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DESIGNING LOCAL WISDOM-BASED COMIC STRIPS TO TEACH WRITING FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The present paper concerns itself with a literature study of designing local wisdom-based comic strips to teach writing for junior high school students and describing the validity of the use of comic strips to teach writing. Comic strips are short visual narrative stories and method of expressions combining pictures in sequences and characters, cartoon panels, accompanied by the dialogue in word balloons or other texts in captions that are organised into units in a unique way to get aesthetic response from the readers. Local wisdom means the combination of traditions, knowledge, and any strategies of life which is formed as an activity that is applied by the local people to solve any problems to fulfill their needs. This study is a conceptual study to design a learning media of local wisdom-based comic strips. It also applies empirical study using literature study based on the journals which are related to the problems of this paper. The results of this study show that (1) comic strips can be designed as the media to teach writing and it can be designed as a local wisdom-based media so that it can be more appropriate to teach the local students, (2) the proofs of comic strips validity show that the use of comic strips as the media in teaching and learning process of writing can improve the students' writing skill.

Keywords: Comic Strips, Local Wisdom, Students' Writing Skill

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity which needs the creativity of the students to organize the idea because to produce a text, a writer should know what topic they will develop in their text. Writing as the one skill that must be mastered by the students is still become the most difficult skill to be learnt by the students who learn English as foreign language. Murcia (2000) explains that writing is the most difficult skill which needs good level of productive language control than the other skills. It means that to teach writing, a teacher needs an effective technique or media so that the students can receive the material as good as possible. By understanding the material as well the students can practice to develop their idea then they can try to start writing. In Indonesia, English for junior high school actually has their own curriculum to organize the teaching and learning process in the classroom. There are also four skills included in the curriculum, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills also have a balance portion to be provided to the students. But in fact, the practice in teaching learning process in the classroom the teacher focus to teach the students about how to answer the questions because most of the English test for junior high school, including the national final tests (UAN), is about answering the question or testing reading. Writing becomes little bit ignored because the teaching focuses on the other skills so it makes the students get less motivation to practice writing. Besides, teaching writing also has uninteresting media to provide the materials. In this case the teacher has lack of idea to support their teaching learning process of writing.

Applying media in teaching learning process is very important for the teacher and the students. The use of media can help the process to be meaningful and more effective so the students can catch the material well. Williams (2018) explains that media in the classroom engage students in learning and provide a richer experience. From the explanation it can be concluded that media can help the teacher to lead the students to do a discussion based on the material from the media. Hamalik (1986) pointed out that the use of teaching media in teaching and learning process can generate new desires and interests, to encourage motivation and stimulation and learning activities, and even brought a psychological influence

on students. Media can increase the students' motivation to learn the material because most of the teaching learning process consists of verbal explanation so that is why providing media can help the teacher to make the students more delighted to obtain the material. Arsyad (2003) also confirmed that teacher as the facilitator in teaching and learning process should be able to use a cheap and efficient tool as a simple media which aim to achieve the expected objectives of teaching. Hamalik (1994) explained that to use a media effectively, a teacher should understand about: (1) media as a communication tool to streamline the teaching and learning process, (2) the functions of the media to achieve educational goals, (3) the use of media in teaching and learning process, (4) the relationship between teaching methods and teaching media, (5) the value and benefits of education, (6) selecting and using media education, (7) knowing any devices and technique of educational media, (8) knowing the use of educational media in every subject which is taught (9) doing any innovation of educational media. It can be concluded that using media can be so important to conduct an effective teaching and learning process in the classroom by the teachers. Teachers are demanded to use or develop the existing media or they can create a new media to support their teaching process.

Comic strips which are known as the media that show a sequence of chronological pictures with dialogue in order to tell the story. Comic strips are often published in newspaper or internet regularly and it sometimes contains a certain issue at that time. Gonzalez-Espada (2003) defined comic strips as the sequence of panels which consist of pictures and dialogue, narration, or just visual symbols. Comic strips can be used as media of teaching and learning process as long as it is appropriate with the teaching materials. As teaching media comic strips contain pictures which can stimulate students to generate their idea in writing activity. The sentences in narration and dialogue can also be teaching material to explain about writing mechanic. But in fact, the use of comic strips as teaching media is still inappropriate for the Indonesian students especially for the junior high school students. There are so many comic strips published in internet as media of teaching and learning process but it is still difficult to get an appropriate comic strip for the Indonesian and junior high school students. Most of English comic strips published in internet are created by the native people so that is why the sentences used are difficult to be understood by the Indonesian students especially the junior high school who still have lack of vocabulary mastery. The comic strips in teaching writing skill are hoped to cover all the writing indicators like mechanic that refers to the use of punctuation, the capital letter, etc. But it can be seen that sometimes the creators of comic strips have less awareness of using the right mechanic. Besides, the contents of the comic strips are sometimes different from the local wisdom of Indonesian people especially for the Javanese people.

