

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presenting the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, conceptual framework, and previous study.

A. Research Background

English is essential for worldwide communication, commerce, and academia (Crystal, 2012). In Indonesia, a developing nation, improving the English language skills of its population is a strategic effort to sustain competitiveness on the global stage (Asmawati, 2016). Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) can be challenging for students, especially when it comes to reading comprehension. This difficulty is influenced by several factors, such as the availability of suitable reading materials, effective teaching methods, and the use of appropriate learning strategies (Zainuddin & Hashim, 2019). To effectively support EFL reading comprehension outcomes among Indonesian students, it is essential to address these issues.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand written text and process it to extract meaning, including main ideas, supporting details, and overall meaning. Acquiring this skill is essential for achieving academic and professional competence. Nurhayati (2023) identifies common reading difficulties EFL learners face, such as sentence comprehension and inadequate teaching methods. She proposes solutions, such as addressing text understanding and enhancing reading motivation. Nanda (2020) identifies factors such as lack of motivation, low prior knowledge, and poor English vocabulary as causes of poor reading comprehension. To solve these issues, EFL students should read more authentic texts to enhance their comprehension of various materials, participate in more rigorous reading comprehension exercises, and employ better learning techniques (Mantra, 2020). In addition, implementing reading comprehension strategies can assist EFL students in effectively understanding the content. For instance, the utilization of popular comic series such as "One Piece" can effectively engage students in reading and improve their comprehension skills.

One Piece, a Japanese comic book series created by Eiichiro Oda, has been gaining immense popularity worldwide since its debut in 1997. In Indonesia, the series has been particularly popular, becoming a significant cultural phenomenon with a sizeable and enthusiastic fan base. Comics, such as One Piece, can be utilized as a tool for language acquisition because they contain visual cues and context hints that help students understand unfamiliar words and phrases. Studies have found that using comics to teach a foreign language improves students' ability to read and understand the text and their vocabulary and ability to think critically (Hoffman, 2018; Rani, 2016). According to Hoofman (2018), educators have the option of employing comics as a preliminary reading exercise to acquaint students with unfamiliar terminology and ideas or as a subsequent reading exercise to promote discourse and the development of analytical skills.

The study was conducted within a One Piece community situated in Bandung, Indonesia. The study specifically targeted individuals within the age range of 15-18 years old, as they constituted a substantial proportion of the study's population. The primary objective of the research was to investigate the efficacy of One Piece comics in enhancing English language reading comprehension among Indonesian EFL students. The study employed a qualitative research methodology to delve into the participants' experiences, perspectives, and challenges in detail. The researcher initiated this study based on personal experiences of encountering learners who struggled with reading comprehension in English. These learners included students from the researcher's teaching training places and the researcher's relatives who had difficulty understanding English passages and even exam instructions. These experiences made it clear to the researcher that there was a need to investigate effective strategies to improve EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Previous studies have shown that using comics can improve reading comprehension skills in language learning. For example, Purnamasari (2017) revealed that comic readers perceived comics as a valuable resource for improving English reading comprehension skills and suggested incorporating comics in the classroom. Brianto and Ramadhani (2022) found that the attractive comic content

in Mangatoon motivated teenagers to read more in English, leading to potential improvements in their reading skills. However, none of these studies specifically explored the impact of using One Piece Comic on EFL student reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students. This study aims to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of One Piece Comic as a self-directed learning tool for EFL students in Indonesia. By doing so, this study aims to contribute to the literature on the use of comics in language learning and provide practical implications for EFL teachers and learners.

Overall, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students. The findings of this study have the potential to contribute to the literature on the use of comics in language learning and provide practical implications for EFL teachers and learners in Indonesia. By incorporating comics into language instruction, teachers can help students develop effective reading strategies and enhance their comprehension skills in an engaging and enjoyable way.

B. Research Questions

From the description above, this research is intended to answer the two following questions:

1. How do Indonesian EFL students perceive the impact of One Piece comics on their reading comprehension skills?
2. What challenges do Indonesian EFL students face when reading One Piece comics in terms of improving their reading comprehension skills?

C. Research Purposes

From the research question above, the aims of this study are:

1. To investigate the perception of Indonesian EFL students regarding the impact of One Piece comics on their reading comprehension skills.
2. To identify the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL students when reading One Piece comics and their effects on improving their reading comprehension skills.

D. Research Significances

The theoretical significance of this study is that it contributes to the literature on the effectiveness of comics as a self-directed learning tool for EFL students. The practical significance is that the findings can inspire students to incorporate more English-language comics into their personal reading routines, providing a fun and engaging way to practice language skills and improve overall proficiency. For future research, this study contributes to the literature on the use of comics in language learning and can inspire future studies on the use of comics in other language learning contexts, including the relationship between motivation, engagement, and language learning.

