medias in teaching reading that can increase students' motivation in class and transfer knowledge, and the researcher used comic strips as the media to improve students' motivation and reading comprehension in this study. Comic strips play an important role in the teaching and learning process. It has the potential to be an effective medium for increasing students' reading comprehension (Nafisah & Pratama, 2020). According to Rokhayani et al., (2014), the use of comic strips as an English teaching media for students was effective. As a result, comic strips as a medium for teaching students' reading comprehension should be used in the English classroom.

Through the use of a story line and images, comic strips convey messages. It has some advantages, such as assisting students in comprehending the contents of the text, assisting them in improving their ideas, and increasing their interest in reading. Readability measures in comics are determined not only by words but also by pictures. Here, images supplement the words to

make the text's contents more understandable (Nafisah & Pratama, 2020).

A comic is defined as a deliberate sequence of juxtaposed pictorial and other images intended to convey information and/or elicit an aesthetic response in the viewer. To juxtapose means to put two things side by side, so according to the definition above, a comic book must have at least two panels. In this sense, a single panel illustration is considered a cartoon rather than a comic. A comic book is a type of multimedia medium. It is a single medium that consists of two distinct media: still images and text. Comics bridge the gap between media we watch and media we read by combining images and texts, and images and texts in comics share narrative responsibility (Poai, 2018).

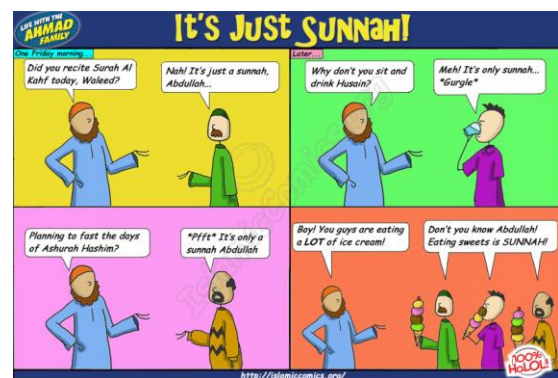




Figure 1. The Digital Islamic Comic Strip Appearance on <https://islamiccomics.org/>

## Materials and Methods

This was a descriptive quantitative study. Descriptive designs are non-experimental because no intervention or treatment is required. They generally seek to provide information about key parameters without putting hypotheses to the test. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of digital Islamic comic strips in order to improve their reading skills. Participants ranged in age from 15 to 17 years old and were taught the same English reading topics and materials. This study's media was a digital Islamic comic strip obtained from <https://islamiccomics.org/>. Data was collected using a descriptive quantitative method via a questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to thirty-six high school students in Binjai, North Sumatra, to get their thoughts and feelings after reading a story with comic strip.

## Results and Discussion

### Result

The researchers used a questionnaire to clarify deeper points in students' perceptions after using a comic strip as a scaffolding reading tool for several weeks. The questionnaire results are shown in Table 1 below. Thirty-six students completed it.

Their responses to the questionnaire statements were given in percentages.

Table 1. The Students' Perception on Comic Strip

No.	Statements	Yes	No
1.	I like reading the story in comic strip.	94.4%	5.6%
2.	Comic strip can improve my reading skills.	91.7%	8.3%
3.	Comic strip makes me easier to comprehend the story.	100%	0%
4.	I have ever been bored in understanding the story through comic strip.	5.6%	94.4%
5.	I am interested in reading visual story rather than text only.	94.4%	5.6%
6.	Comic strip affects my reading motivation.	97.2%	2.8%
7.	I would continue to read English story through comic strip.	91.7%	8.3%
8.	Comic strip is an interesting media to learn English.	94.4%	5.6%
9.	Comic strip minimizes my difficulties in reading the story.	91.7%	8.3%
10.	I think using the comic strip is a positive way to attract my interest in reading skill.	94.4%	5.6%

Examining Table 1, some key points showed the highest percentage of participants' perceptions about comic strip in their EFL class. The percentage of the questionnaire items revealed that item 1 was about students' preference in reading the story in comic strip (94.4%). Item 2 was about comic strip that can improve reading skills (91.7%). Item 3 was about the students' belief on comic strip that can make them easier to comprehend the story (100%). Item 4 was about the students' feeling to understand the story by using comic strip (94.4%). Item 5 was about students' interest in reading visual story rather than text only (94.4%). Item 6 was about comic strip that can affect reading motivation. (97.2%). Item 7 was about students' commitment to continue to read English story through comic strip (63.3%). Item 8 was about students' excitement claim comic strip as an interesting media to learn English (94.4%). Item 9 was about students' opinion about comic strip which minimizes difficulties in reading the story (91.7%). Item 10 was about students' thought about comic strip as a positive way to attract interest in reading skill (94.4%).

### Discussion

The research findings revealed that all statements were found to be positive perceptions because more than 50% of the responses were rated as 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Two key points could be discussed based on those statements about students' perceptions of using comic strip to improve their reading skill.

Firstly, it was obvious that students appreciated the role of comic strip in helping them to introduce the setting of story from the visual background. Learning by using comic strip gave them meaningful experience in understanding the story. They could also connect one part to the others.

They also gained more vocabulary since they could see the visual representation of the story.

This finding was in line with the studies done by Anida (2019), it is possible to conclude that teaching reading narrative text using comic strips could improve students' comprehension of the narrative text. It was clear that the highest writing test score was 95. Students' achievement in reading narrative text was low prior to using comic strips. There were 11 students who passed the test and 21 students who failed it.

Secondly, the findings revealed that students improved significantly in terms of motivation, interest, willingness, and comic strip contribution to their EFL class. They thought it would be fun to use a comic strip as a learning tool. They were also motivated to improve their English learning and practice. The comic strip helped them learn and improve their vocabulary and reading skills. Students can imagine the storyline and figure out how to comprehend it by sequencing pictures.

This finding agreed with (Darsalina et al., 2016), who stated that it was critical that students' vocabulary mastery improved significantly when reading a story through a comic strip.

### Conclusions

The results show that comic strips improved learners' vocabulary competency when learning to read. It has a positive influence on their reading ability, which has resulted in better results. Students' reading skills have improved as a result of the use of Comic Strips in teaching reading. The author suggests that teachers use Comic Strips to provide students with new vocabulary at each classroom meeting.

Students gain knowledge of the meaning before reading the texts in which the words are used in this manner. The researcher also admits that she was unable to investigate the students' perspectives on the use of this technique in teaching students vocabulary. As a result, the author hopes that future researchers will investigate this area.

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