Local wisdom is very important to be preserved starting from the school. It is needed because today most students use mobile devices which contain many social media to contact with the overseas people so they can access anything from the world including knowledge and the other cultures. Local wisdom itself based on Riadi (2017) is the combination of traditions, knowledge, and any strategies of life which is formed as an activity that is applied by the local people to solve any problems to fulfill their needs. Kinds of local wisdom can be local value, local knowledge, local skill, local resources, local mechanism of taking decision, and local group solidarity, (Riadi, 2017). In teaching and learning foreign language, in this case is English, (Ayat: 1986). Nadlir (2014) states that there are ways which can be taken to keep the existence of culture and local wisdom is by integrating the values of local wisdom in teaching and learning process, extracurricular activities, or the other student activities at school.

From the explanation of the facts about teaching media for writing and the existence of local wisdom in teaching and learning process, it can be seen that there are some problems faced by the teacher and the students who want to learn about writing skill. It is still a little bit difficult to find appropriate comic strips as the writing media to teach local students. As the alternative solution for the problems above, the researcher uses comic strips which based on the local wisdom to teach writing for the junior high school students by investigating problems as: (1) how comic strips can be designed as the media to teach writing and it can be designed as a local wisdom-based media so that the comic strips can be more appropriate to teach the local students, (2) how is the validity of the use of comic strips as the media in teaching and learning process of writing to improve the students' writing skill.

2. METHOD

This research is a conceptual research about designing local wisdom-based comic strips as the media to teach writing for the junior high school students. The researcher used empirical study to gain knowledge about the comic strips, local wisdom, and writing skill by using literature study which sourced from the journals related to the problems in this research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Writing skill

Hutchinson (2005) states that writing is just another form of expression; skill developed with practice by putting words on paper and by processing thought and grammatical structures. Nadler, et al. (2005) state that writing is the uses of appropriate letters and symbols according to the standard usage of a given language. Lieberman and Wood (2003) say that writing produces occasions to foreground and clarify thinking; to record, shape, and analyze experiences; to express internal lives; to explore ideas learned from others. Rochberg (2004: 2) states that writing is related the constellations to cuneiform signs from which one could read and derive meaning, and thus express the idea so that written messages were encoded in celestial phenomena. O'Malley (1996: 136) defines writing as a personal performance in which writers get ideas and transform it into the topic.

Writing activity produces a text as the result of it and the reader is a people who read the text or as the recipient of the text produced in writing activity. Writers write a text in order to share their ide in genre of history, news, information, descriptive, book, etc. And the reader as the recipient read the text aims to know the information or idea that the writers share.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that writing is a form of expression, a personal performance which is forming graphic symbols, arranging the symbols, forming words by using appropriate letters and symbols, and arranging the words to form sentence, by putting them into written form according to the standard usage of a given language in order to record, shape, and analyze experience, to express internal lives, to derive meaning, and to explore ideas learned from others.

In teaching and learning process, it needs the indicators of writing as the rod to measure the students writing skill. In testing writing the teacher must get the appropriate indicators which can measure the students writing results. Based on the some experts, here the table of writing indicator construction:

Table 1. Writing indicators construction by experts

Component	Experts							Construct
	Kane (2000)	Bratcher and Ryan (2004)	Broad (2003)	Hegarty (2000)	Jacobs (2002)	Reid (1993)	Brown (2000)	
12 Content		√	√		√	√	√	√
Organization			√		√	√	√	√
Grammar	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Vocabulary				√	√	√	√	√
Mechanic	√		√	√	√		√	√
Syntax							√	
Style						√	√	

From the tabe above, it canbe seen the indicators of writing are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

INDICATORS:

1. **Content:** Generating ideas and providing supporting details: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic
2. **Organization:** Expressing fluent expression: ideas clearly stated/ supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequence and cohesive
3. **Grammar:** using correct grammar: effective complex construction, correct agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions.
4. **Vocabulary:** Using effective word/idioms: sophisticated range, effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register.
5. **Mechanics:** Using correct English writing: demonstrating mastery of conventions, correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.

