

## THE EFFECT OF COMIC STRIPS ON SECONDARY EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING ABILITY

<sup>1</sup>M. Ridhwan, <sup>2</sup>Muhammad Taufik Ihsan, <sup>3</sup>Naskah

<sup>1</sup> STAI Auliaurrasyidin Tembilahan, <sup>1&2</sup> UIN Sulthan Syarif Kasim Riau

<sup>1</sup>[muhrezwan@gmail.com](mailto:muhrezwan@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[muhammadtaufikihsan@gmail.com](mailto:muhammadtaufikihsan@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>[ismailkincai@gmail.com](mailto:ismailkincai@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the significant effect of using comic strips strategy toward students' reading comprehension and writing ability at MTsN 1 Pekanbaru. A Quasi-Experimental by Non-equivalent Pre-test and Post-test Group was applied as a designed for study. The sample was two classes (VIII 3 and VIII 4) consisting 20 students of treatment class, and 20 students of control class. The data were computed using SPSS 20.0 to analyze Independent sample t-test and Paired sample t-test. The finding of this study revealed that there was a significant effect on students' reading comprehension by using comic strips strategy, it shown on paired sample t-test; treatment class was 77 and control class was 64.5, the hypothesis testing showed the result of post T-test -7.149, then score of sig.(2-tailed) is 0.000, if we act to null hypothesis (Ho) that is 0.05, it means that the score of sig.(2-tailed) was smaller than score of Ho. The data also revealed that there was a significant effect on students' writing ability, it shown on paired sample t-test; treatment class was 79.6 and control class was 54.2, the hypothesis testing showed the result of post T-test -21.9, then score of sig.(2-tailed) is 0.000, if we act to null hypothesis (Ho) that is 0.05, it means that the score of sig.(2-tailed) was smaller than score of Ho. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. From those data it can be summarized that there is a significant effect of using comic strips strategy on students' reading comprehension and writing ability.

**Keywords:** *Comic Strips, Reading, Writing.*

### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh signifikan penggunaan strategi strip komik terhadap pemahaman membaca dan kemampuan menulis siswa di MTsN 1 Pekanbaru. Sebuah Eksperimental Semu (kuasi-eksperimen) oleh Non-setara Pre-tes dan Post-tes Group diterapkan sebagai rancangan untuk belajar. Terdapat dua kelas sebagai sampel (VIII 3 dan VIII 4) yang terdiri dari 20 siswa kelas perlakuan, dan 20 siswa kelas kontrol. Data dihitung menggunakan SPSS 20.0 untuk menganalisis *Independent sample t-test* dan *Paired sample t-test*. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa ada pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa dengan menggunakan strategi strip komik, itu ditunjukkan pada *paired sample t-test*; kelas eksperimen adalah 77 dan kelas kontrol adalah 64,5, pengujian hipotesis menunjukkan hasil post *t-test* -7.149, kemudian skor sig. (2-tailed) adalah 0,000, jika kita uji untuk hipotesis nol (Ho)

yaitu 0,05, itu berarti skor sig. (2-tailed) lebih kecil dari skor Ho. Data juga mengungkapkan bahwa ada pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kemampuan menulis siswa, hal ini ditunjukkan pada uji *paired sampel t-test*; kelas eksperimen adalah 79,6 dan kelas kontrol adalah 54,2, pengujian hipotesis menunjukkan hasil post *t-test* -21.9, kemudian skor sig. (2-tailed) adalah 0,000, jika kita bertindak untuk hipotesis nol (Ho) yaitu 0,05, itu berarti skor sig. (2-tailed) lebih kecil dari skor Ho. Oleh karena itu, hipotesis nol ditolak dan hipotesis alternatif diterima. Dari data tersebut dapat dirangkum bahwa ada pengaruh yang signifikan menggunakan strategi strip komik pada pemahaman membaca dan kemampuan menulis siswa.

