

## **Digital Mangatoon to Born Out New Peace in English Classroom**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Digital comics are proven to be an effective learning tool for both teachers and students. At the university level, this study was set out to find the views of second-semester students on the use of Mangatoon digital comics in reading instruction. A quantitative study was performed, involving second-semester students at the Universitas of Al Asyariah Mandar (n=30). This study found, that on average, students find Mangatoon helpful in assisting them in reading since it has practical features preserving their motivation. Based on the student's perception, the reading material presented in Mangatoon is easily understood, hence improvement in their reading skills can be maximised.

**Keywords:** Digital Comic; Reading; ELT; and Pedagogical Innovation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

For Indonesian students, learning English is a must. Junior high school students are introduced to English in the first grade. In fact, some elementary school students have become acquainted with English through their school or English course as good command of English is essential for international communication, as well as for gaining access to English academic writings, articles and news from around the world. Learning a language can be helped by using various teaching methods, such as reading, listening, and speaking. To make English instruction effective, Gagne et al., (1992) state that educational media can be used to maintain students' motivation. Having said that, teachers need to pay attention to the availability and adequacy aspects of the

instructional media itself since it will determine the success of learning (Wambui, 2013). Furthermore, Wambui (2013) explains that these two aspects will influence students' participation, understanding, and retention. For this reason, educators should be familiar with various kinds of instructional media and how they should be used to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of student learning. Having said that, physical attributes of media, task characteristics, and student characteristics are all factors that educators have to consider in deciding which media to use. To respond to such considerations, the use of comic books in English language teaching can be taken into account.

Comics are visual works that tell a story using images. To convey the message, the image must have a distinct personality. There are online and offline digital versions of the comics the students can learn from. For instance, Mangatoon comics provides teachers with teachers to create their own offline comics by saving or printing online comics for their students (Santiana, et.al., 2021). Digitally published electronic comics fall under the term "digital comics" (Jang & Song, 2017). In terms of content, digital comics can be categorized into various genres and sub-genres. These materials can be customized to help students improve their language skills.

The study showing the effective use of offline comic books in teaching English can be illustrated by Setyawan (2018) who conducted a qualitative study in which he used comics as instructional media to teach reading to eighth graders. This study was set out to tackle students' challenges in terms of their low reading motivation, poor test reading score, and inability to recall and retell the information they read. The result of this study shows that comics could promote active engagement of the students which then helps them to preserve their attention throughout the reading lesson, hence their comprehension of the reading content increases. Even when the students cannot understand the meaning of words, the pictures presented along with the reading content could give them clues from which they can guess the intended information. Moreover, the study also shows that students' motivation and attitude change dramatically.

To illustrate the use of digital comics in EFL reading classrooms, Saputri et al., (2021) administered a survey to senior high school students in Surakarta and found out that the students responded well to the digital comic. The students perceive that digital comics offer various learning materials and the visual aspects of the digital comic such as the visualised characters attracted the students to pay more attention and make the teaching and learning process more dynamic.

The positive aspect of digital comics is that they encourage students to pay attention and want to learn more about what they are learning. Due to the reduced amount of text in comics, these comics tend to attract more reluctant readers. Students' interest is piqued and maintained through the use of vivid imagery and well-known characters. Because comics have visual appeal, are less textual and have few familiar characters, students are more likely to engage. Aside from being an initial attraction, comics can help in writing, reading, and mastering foreign languages. Jia, C., Hew, K. F., Bai, S., & Huang, W. (2022) claim that making learning interactive is the best way to keep students interested and engaged in it. Digital comics also work on students' emotions. Students can express their thoughts and feelings about a literary work in various ways by experimenting with colours, lines, fonts, images, and narratives through the use of digital art software (Yeung, 2016; Santiana, et.al., 2021).

Another study examining the use of digital comics was previously conducted by Gibson, M. (2015) by giving the participants comic links to practice reading comprehension. A reading comprehension test was administered during the study. The result showed that reading comics sometimes evokes memories in participants; showing that the textual information presented in the comics is easy to comprehend.

To explore more on how digital comics may help students in reading, this research looked at the students' perceptions of their experience in using Mangatoon in their reading class.