3.2 Comic Strips

Comic strips is one of visual aids that can be used as media in language learning and language teaching. Liu (2004: 229) states that a comic strip is defined in this study as a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Kunzle (2014: 1) defines comic strips as a bound collection of strips, each of

which typically tells a single story or a gag (joke) in a few panels or else a segment of a continuous story. Alexio and Norris (2007: 70) state that most people can recognise comics: sequences of pictures accompanied by the dialogue in word balloons or other text in captions. Comic strips are kinds of comics that are provided in strips form and have a chronology of a certain short story. The story sometimes does not always end in once publishing but it can be a continue story. It consists of three or six panels. Comic strips can be found in daily newspaper, magazine or tabloid/ bulletin. The story of comic strips can be a joke or a serious story about the current issue. But today, comic strips are also provided for teaching and learning process in the classroom. There are so many kinds of comic strips which can be accessed easily via internet, it is called web comic or educomic. There are some steps of the use of comic strips as the media in teaching learning process of writing constructed from experts' theories as follows:

Table 2. Construct of teaching step using comic strips

Teacher's Activity	Students' Activity
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warming up the class by asking about the last material 2. Writing the title of the comic strips that will be presented on the whiteboard without the comic strips 3. Showing the comic strips by using LCD projector to discuss more about the topic. 4. Asking the students about the comic strips and the topic of the comic strips to build the students' knowledge of field. 5. Explaining how comic strips work, explain how it is read: boxes left to the right in rows, the difference between speech, thought, and exclamation bubbles. 6. Asking the students to stay in pairs and discuss the comic strips to find out the characters or the other objects of the story. 7. Providing some questions to the students and ask them to answer them based on the story of the comic strips that has been provided. 8. Explaining about the descriptive text, the use of present tense, language features, etc. 9. Providing the model of the writing process using comic strips 10. Asking the students to stay in pairs and then construct the writing outline by analyzing the participants of the story, the characteristics, place and the condition on the story. 11. Asking the students to write a descriptive text based on the comic strips that they have analyzed in pairs 12. Peer correction 13. Providing new story of comic strips by using LCD projector 14. Asking the students to produce a descriptive text based on the comic strips individually 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Answer the teacher's questions to warming up their selves about the last material 2. Paying attention to the title on the whiteboard 3. Discussing more about the topic 4. Answering the teacher's question about the comic strips and the topic of it. 5. Listening to the teacher's explanation about how comic strips work, explain how it is read: boxes left to the right in rows, the difference between speech, thought, and exclamation bubbles. 6. Staying in pairs and discussing about the comic strips to find out the characters and the other objects of the story 7. Answering the questions correctly based on the story of the comic strips that has been provided 8. Paying attention to the teacher's explanation about the descriptive text, the use of present tense, language features, etc. 9. Paying attention to the comic strips and asking question to the teacher if getting any difficulties 10. Staying in pairs and then constructing the writing outline by analyzing the participants of the story, the characteristics, place and the condition in the story. 11. Writing a descriptive text based on the comic strips that they have analyzed in pairs 12. Peer correction 13. Paying attention to the new comic strips 14. Producing a descriptive text based on the comic strips individually

The use of comic strips is effective to teach writing because they can encourage the students to generate the ideas, collecting some informations that will be written, and help the students to finish their writing activity well. McVicker (2007) mentions that comic strips is easy to use as teaching media because the teachers can obtain the comic strips easily by accessing the from internet, magazine, daily newspaper, etc. Comic strips are also easy to be understood because all of the students must ever read kind of comic before so it will be more interesting form them to follow the learning process. Besides, by providing some sentences as narration or dialogue, comic strips can motivate the students to learn more about grammatical structure and mechanic (punctuation and the use of capital letter). Sometimes learning grammatical structure is boring and uninteresting because there is no media used and the teacher just uses lecturing method. But by using comic strips students will be led to the interesting grammatical structure class because the material are provided in enjoyable media. The narration and dialogues used in comic strips also help the students to learn how to produce a good sentence and construct a good paragraph. Both are also useful to help the students to understand a particular expressions and how to apply them in daily communication.