**Kata kunci:** *Strip Komik, Membaca, Menulis.*

## INTRODUCTION

Janette, Sharon and Alison (2007:12) state that reading comprehension is a process of constructing meaning, coordinated with complex processes, including word reading, word and word knowledge, and fluency. In those processes, the readers have to be able to extract and construct the text in order to obtain certain information. The ability of constructing the text is very useful during the reading activity. Likewise, managing those skills will be much more functional and make easier once the reader wants to communicate his or her reading ideas in form of writing.

Lynn, Simon and Schuster (1993:1) express the writing is a way of thinking and learning, through

writing someone can get opportunities to explore many ideas from the text they read, it is a way to discover something different or newest which involved series of steps. Writing cannot be completed perfectly only in one step because it involves exploring writers' opinions that tries to make unexpected connections among ideas and languages. For that reason, writing for student is also important with the intention of communicating some ideas they have, as argued by Nunan (2003: 88) students do not simply communicate each other but also express their ideas, feelings, and experiences. Furthermore, Nunan (2009) believes that writing is a combination of process and product which refers to how the writer shares

ideas, and how to comprehensibly understand the reader.

In order to accommodate students' needs on English reading and writing, MTsN 1 Pekanbaru since the latest curriculum 2013 (K-13) has been attempting to strengthen the English teaching not only as a conventional subject matter, it is more as a medium of sparking toward the very challenges era of information. By means of that perspective once ever said that for those who want to live their lives should be living with information which is hardly being understood without understanding English text. Such of that reason, the student must realize the important of reading, then progressively importing their reading ideas in written text.

MTsN 1 Pekanbaru is one of the Secondary Schools in Riau Province Indonesia where English should be studied as an obligation. It is taught twice a week; the duration of each meeting is 2 x 40 minutes. Referring to its syllabus, the second-year students learned at least some kinds of English texts, such as narrative, recount and descriptive.

Based on KKM (Minimum Achievement Score) which granted by 70, those three types of reading text become one of the elements being scored at the end of the English teaching. In this case, they were expected to know how to write a good recount text as well as understand its meaning. Thus, the researchers assumed the second-year students who have learnt that topics are skilled enough to write and comprehend narrative, recount and also descriptive text.

Nevertheless, based on preliminary study, some English teachers said that majority of students commonly got difficulties in reading and writing. In reading for instance, the students still have some problems, some of them were not able to understand, interpret, identify the generic structure or even language features of a recount text. In the same way occurred in writing, there were some students not able to express their ideas clearly, not able to link or organize their ideas well, having difficulties in using appropriate language features of certain texts, difficulties in diction

(choice of words), and barely understand either using the appropriate punctuation or capitalizing the composition of text.

Inspired by those problems and tried to deal with it, the researchers believed the students were supposed to learning new strategies in English teaching, one of them is a Comic Strip Strategy. Literatures described that Comic Strip strategy can increase students' reading comprehension and writing ability, such as Wright, Sherman, and Ross (1999) identified the features of comic strips can ideally applied as a medium for reading, at that point, Wright, Sherman, and Ross then suggested that comic strips can be used effectively to build reading skills in a three-step model for the language class. Likewise, Derrick & Justine (2008) maintained there are also some ways in using comics in writing class, such as understanding visual symbols, reading order in comics, comic jigsaw, and fill in the text. Also, Davis (1990) said that comic is one of the authentic materials that can be used in teaching. As supported by Csabay

(2006), there are some activities that can be done in teaching English by using comic strips, those are:

1. The teacher cuts apart the individual panels of a comic strip and puts them in an envelope. The students (individually or in groups) then are asked to arrange the pieces into the proper sequence to tell the story, either in written form or as a speaking exercise. For more advanced learners, the task can be made more difficult by giving a different panel to each student in a group and asking students to describe to the rest of the group what is on their panels. The students should not show their pictures to each other until they have figured out the correct order for the panels.
2. In a variation of the first exercise, the teacher removes the speech or thought bubbles of the comic strips, hands out copies of both the comic strip and the text of the bubbles to the students. The students' task is to figure out the proper order of the speech or thoughts.