## METHOD

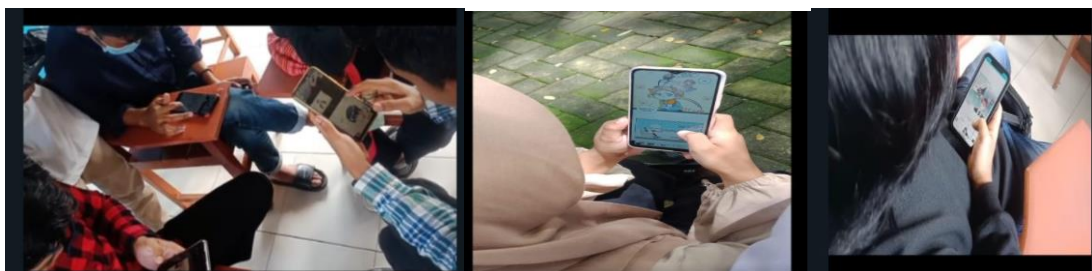
The use of digital comics for learning English in universities can also be done, especially at the Al-Asyariah University of Mandar Indonesia, which was studied by researchers using quantitative methods. The participants of this study are second-semester students at the Universitas of Al Asyariah Mandar (n=30) and were obtained through the purposive sampling method. The research emphasizes the study of social problems from an individual or group perspective. Students' perspectives on the use of digital comics in English learning are examined in this quantitative study, which aims to provide a factual and accurate picture of certain facts. Computer science students were asked to answer questions in a survey. Google Forms is used to give out the survey, which only has Likert scale questions. There are three sections in the form and every single question is set to compulsory. The first section requires the students to reflect on the learning experience provided by Mangatoon. This section specifically measures the students' attitude towards the use of Mangatoon in the reading lesson. The second section focuses on measuring students' motivation to participate in the learning process and on their perception of how accessible the platform is. The last section of the form measures students' perception of what they gain from learning English reading by using Mangatoon.

After the data is collected, the research conducted data analysis by performing a simple calculation to identify students' tendencies (strongly agree, agree, doubt, and disagree) towards the statement stated in the online form. The result is then visualised by using bar graphs.

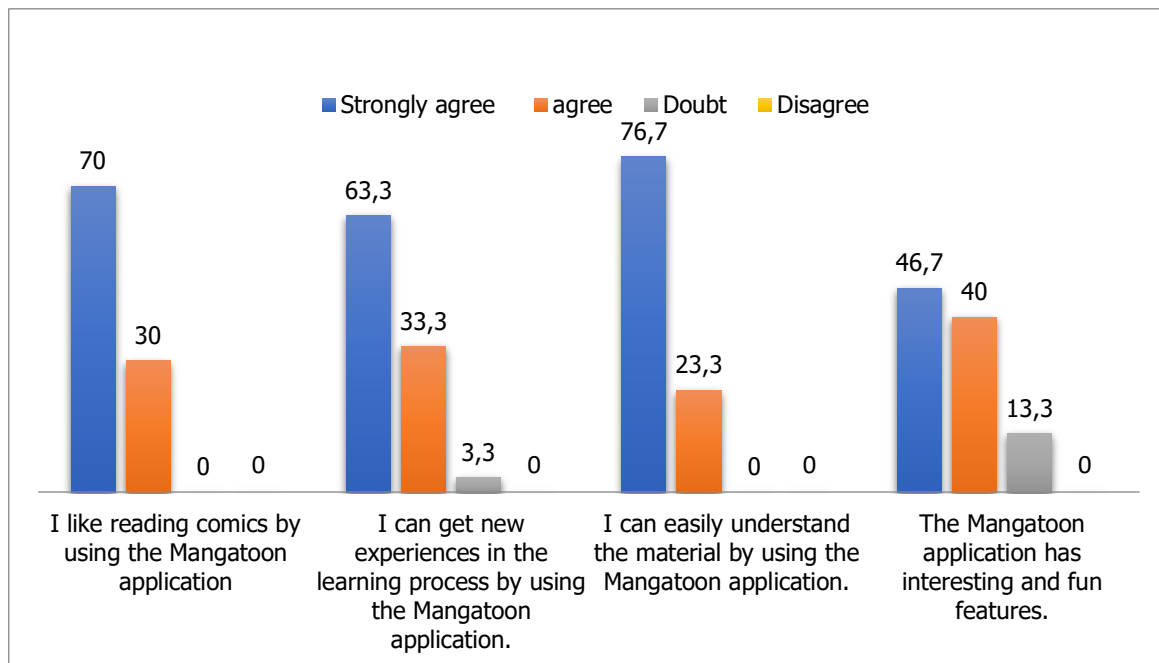
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section consists of a data display illustrating students' perception of the use of Mangatoon during their EFL reading lesson. Some theories and previous studies are also presented to elaborate, support, and explain some relevant concepts and mechanisms relevant to the results of this study.