3.3 The validity of comic strips as media to improve students' writing skill

There are many studies about comic strips as media to teach writing or studies in other aspects but still have relationship with improving writing like reading which is often integrated with writing. The use of comic strips in teaching reading also provides good result. It can be seen from the study results by Liu (2004) which states that the reading comprehension of the low-level students is greatly facilitated when the comic strips repeated the information presented in the text. Comic strips accompanying high-level texts, however, often do not reflect the text's linguistic complexity and tend to suggest only the basic information or the story line. Using comic strips with the high-level text might have prevented the high-level students from exploring the text's complexities as indicated in the recall protocols. It means that the use of comic strips can help the low-level students. From the explanation, it can be concluded that the use of comic strips is effective for reading, it means the students can understand the content of the comic. By knowing the concept of the comic strips the students can generate their idea and learn about the use of some aspects in writing a text from the comic strips. The another study about comic strips for reading also shows that all students with a comic strip effect, regardless of proficiency and text level, performed better than the ones without the comic strips (MERC, 2013).

The other studies about writing conducted by Chiera-Macchia. A and Rossetto. M (2011) entitled "Visual learning is the best learning—it lets you be creative while learning": exploring ways to begin guided writing in second language learning through the use of comics" investigated the use of comics in a guided writing experience in secondary school Italian language learning. The study showed that by using comic strips the students can be easily learn the the second language, in this case is English as the second language. The students write a text using English as second language by the helping of comic strips in learning process. Then as the result of the study the researcher found that the use of visual aid to teach writing can guide the students to produce a good writing. From the picture the students can obtain the idea then generate their ideas. They also can find the key vocabulary from the narration or dialogue stated in the comic strips. It helps them to organize various sentences and enrich the students' knowledges of making sentence.

In teaching and learning English as foreign language (EFL) comic strips are effective to help the students understanding the materials of writing. Based on the research of Drolet (2010) comic strips as authentic materials should be working as well as possible to the second language students. In this study the researcher integrate reading with writing in one activity by using comic strips. The researcher conducted an extensive reading using authentic material in the writing class. It follows that the teacher of EFL could be more creative to make the writing class more interesting. The use of comic strips can encourage the students' writing because comic strips are popular texts so every student can access them easily. Comic strips also provide realistic sample of the use of daily English done by the native speaker. Authentic materials are reading texts that were written by native speakers and actually published in contexts designed specifically for native-speaker consumption, with no thought given to non-native accessibility, (Lansford, 2014). The use of comic strips as authentic materials also helps the students to know the real dialogue and culture. From the study is also known that students enjoy the material of writing by comic strips during the teaching and learning process.

Bowkett (2011) released that comic art images as a visual analogue are able to help the children to generate, organize, and refine their ideas when writing and talking about text. When the students are reading the comic strips, they can see richer imagined world and text based stories so they can also enrich

their imagination about something and find an idea to write their own text. After that the students start their planning to write a text. They need to plan what genre they will develop in their writing and develop the characters of their text. Students are also expected to create their writing with sense. The researcher also found that the writing activity using comic strips serves the students some panels with narration and dialogues which can be a template to help the students organizing paragraphs in written story or a non-fiction writing. Besides, the dialogues used in comic strips can direct the students to create their own dialogues for their writing text so they can write a text as good as possible. Yunus (2013) in his study about information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching language. Yunus used digital comics to motivate the students which have low proficiency in writing skill. The result of the study shows that there are a lot of advantages of using digital comic as teaching media which can encourage students to write in English.

Humola & Talib (2016) finds that comic strips motivate the students to improve their writing skill and be able to achieve all the writing indicators. To encourage the students to generate the idea, the researchers ask the students to determine the topic of the story of comic strips before writing it into the narrative text. To organize the text the students need to know the generic structure of the story then determine the generic structure of the text they will write to. By knowing the generic structure of the story, the students will organize their text more easily. The vocabulary aspect is also important to be mastered by the students due vocabulary is the basic part of a text so the students should have a good vocabulary mastery to produce a written text. Indonesian students often still write a text in Indonesia before they translate it into English. So by using comic strips at least the students obtain some new words from the comic strips to enrich their vocabulary mastery. The another aspect is the language use of narrative text. Narrative text is kind of text that use past tense to express the story. In this case the researchers explain the use of past tense using the narration and dialogues from comic strips then ask the students to apply it in a text after giving some exercises to them. The use of mechanics is also as important as the other aspects. The researcher guide the students to use the right capitalization and punctuation using the sentences in comic strips as the example. It helps the students to understand the explanation easier by matching the sentence and the expression form the characters of comic strips.