3. The teacher hands out a comic strip which the last panel is cut out. Students are asked to continue the story and come up with an ending. A follow-up for this exercise could be that the students act out their stories in class. After acting out a story, they could continue it as a role-play activity.
  4. Another interesting (and slightly more complex) exercise is to organize students into groups and give them a written story with missing information. First, the groups should discuss what might be missing from the text. Then the teacher gives them a comic strip version of the text. They must fill in the blanks in the written story by describing what they see in the pictures. After that, they are asked to think of speech and/or thought bubbles for the comic strip. Naturally, as a follow-up activity, they can act it out and continue the story as a role-play.
- From the above points, the researchers designed the class activities of this study by only selected the first activity which is previously proposed by Csabay (2006), using comic strip based on Csabay's first activity further elaborated into some steps as follows:
1. The teacher cuts apart the individual panels of a comic strip and puts them in an envelope.
  2. The teacher decides the topic of comic strips that wish to study.
  3. The teacher explains the characteristics of recount text to provide students with more information about the text they wish to write.
  4. The teacher introduces the comic strip is a strategy for outlining the text.
  5. The teacher shows one frame of a comic strip, then explains to students that they should change the comic strip into written text.
  6. The teacher asks the students to write a recount text based on the comic strip that they already arranged (writing skill).
  7. The teacher asks the students to read a recount text based on the

comic strip that they already arranged (reading skill)

8. The teacher and the students discuss the comic strips and the students' handwriting.
9. The teacher lets the student to ask question about the materials.
10. The teacher motivates the students to be more active in the classroom.

## METHOD

The present study is a Quasi Experimental by Non-equivalent Pre-test and Post-test Group Design. Pre-test was administered before giving the treatments. Creswell (2008: 299) explains that experiment is testing an idea (practice) to determine whether it influences an outcome or dependent variable, he also described that when individuals are not randomly assigned, the procedure is called quasi experiment (2009: 155).

**Table 1. Research Design**

Pre- and Post-test Design		Time	
Experiment Group	Pre-test (O <sub>1</sub> )	Treatment	Post-test (O <sub>2</sub> )
Control Group	Pre-test (O <sub>1</sub> )	No treatment	Post-test (O <sub>2</sub> )

(Adopted from Creswell & Plano: 2011)

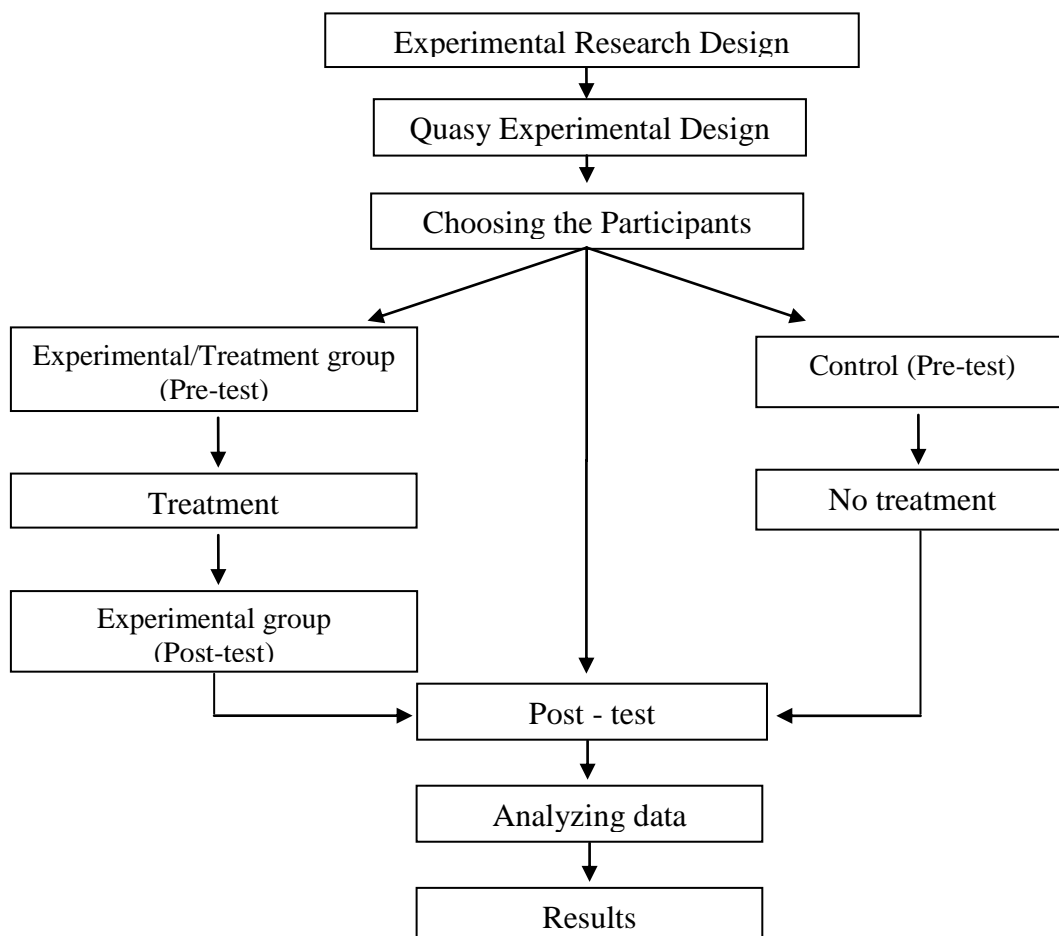
Similarly, as argued by Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2002) emphasized that quasi experimental design is used where true experiment is not feasible. Meanwhile, Gay and Airasian (2000: 349) explained the experimental method is a method of research that can truly test hypothesis concerning with cause and effect relationship in the experimental research, they further said an experiment typically involves a comparison of two groups. In this study the researchers wanted to investigate two classes which were being separated into treatment class and control class, as a treatment class the students received a comic strip strategy, while the control class did not receive any treatment. However, both furthered analyze and tested to see the effect of using coming strategy on their reading and writing. The detail of this study outlined in the following table:

At earlier stage of study, the researchers conducted a pre-test to see the students' ability for both experimental group and control group. Furthermore, treatment was given to the experimental group by using Comic Strips strategy. The control group was provided a conventional technique or without any treatment.

This research was at MTsN 1 Pekanbaru which located at Jl. Amal

Hamzah No. 1 Sail District. The study was completed during September to October in 2017. The researchers determined the sample by its own natural setting of class VIII 3 and class VIII 4. They were consisting of two group taught by using different strategies; the two classes labelled as group 1 and group 2. One group consisted of 20 students.

**Figure 1 (Research Procedure Flow Chart)**



## FINDINGS DISCUSSION

**Table 2. Result of students' reading comprehension pre-test and post-test score**

### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre_test_exp	20	1270.00	63.5000	9.19096
post_test_exp	20	1540.00	77.0000	9.92074
pre_test_ctr	20	1185.00	59.2500	9.35766
post_test_ctr	20	1290.00	64.5000	9.98683
Valid N (listwise)	20			

Table 1 illustrates that the number of participants in the experimental group is 20 with pre-test standard deviation (9.19), post-test standard deviation (9.92), with pre-test mean score (63.5) and post-test mean score (77). Meanwhile 20 participants in the control group is 20 with pre-test standard deviation (9.35), post-test standard deviation

(9.98), pre-test mean score (59.2), and post-test mean score (64.5). The table represented the meaning that there was significant mean score of students' reading comprehension between experiment group and control group before and after the test. The post-test of experimental groups increases higher compare to the control groups.

**Table 3. Result of student writing ability pre-test and post-test score**

### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre_test_exp	20	38.33	55.00	49.5833	4.21897
post_test_exp	20	72.00	90.00	79.6500	5.81253
pre_test_ctr	20	43.33	55.00	51.2500	2.52907
post_test_ctr	20	46.67	65.00	54.2500	3.68635
Valid N (listwise)	20				

Based on Table 3, it can be determined that the number of participants in the experimental

group is 20 with pre-test standard deviation (4.21), post-test standard deviation (5.81), with pre-test mean



score (49.5) and post-test mean score (79.6). Meanwhile 20 participants in the control group with pre-test standard deviation (2.52), post-test standard deviation (3.68), pre-test mean score (51.2), and post-test mean score (54.2). The table

represented the meaning that there was significant mean score of student's writing ability between experiment group and control group before and after the test. The post-test of experimental groups increases higher compare to the control groups.