E. Conceptual Framework

Reading comprehension refers to the cognitive skill of comprehending and interpreting written text. The process includes a range of abilities, such as decoding, vocabulary acquisition, and monitoring comprehension. According to the Simple View of Reading, reading comprehension stems from two distinct mechanisms: decoding and language comprehension. Meanwhile, Kintsch and Rawson (2005), the Interactive Compensatory Model proposes that readers employ various methods to compensate for any deficiencies they may have in decoding or language comprehension. Both theories highlight the significance of bottom-up and top-down processing in reading comprehension. Effective reading comprehension instruction should involve all these cognitive processes and help students develop a diverse set of strategies to comprehend and analyze textual material.

Therefore, One Piece Comics can be used to enhance EFL students' reading comprehension. The series has a captivating storyline and engaging characters that can capture the interest of EFL students and motivate them to read more. Reading One Piece Comics can be an enjoyable way for students to practice their language skills, enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension abilities. Rumelhart's Schema Theory (1980) posits that readers employ their pre-existing knowledge and past experiences to comprehend and interpret novel information.

Utilizing One Piece Comics enables students to engage their pre-existing knowledge of the series and use it to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Comics as a medium to improve reading comprehension has the potential to impact the perception of reading among EFL students positively. Comics can increase reading engagement and motivation among EFL students, positively impacting their language-learning experience. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest and enjoyment, is more effective in promoting long-term learning and engagement than extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or punishments (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, using One Piece Comics as a self-directed learning tool can enhance students' intrinsic motivation and engagement in the learning process.

In summary, the integration of visual and textual components can enhance the process of learning and memory. Utilizing One Piece Comics as a tool for improving reading comprehension among EFL students can enhance their linguistic abilities and bolster their self-assurance in comprehending and interpreting the English language. Students' intrinsic motivation and involvement in learning can be improved by using comic books as a self-directed learning aid.

F. Previous Studies

Several studies have explored the use of comics in language learning and reading comprehension. First, the research directed by Budi (2020) investigated the influence of English-translated comics on the English reading comprehension of Indonesian high school students who frequently read such comics. The study used a questionnaire to gather data from 15 students and found that English-translated comics have some influence on the students' reading skills. The study discovered that English-translated manga unaffected reading comprehension, as indicated by the questionnaire's items and setting. It does not follow that the study shows manga translated into English has no effect on English reading comprehension. Such a theory might be accepted in different contexts and with different statements from the questionnaire. The study used a quantitative research methodology, which differs from the current study that uses a qualitative research

methodology to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Second, the research conducted by Purnamasari (2017) conducted a qualitative survey to explore comic readers' perceptions of the influence of comics on their reading comprehension skills. The study involved 25 participants between the ages of 16 to 25 years old, who were fans of comics. The study revealed that 92% of the participants had a positive perception of comics' contribution to their reading comprehension skills, particularly in recognizing literary devices, making inferences, following the structure of a passage, developing and using reading strategies, and determining the author's purpose. The study used a qualitative research methodology, which differs from the current study that uses a qualitative research methodology to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Third, the research conducted by Brianto and Ramadhani (2022) investigated the use of Mangatoon, an application that presents comics in English, as a medium for developing English reading skills. The study used a qualitative method to describe the application and how teenagers use it to learn English. The study found that the attractive comic content in the application motivates teenagers to read more in English, leading to potential improvements in their reading skills. The study differs from the current study that investigates the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Fourth, the research conducted by Deliah (2019) investigated the role of digital comics in enhancing novice EFL students' reading comprehension. The study aimed to address the observed problem of EFL students facing difficulties in reading and comprehension, particularly among students with low language proficiency. The study used a quantitative research methodology and targeted second-year English language students with a variety of gender and social status at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The data was collected through a

questionnaire, and the results showed that reading was a challenging task for EFL students, but comics could make them read actively, indicating a potential for digital comics to enhance EFL students' reading comprehension. The study differs from the current study that uses a qualitative research methodology to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Fifth, the study conducted by Mekki and Daikh (2022) investigated the impact of reading comics and WEBTOON on learning the English language. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from 215 English language students at Abdelhafid Boussouf, Mila University Centre, and five Master Two non-English language students from other universities. The study found that the majority of students benefited from reading Comic and WEBTOON, improving their reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural awareness. The study differs from the current study that uses a qualitative research methodology to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.

Despite the valuable insights from these studies, none of them specifically explored the impact of using One Piece Comic on EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students. The current study focuses on the use of One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students. The study uses a qualitative research methodology to investigate the effectiveness of using One Piece comics as a self-directed learning tool for improving EFL reading comprehension skills among Indonesian students.