

Bringing Student-Generated Comic as a Collaborative Project into the Extensive Reading Program

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Bringing Student-Generated Comic as a Collaborative Project into the Extensive Reading Program

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Abstract

The study looks into the possibility of bringing student-generated comic as a collaborative project into the Extensive Reading program. It focuses on the students' preferences and difficulties in creating a student-generated comic based on their perceptions. For this purpose, the study involved 30 students of the English Education Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, who had taken the Extensive Reading program. The questionnaire is employed to assess their perceptions. The results of the study show that creating a student-generated comic is a pleasurable doing, an exciting activity, and a fun way for the EFL learners to study English. Moreover, students consider that student-generated comics can improve students' language production creativity, contribute an educational resource for other students, and arouse their creativity. Concerning the development of students' language proficiency, creating comic corresponds to the novel they have studied, affects their English fluency, and improves their writing skills. Astonishingly, only a few students believe that it is not easy to draw and illustrate a comic, compose stories and characters, and reveal the novel's aspects into a comic.

Keywords: student-generated comic, collaborative project, Extensive Reading program, students' perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Extensive reading relies on the comprehension theory of Krashen (Ng et al., 2019). The theory suggests that to learn a language and build up literacy, learners need plentiful language input from reading and listening. When learners understand the messages from reading and listening, they obtain the language acquisition. In other words, language input is a fundamental factor in language learning. Furthermore, Krashen et al. (2017) also recommend that input should engross language learners to know more about the language. In this condition, learners would have positive progress studying the language without conscious effort, for example, through reading books based on their interests or watching films and television programs.

In line with the theory, Nation (2009) states that in an extensive reading program, there are two significant exposures get together by the students: the meaning-focused input and fluency expansion. The program depends on the level of the books read by the students. Meaning that if the books contain only a small number of unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar items, the extensive reading becomes the means of meaning-focused input. Meanwhile, when the books are easy for students, and they have no unknown items, i.e., vocabulary and grammar, extensive reading offers the fluency enhancement of language learning.

Extensive reading is one of teaching reading instructions that have some promising advantages for EFL learners, such as vocabulary enrichment, reading skill improvement, grammar accuracy development, writing skill enhancement, etc. Relating to the students' vocabulary gain, students meet words frequently in the process of reading (Liu & Zhang, 2018; Celik, 2017; Karimpour & Aidinlou, 2016). Therefore, they learn to understand the

meaning of those words in context, and as a result, the incidental vocabulary mastery becomes wider. Meanwhile, another benefit of extensive reading is to improve the students' reading proficiency (Endris, 2018; Al-Nafisah, 2015). For making reading comprehension successfully, students suggested to engage in extensive reading. Here, extensive reading enables learners to practice their reading proficiency.

Besides enhancing vocabulary and improving reading ability, extensive reading leads students to have better grammar accuracy (Poorsoti & Asl, 2016). In the process of reading, learners perceive more input of sentence patterns and other aspects of grammar. It broadens the students' knowledge and understanding of English grammar. Further, extensive reading also facilitates students to improve their writing skills (Sakurai, 2017; Poorsoti & Asl, 2016; Mermelstein, 2015). Here, the researchers prove that extensive reading is an effective means to foster the students' writing fluency. They also claim that prolific readers will be better writers.

As well as these linguistic benefits, extensive reading also necessary to build a good reading habit for EFL students. Specifically, extensive reading enables learners to choose a lot of English books that fit their linguistic capabilities with a variety of genres (Day & Bamford, 1998). Further, the enjoyment of the learning process achieved so that the students' reading proficiency also improved. In other words, extensive reading is an approach of teaching reading that emphasizes the joy of reading to produce a positive attitude and motivation towards learning.

Theoretically, Day & Bamford (2002) develops ten guidance of extensive reading as the primary point to make the program is successful for EFL learners. The principles are as follows:

1. The reading material is easy for learners.
2. A selection of reading text on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. The learners select what they want to read.
4. The learners learn large amounts of text.
5. The purpose of reading is to get pleasure, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading becomes its reward for the learners.
7. The learners read at a faster rate.
8. Reading is silent and independent.
9. The teacher orients and guides the learners.
10. The teacher becomes a role model for the learners and provides keenness in reading.

However, those standards of extensive reading not rigorously implemented altogether (Macalister, 2015). Some practitioners may apply differently to different classrooms. For example, principle number 6 "Reading becomes its reward for the learners" is better to replace with "Reading will need to be monitored and assessed," or learners will not involve in extensive reading seriously (Ng et al., 2019). Additionally, concerning the principle number 8, "Reading is silent and independent," in a particular situation, it is impossible to complete. For EFL learners, reading large amounts of English text solitary is very hard. Some teachers merely substitute that activity into reading collaboratively. Here, it can be an alternative to motivate the learners in an extensive reading program (Novita, 2018; Kirchhoff, 2015).

Collaboration refers to students work mutually to complete the task they cannot do independently (McRae & Guthrie, 2009). This social sharing allows students combining their knowledge and skill, learning from one another, and constructing new meanings. In line with this, Grabe (2009) states that promoting the development of group cohesiveness and create communities of learners, especially in reading class. Here, putting the students in groups benefits struggling readers to connect with the texts. They can work together with their peers and help each other in learning. He also claims that collaborative work is vital to generate motivational growth. Motivation has a crucial role in affecting students' reading development. Moreover, it directs them to be more active, creative, and equal to everyone in the class.

At the English Education Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, extensive reading is one of the compulsory courses. It is a three-credit-hour subject offered to second-year students. The objectives of the program are developing students' good reading habits, experiencing different kinds of reading material, and demonstrating a good understanding of several different types of reading materials. