



The Use of Humorous Comic Strips to Promote Vocabulary Development of Eight Grade Students at Junior High School

Chindy Puspita Datu¹, Jufriadi², Nurhayati Usman³

^{1,2,3}English Language Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Palopo

Article Info

Received: 2026-05-15

Revised: 2026-05-25

Accepted: 2026-06-14

Keywords:

humorous comic strips,
vocabulary mastery,
EFL learning,
vocabulary teaching

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10802

Corresponding Author:

Chindy Puspita Datu

2202020030@uinpalopo.ac.id

Universitas Islam Negeri Palopo

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of humorous comic strips in improving the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo. Because it helps students learn and apply English effectively, vocabulary is recognized as an essential part of language learning. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design utilized in this quantitative study. thirty students from class VIII-B were selected as the sample using purposive sampling. Based on the results, the mean score improves from 62.67 in the pre-test to 78.83 in the post-test. The use of humorous comic strips significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, based on from paired sample t-test, and this showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the effect size analysis showed a Cohen's d value of 1.02, which was categorized as a large effect size. The findings indicate that humorous comic strips provide meaningful, contextual, and enjoyable learning experiences that support vocabulary retention and student engagement.

1. Introduction

English is an important international language used for education, technology, business, and global communication (Alaviyya et al., 2024). In Indonesia, English is taught as an essential subject in Indonesian junior high schools to prepare pupils for academic and professional challenges in the globalization era. However, many students still have trouble to understand English, especially vocabulary. Vocabulary is considered the foundation of language learning because students cannot communicate effectively without sufficient vocabulary mastery (Thornbury, 2002).

Based on preliminary observations conducted during teaching practice and informal discussions with the English teacher at SMPN 7 Palopo, many students in eighth grade had challenges learning in vocabulary in English. Their limited vocabulary made it challenging for students to understand the texts, effectively express ideas, and actively participate in class activities. Additionally, compared to traditional textbook-based instruction, students demonstrated a greater interest in visual and engaging learning materials. This situation emphasizes the need for creative, student-centered educational materials that improve vocabulary learning motivation and cognitive engagement (Baga et al., 2021).

Humorous comic strips are a further tool that can help with vocabulary mastery. Humorous comic strips can make students' attention and provide a more enjoyable educational experience by combining visual illustrations, contextual dialogue, and funny situations. Learning is more effective when information is presented in both verbal and visual forms, according to Allan Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1991). While illustrations contribute in visual processing and memory retention, dialogues stimulate verbal processing while illustrations support visual processing and memory retention.

The use of comic strips in language learning is also supported by previous studies. Comic strips improved students' vocabulary mastery and increased classroom engagement, according to study by Rokhayani and Utari (2014). Similarly, comic strips significantly improved students' vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension, according to Azizah and Hamid (2022). In addition, Juliana (2021) indicated that comic strips can improve students' motivation by creating a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for learning. Jufriadi (2023) is on to argue that learning vocabulary is an essential part of learning English since it forms the foundation for more comprehensive language abilities.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of comic strips in language learning, research focusing specifically on humorous comic strips as a medium for vocabulary development among eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo remains limited. Moreover, few studies have examined how humorous elements within comic strips contribute to students' vocabulary learning and classroom engagement. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of humorous comic strips in improving the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design does not include a control group, it is appropriate for classroom-based research where random assignment is not feasible due to administrative and practical constraints.

The research was conducted at SMPN 7 Palopo, South Sulawesi. The population of this study consisted of eighth-grade students, particularly class VIII-B. The sample consisted of 30 students selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments included vocabulary tests consisting of multiple-choice items and classroom observation. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was applied to determine students' vocabulary improvement before and after treatment (Sugiyono, 2019).

The procedures of the research consisted of three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was administered to identify students' initial vocabulary mastery. Afterward, students received treatment through humorous comic strips during classroom activities. Finally, the post-test was administered to measure students' vocabulary improvement after the treatment.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential statistics included a paired sample t-test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to determine whether the improvement was statistically significant. Cohen's d effect size analysis was also conducted to measure the magnitude of the treatment effect.