**Table 4. The Analysis of Paired Sample T-test between pre-test and post-test on students' reading comprehension for experimental group**

Paired Samples T-Test							
Subject	Group Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	df	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effect	Pre – testscore	6.35	9.19	20	19	-7.149	0.000
	Post – testscore	77	9.92	20			

From the table 4, the output of paired sample t-test shows that the t-test result is -7.149, its df is 19, by comparing number of significances. If probability > 0.05, null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. If probability < 0.05 alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Because the significance is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , thus,  $H_a$  is accepted while  $H_0$  is rejected.

Then, the writer found the percentage of significant effect between pre-test and post-test of experimental class by looking for the effect size or eta-squared as follows:

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + n - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{(-7.149)^2}{(-7.149)^2 + 20 - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{51.1}{51.1 + 19}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = 0.72$$

$$Eta\text{-squared} = \tilde{\eta}^2 \times 100\%$$

$$Eta\text{-squared} = 0.72 \times 100\% = 72\%$$

The result of data analysis is based on inferential statistics which has identified after conducting the treatment for 6 meetings or 12 class-hours by using Comic Strips strategy can improve **72%** on students' reading comprehension. Therefore, the  **$H_0$**  hypothesis is rejected and  **$H_a$**  is accepted, there is a significant

difference on students' reading post-test mean score in the comprehension between pre-test and experimental group.

**Table 5. The Analysis of Paired Sample T-test between pre-test and post-test on students reading comprehension for control group**

Paired Samples T-Test							
Subject	Group Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	df	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effect	pre – testscore	59.2	9.35	20	19	7.76	0.000
	post – testscore	64.5	9.98	20			

The output of paired sample t-test shown on Table 5 figures out that the t-test result is 7.76, its df is 19, by comparing number of significances. If probability > 0.05, null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. If probability < 0.05 alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Because the significance is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , thus,  $H_a$  is accepted while  $H_0$  is rejected.

Then, the writer found the percentage of significant effect between pre-test and post-test of control class by looking for the effect size or eta-squared as follows:

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + n - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{(-7.76)^2}{(-7.76)^2 + 20 - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{60.2}{60.2 + 19}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = 0.76$$

$$Eta\text{-squared} = \tilde{\eta}^2 \times 100\%$$

$$Eta\text{-squared} = 0.76 \times 100\% = 76\%$$

In addition, inferential statistics which has been identified after conducting the treatment for 6 meetings or 12 class-hours by using non-Comic Strips Strategy can improve **76%** on students' reading comprehension. Therefore, the **H<sub>0</sub>** hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>a</sub>** is accepted, there is a significant difference on students' reading comprehension between pre-test and post-test mean score in the control group.

**Table 6. The Analysis of Paired Sample T-test between pre-test and post-test on students writing ability mean scores for Experimental Group**

Paired Samples T-Test							
Subject	Group Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Df	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effect	pre – test score	49.5	4.21	20	19	-21.9	0.000
	post – test score	79.6	58.1	20			

Output in table 6 about paired sample t-test shows that the t-test result is -21.9, its df is 19, by comparing number of significances. If probability > 0.05, null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. If probability < 0.05 alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Because the significance is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , thus,  $H_a$  is accepted while  $H_0$  is rejected.

Then, the writer obtained the percentage of significant effect between pre-test and post-test of experimental class by looking for the effect size or eta-squared as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\tilde{\eta}^2 &= \frac{t^2}{t^2+n-1} \\ \tilde{\eta}^2 &= \frac{(-21.9)^2}{(-21.9)^2+20-1} \\ \tilde{\eta}^2 &= \frac{479.6}{479.6+19} \\ \tilde{\eta}^2 &= 0.96 \\ \text{Eta-squared} &= \tilde{\eta}^2 \times 100\% \\ \text{Eta-squared} &= 0.96 \times 100\% = 96\%\end{aligned}$$

Based on inferential statistics which has identified after conducting the treatment for 6 meetings or 12 class-hours can improve **96%** on students' writing ability. Therefore, the  **$H_0$**  hypothesis is rejected and  **$H_a$**  is accepted, it means that there is a significant difference on students' writing ability of pre-test and post-test mean score by using Comic Strip in experimental group.