In this section, the researcher describes the data collected during the research conducted at Al-Asyariah Mandar University. Researchers prepare to teach materials and implement them with Mangatoon comics online to see their perception.

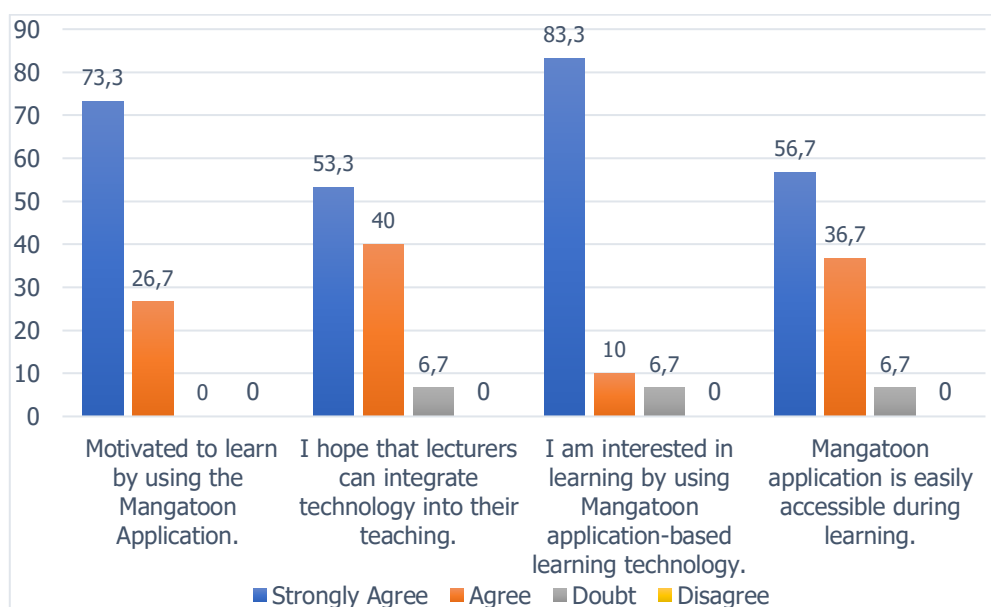


**Picture 1. Pedagogical Innovation through Mangatoon in EFL Class**



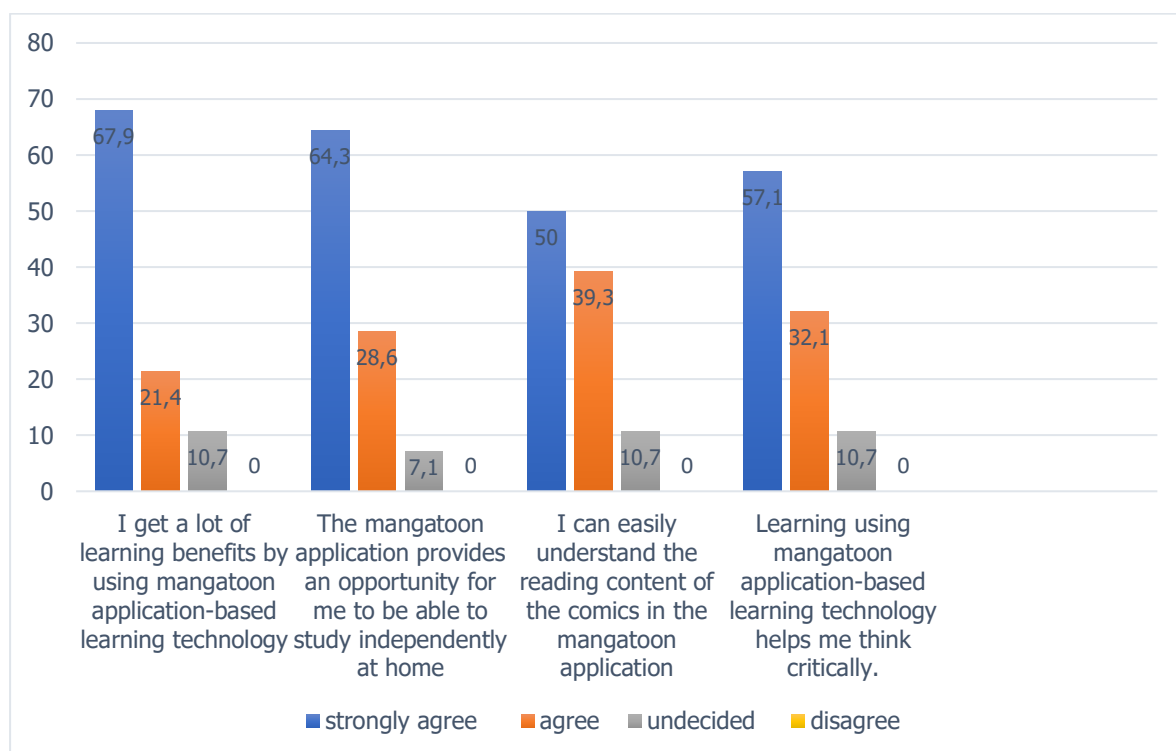
**Figure 1. Reading comics using the Mangatoon application**

From figure 1, it is observable that the students show positive attitudes toward the use of Mangatoon for their reading lesson. Mangatoon preserves students' enthusiasm (70%), offers a new learning experience (only 3% showed hesitation) and gives more chances for successful learning (76%). These responses might be further explained by students' relatively positive attitudes towards the Mangatoon's features which are interesting and fun (only 13% showed hesitation). Most of the students tend to feel that Mangatoon could facilitate positive learning experiences. However, 13% of the students showing hesitation about whether or not the Mangatoon application is interesting and fun might explain the reason why 3% of students doubted that they gained new experience in the learning process where the Mangatoon application is implemented.



**Figure 2. Motivated in Learning ELT with Mangatoon-Based Material**

Furthermore, figure 2 shows that Mangatoon is easily accessible (only 6.7% say otherwise) which makes the students more motivated (73%) and interested (83%). The data also shows that the effective use of Mangatoon can lead the students to gain more awareness about how technology can help their learning, hence they expect the lecturers to integrate technology into their teaching. Overall, it can be clearly seen that students involved in this research considered Mangatoon helpful. However, almost 7% of them state that they