3. Result

This study uses a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was employed in this quantitative study (Sugiyono, 2019). This design is thought to be suitable for classroom-based research where random assignment is challenging to implement due to administrative and practical constraints, although it does not have a control group. By comparing students' performance before and after the treatment, the design was used to analyze how effectively humorous comic strips improved students' vocabulary mastery.

The research was conducted at SMPN 7 Palopo, South Sulawesi. The population consisted of eighth-grade students, and class VIII-B was selected as the sample through purposive sampling. The sample comprised 30 students who participated in all stages of the study. A vocabulary test and observation in the classroom has been included in the research instruments. Multiple-choice questions were implemented in the vocabulary test to measure students' level of vocabulary mastery.

The English teacher reviewed the test before it was given out to make sure it was appropriate for the students' level and contained valid content. During the treatment sessions, students' participation, engagement, and reactions to the use

of humorous comic strips were observed in the classroom.

The research procedures consisted of three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. First, students' initial vocabulary mastery was evaluated through a pre-test. Second, humorous comic strips were implemented as resources for instruction during the treatment. In the treatment sessions, students were introduced to vocabulary through comic strip situations, illustrations, and contextual conversations. Comic strip reading, vocabulary identification, word meaning discussion, and vocabulary-related exercises were included in the learning activities. After the treatment, a post-test was given to measure the students' vocabulary mastery.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores and determine the level of students' vocabulary mastery before and after the treatment. Inferential statistics included a paired sample t-test and a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to determine whether the improvement in students' scores was statistically significant. In addition, Cohen's *d* effect size analysis was conducted to measure the magnitude of the treatment effect and evaluate the practical significance of the findings.

Based on the findings and statistical analysis presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of humorous comic strips significantly improved the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo. The descriptive analysis showed a clear increase in students' mean scores from the pre-test (62.67) to the posttest (78.83).

The inferential analysis further confirmed this result. The paired sample t-test revealed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Indicating a statistically significant difference between students' vocabulary mastery before and after the treatment. In addition, the effect size analysis demonstrated a large effect, meaning Based on the findings and statistical analysis presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of humorous comic strips significantly improved the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo that the improvement was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that the use of humorous comic strips significantly improved the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo. The improvement observed in the post-test results is consistent with the theoretical framework underpinning this study, particularly the Dual Coding Theory proposed by Allan Paivio (1990), which states that learning becomes more effective when information is processed through both verbal and visual channels.

By combining dialogues with visual illustrations, humorous comic strips enabled students to associate new vocabulary with contextualized images, making it easier for them to understand and retain word meanings.

The findings also suggest that the effectiveness of humorous comic strips was not solely related to their visual features but also to the presence of humor. The humorous situations presented in the comic strips appeared to create a more relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. As a result, students were more willing to participate in learning activities and showed greater enthusiasm during the lessons. This finding is consistent with Juliana (2021), who reported that comic strips can increase students' motivation and reduce anxiety in vocabulary learning. When students feel comfortable and entertained, they tend to engage more actively with learning materials and demonstrate greater confidence in using newly learned vocabulary.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Rokhayani and Utari (2014), who found that comic strips enhanced students' vocabulary mastery and classroom engagement. Similarly, Azizah and Hamid (2022) reported that comic strips significantly improved students' vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension. However, the present study extends previous findings by specifically focusing on humorous comic strips as a medium for vocabulary development among eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo. The results suggest that the integration of humor into comic-based learning may provide additional benefits by increasing students' interest and emotional involvement in the learning process.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings imply that English teachers can utilize humorous comic strips as an alternative instructional medium to support vocabulary learning. Comic strips provide contextualized language input, visual support, and enjoyable learning experiences that can help students learn vocabulary more effectively. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate comic-based activities into classroom instruction to promote student engagement and improve vocabulary mastery.