In another study, csabay (2006) explain that using comic strips sometimes make the students confused about the language used in comic strips. It is caused that comic strips are authentic materials and use native language and terms. Besides the difficulty of the language presented to the class should be matched with the level of the students; otherwise the use of authentic materials will only frustrate them. Students have low knowledge about the native language will get misunderstanding about the meaning of the sentences. The teachers must also choose the appropriate comic strips that will be used in teaching writing because not all of them can be appropriate with the students' level. Especially for the Indonesian students, it will be more different with the other countries' students. Ravelo (2013) mentions that students still get difficulties in understanding the different culture with the comic strips they read. It requires teacher to make negotiation with the students to make them understand about the culture of comic strips. In another opinion, Ravelo states that teacher encourage students to find the difficult words that they don not understand by using dictionary or they can observe another source to help them understand the story of the comic strips. The students who want to learn with comic strips are also challenged to be more active to make meaning from the interplay of text and images, as well as filling in the gaps between panels, (Manno, 2014).

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3.4 Local Wisdom

Based on Rosidi (2011) the term local wisdom is the translation of the local genius which was first introduced by Quaritch Wales in 1948-1949 which meant the ability of local culture to deal with foreign cultural influences when the two cultures were related. Local wisdom can show the current place identity. For example people in Nganjuk still believe about the spirit of the ancestor who set up the village for the first time by conducting a ritual called nyadran to respect the ancestors. People conduct the ritual in a building where the ancestors were buried which in Nganjuk it is called punden. After conducting the ritual then people join a cultural festival that will do long march to get around the village wearing traditional costumes. From the tradition it can be seen that Nganjuk has it's own believe about something. If people from the other places hear about nyadran, they will know that it is a ritual or cultural festival from Nganjuk. Every place has their own tradition and culture including the other places in Indonesia and in the world. It means every place can show their identity by exploring the local wisdom.

Local wisdom in education is also very important to encourage students to know and love their tradition especially in teaching and learning English as foreign language. Nadlir (2014) states that the use

of foreign languages in mass media and electronic media cause the love of the value of local culture to slowly fade. Whereas, language as a tool in conveying learning has a huge influence on the formation of youth character. There is no more tradition that should be inherited from previous generations. Modernization erodes local culture to become Westernized, while puritanism often regards culture as a syncretic practice that must be avoided. So that is why based on his opinion local wisdom should be integrated in teaching learning process, extracurricular, or the other student activities at school. Tobroni (2012) states that teacher should teach their students about human who do not just live but also exist so they can be motivated to resolve the limited situation. It means the students are encouraged to have critical and creative thinking to response the socio-cultural condition. Nadlir (2014) also explains that local wisdom-based education is an education which teach students to always be close with daily concrete situation.

Education based on local wisdom is the reflection of government regulation (PP) No 19/2005 about National Standard of Education, it is article 17 paragraph 1 which explains that elementary-high school education unit level curriculum or other equivalent forms are developed according to the education unit, regional potential, socio-cultural, and students. It can be concluded that the students should know about the potential of their region so they can do further development of it. Sularso (2016) in his research clarifies that the important reason why local wisdom should be given in education is that learners do not lose the basic cultural values, do not lose its historical roots and have insight and knowledge on social and environmental realities attitude culturally. In other words adding local wisdom in education can provide a good example of how to do something based on the value in local society. It directs students to filter the new knowledges from the other cultures so they can take the benefit from the knowledges.

E Ningrum & Sungkawa (2018) apply local wisdom-based learning in a teaching learning process to understand a land ethic materials. In their research, they states that a learning process is not just about learning or acquiring a knowledge but also a process to know about investing values, norms, ethics, and morals to the students. It means that the use of local wisdom to teach students can help them learn about their Mother Nature and knowledges. It also can be used as an entrenchment of their mental development from the foreign cultures. Lickona (1992) explains that local wisdom-based learning model contributes to modeling of ecological awareness behavior which encompasses moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Dietz (1998) adds that local wisdom-based learning model facilitates students in acknowledging local culture, improving knowledge about how to preserve the environment. From those explanations, it can be concluded that the use of local wisdom in teaching learning process can provide a good influences to the students. By using local wisdom, students are helped to integrate the foreign knowledges or cultures with the local wisdom, so they still can learn about the overseas knowledges and filter the inappropriate cultures.

4. CONCLUSION

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that 1) comic strips can be designed as the media to teach writing and a local wisdom-based media so comic strips can be more appropriate to teach local students, (2) the proofs of comic strips validity show that the use of comic strips as the media in teaching and learning process of writing can improve the students' writing skill.

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Biodata

Puput Zuli Ekorini is an English lecturer of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk since two years ago. She is obsessed of teaching writing. Writing is like a magic stick for her due she can express any feeling by writing. She got hibah from DRPM Kemenristek Dikti for her research about writing. She develops a media to teach writing, it is local wisdom-based comic strips.

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