**Table 7. The Analysis of Paired Sample T-test between pre-test and post-test on students' writing ability for control group****Paired Samples T-Test**

Subject	Group Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	df	T	Sig.(2-tailed)
Effect	pre – test score	51.2	2.52	20	38	-2.68	0.014
	post – test score	54.2	3.68	20			

Paired sample t-test in the table 7 illustrates that the t-test result is -2.68 its df is 19, by comparing number of significances. If probability > 0.05, null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. If probability < 0.05 alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Because the significance is  $0.014 < 0.05$ , thus,  $H_a$  is accepted while  $H_0$  is rejected.

The percentage of significant effect between pre-test and post-test of control class by looking for the effect size or eta-squared as follows:

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + n - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{(-2.68)^2}{(-2.68)^2 + 20 - 1}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = \frac{7.18}{7.18 + 19}$$

$$\tilde{\eta}^2 = 0.27$$

$$\text{Eta-squared} = \tilde{\eta}^2 \times 100\%$$

$$\text{Eta-squared} = 0.27 \times 100\% = 27\%$$

The result of data analysis based on inferential statistics which has identified after conducting the

treatment for 6 meetings or 12 class-hours can improve by **27%** toward students' writing ability. Therefore, the  **$H_0$**  hypothesis is accepted and  **$H_a$**  is rejected. It means that here is a significant difference on students' writing ability of pre-test and post-test mean score by using Comic Strip in control group.

**CONCLUSION**

The finding of this study revealed that there was a significant effect on students' reading comprehension by using comic strips strategy, it shown on paired sample t-test; treatment class was 77 and control class was 64.5, the hypothesis testing showed the result of post T-test -7.149, then score of sig.(2-tailed) is 0.000, if we act to null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that is 0.05, it

means that the score of sig.(2-tailed) was smaller than score of Ho. The data also revealed that there was a significant effect on students' writing ability, it shown on paired sample t-test; treatment class was 79.6 and control class was 54.2, the hypothesis testing showed the result of post T-test -21.9, then score of sig.(2-tailed) is 0.000, if we act to null hypothesis (Ho) that is 0.05, it means that the score of sig.(2-tailed) was smaller than score of Ho. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. From those data it can be summarized that there is a significant effect of using comic strips strategy on students' reading comprehension and writing ability.

To sum up this discussion, even though the statistical evidences proved that there is significance effect of using comic strip, there were some other findings that could be described qualitatively; based on time allocation during this experimental research, we realized that school curriculum was having much influence toward the study alongside the teachers themselves, so

the use of Comic Strip strategies sometimes was not completely implemented as it wishes. However, during the experiment at earlier opening of each meetings, the writers geared the treatment class using some warm-up activities like figuring out the comic strip strategies into some playful presentations, this was important because the students' attention while receiving new strategies from unfamiliar teachers (i.e. we as the teachers) should be attracted in order to create good class situation. If compare to the control class, the earlier problems found at treatment class, were not as similarly as happening in the control class, because the control class occupied a conventional way of teaching by their school teachers, so there was no special action for the control class as they perceived their genuine daily teaching and learning activities.

As final comment, to improve students' English skills, particularly in reading comprehension and writing ability, the teacher is truly required to renew and refresh his or her teaching strategies become more effective, efficient, and relevant

either for students or himself. Comic strip is one of the answers to be considered, especially teaching at secondary school is dynamically challenging as the students are commonly perceived English in many forms of text and writing. This strategy proved can assist the students' writing ability as well as reading comprehension. Yet, this research tends to provide several suggestions listed as follows:

1. It needs to magnetize students' attention at the opening session of the experimental class, because when they were being introduced to the new strategy, they perhaps were not so interested.
2. Use mixing language (Indonesian and English) if the treatment class could not understand English fluently.
3. Control the class situation by giving some motivation, because it may easier find some students who mock each other when they were performing their reading or writing.

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