hesitated about whether or not the accessibility of the Mangatoon application during learning is sufficient. This might explain why there are 7% of students answered that they could not decide whether they are interested in learning by using Mantaoon or not. Therefore, the expression that shows hesitation also minimally appears on whether or not the students expect the lecturers to integrate technology into their teaching (7%). Having said that, the majority of the students involved in the study show a strong positive attitude towards the use of Mangatoon in the classroom.



**Figure 3. Mangatoon and Critical Reading**

Figure 3 illustrates the students' perceptions of how Mangatoon helps them learn during the reading comprehension class. First of all, the students perceive that Mangatoon gives them a lot of learning benefits (68%). For instance, Mangatoon could facilitate self-directed learning (64%) so that the students can understand the reading content easily (only 10% say otherwise) and stimulate them to think critically (only 11% say otherwise). Furthermore, it can be seen from the bar graph that only slightly below 11% of the students involved in this study could not decide or hesitated about whether or not Mangatoon is an effective medium where critical thinking of the students could increase. This data might also explain why 11% of the students could not tell that they get learning benefits by using Mangatoon application-based learning technology. Moreover, it might also explain why 7% of the students in this study show hesitation that the Mangatoon application provides them with the opportunity to be able to study independently at home. Finally, the 11% of the students who considered

that Mangatoon could not stimulate them to think critically might be also those who doubted that the reading content of the comics in the Mangatoon application is easily understood.