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations. First, the study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group, which limits the ability to attribute the observed improvement solely to the treatment. Second, the sample consisted of only one class from a single school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to employ quasi-experimental or true experimental designs involving larger samples and multiple schools to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of humorous comic strips in vocabulary learning. Overall, the findings confirm that humorous comic strips are an effective and engaging instructional medium for improving students' vocabulary mastery.

In addition to enhancing vocabulary acquisition, they contribute to increased motivation, participation, and positive learning experiences in English language classrooms, particularly at the junior high school level.

5. Conclusion

The use of humorous comic strips significantly improved the understanding of vocabulary of eighth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo, based on the results of statistical analysis. Students' mean scores increased from 62.67 in the pre-test to 78.83 in the post-test, indicating improvement. There was a statistically significant difference before and after treatment, confirmed by the paired sample t-test's significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), confirming that there was a statistically significant difference between students' vocabulary mastery before and after the implementation of humorous comic strips.

Findings confirm that humorous comic strips illustrate language in relevant and contextualized contexts, they are useful in promoting vocabulary mastery. Students were better able to comprehend word meanings and retain new vocabulary as a result to the combination of dialogues, visual aids, and humorous content. Additionally, the humorous elements made studying enjoyable, which improved students' motivation, participation, and engagement in class activities.

These findings indicate that humorous comic strips can serve not only as an entertaining learning medium but also as an effective instructional tool for enhancing vocabulary development in EFL classrooms. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate humorous comic strips into vocabulary instruction to create more interactive and student-centered learning experiences. As an alternative teaching medium, humorous comic strips can help address students' difficulties in vocabulary learning while promoting a more positive attitude toward learning English.

Despite these positive findings, this study was limited to one class and employed a pre-experimental design without a control group. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies using larger samples and more rigorous research designs, such as quasi-experimental or true experimental studies, to obtain more comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of humorous comic strips in vocabulary learning.

6. References

- Alaviyya, Nuri, and Gulay Yasinli. "The Impact Of Globalization On English Language." *Ancient Land International online scientific* 6.4/31 (2024): 35.
- Annisa, N., Syam, A. T., & Masruddin, M. (2022). Teaching vocabulary through Round Robin Brainstorming Technique. *English Education Journal*, 13(1), 741-750.
- Azizah, Risma, and Syifa Fadhilah Hamid. "The Effectiveness of Comic Strip in Improving Students' Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension." *Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature Studies* 2.1 (2022).
- Baga, Sisean, et al. "Students' interest and cognitive ability through the implementation of comic media." *International Journal of Biology Education Towards Sustainable Development* 1.1 (2021): 17-26.
- Bani, M., & Masruddin, M. (2021). Development of Android-based harmonic oscillation pocket book for senior high school students. *JOTSE: Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 11(1), 93-103.
- Jufriadi. (2023) *The Foundation of English*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/401302058_The_fondation_of_English_jufriadi_untuk_HKI
- Juliana, Juliana. "The effect of using comic strips on students' motivation in mastering vocabulary." *JETLi: Journal of English Teaching and Linguistics* 2.2 (2021): 65-71.
- Junaid, R., Santaria, R., & Rustan, N. Q. (2025). Code-Switching Practices in English Language Classrooms: A Classroom Discourse Analysis and Its Pedagogical Implications for EFL Learning. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 13(2), 9043-9058.
- Masruddin, M., & Nur, M. I. (2026). LINGUISTICS LANDSCAPE OF PALOPO CITY. Kongres Internasional Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia, 2025.
- Paivio, Allan. *Mental representations: A dual coding approach*. Oxford university press, 1990.
- Rokhayani, Atik, and Aisyah Ririn Perwikasih Utari. "The use of comic strips as an English teaching media for junior high school students." *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature* 8.2 (2014).
- Rustan, E. (2025). Developing a Web-Based Mobile Game to Enhance Students' Motivation in learning English Vocabulary. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 13(1), 46-73.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Thornbury, S., and S. Thornbury. "How to teach vocabulary. Essex Pearson Education Limited." *References-Scientific Research Publishing* (2002).