From the results of this study, Mangatoon provides the students with a positive learning experience. Its features motivate the students to engage in the lesson so the reading materials presented in Mangatoon can easily be perceived. It is generally agreed students' engagement can promote better learning attitudes. Furthermore, it is also important to notice that there are three domains teachers need to pay attention to when dealing with students' engagement: behaviour, emotion, and cognitive engagement. Attention to these three domains is associated with students' better activeness, attendance, social skills, self-regulation, and the sense of belonging to the school or subject being learned (Connell & Wellboarn, 1991; Skinner and Belmont, 1993; Finn, Pannoazon, & Voelk, 1995; Birch & Ladd, 1995).

Moreover, Mangatoon allows the students to learn independently. Self-directed learning is important to facilitate in the classroom. Self-directed learning can be broadly explained as a learning condition where learners could acquire new information, skills, behaviour, and experience independently. In the other words, instruction that could facilitate this type of learning condition could also increase the students learning skills (Radial & Volet, 2009; Murray, 2015; Turan and Koc, 2018:99). Furthermore, self-directed learning could allow the students to define their learning objectives, needs, resources, strategies, and how they would evaluate on the learning output (Skiff and Beckendorf, 2009). Such a mechanism then allows the students to be more active in acquiring knowledge (Fischer and Sugimoto, 2006).

The result of this study is also aligned with the previous studies that show that digital comics can draw on students' personal experiences and stimulate them to retell and discuss more on the reading material (Meihami, H., 2022; Yuan, R., et al., 2022; Boaler, J., 2022; and Chen, M. P., 2022). In the other words, it can be said that Mangatoon can promote experiential learning, which is one of the teaching approaches where knowledge is acquired and increased through direct experience followed by reflection (Association of Experiential Education, 2012). Studies show that experiential learning, which allows the students to actively engage and involve in the learning process, could support the students to reach their maximum potential (Caulfield & Woods, 2013; Fenwick, 2000; Kolb, 2014). Moreover, digital media, like digital comics, promote students' motivation to finish the tasks (Henderson et al., 2017) especially when the teacher implements it in a collaborative way (Dallacqua, 2012).

As shown in this study, Mangatoon can as well stimulate the students to develop their critical thinking skills during reading comprehension class. Studies exploring the relationship between the use of comics and critical thinking were once conducted by Anugerahwati (2017) who found that guided instruction where comics are implemented could assist the students to enhance students critical thinking since through comics they could use their background knowledge and relevant experiences in resolving real-life challenges. This notion is also aligned with the study conducted by Haines (207) which concludes that enhanced students' critical thinking as the result of the use of comics should be fortified by some kinds of classroom activities where can share their ideas and opinions related to the contents in the comic. For instance, the teachers allow the students to discuss the visuals and characterisation.

In addition to creative thinking skills, the students involved in this study also perceive that creative thinking is one of the skills that can be enhanced through the use of Mangatoon in their reading class. This finding is aligned with a quantitative study involving 52 participants conducted by Putra and Iqbal (2014) who found that

increased creative thinking is positively associated with the implementation of digital comics. The study also emphasizes that digital comics may increase students' learning skills. Moreover, Okolie, U. C., et al., (2022) and Liu, H., Sheng, J., & Zhao, L. (2022) state that students who are creative thinkers can improve their ability to learn effectively. The focus on student engagement, deeper understanding of content, and self-reflection in the classroom serves as a driving force in the investigation of whole-class practices that promote deeper learning. Furthermore, aligned with the results of this study, Calafato, R., & Gudim, F. (2022) and Castillo-Cuesta, L., & Quinonez-Beltran, A. (2022) state that digital comics can help students learn to read English stories by increasing their interest and intention.

## CONCLUSION

It is generally agreed that digital comics can be one of the effective learning tools. Throughout this study, Mangatoon, a digital comics provider, offers the student with a supportive learning experience. Mangatoon can help the students engage more in the reading lesson since it presents interesting and fun learning features and offers a new way of learning which then increases students' motivation. Moreover, Mangatoon facilitates self-directed learning and stimulates the students to think creatively and critically. In terms of students' reading skills, Mangatoon helps the students understand the material more easily. It also allows the students to reflect on how technology can help them learn more effectively. Therefore, based on the result of this study, implementing Mangatoon in the reading class might increase students' reading skills. On the other hand, further study needs to be conducted to find a direct association between the use of Mangatoon and students' reading skill. A study on how Mangatoon is implemented in reading instruction might also provide language teachers with more practical information.

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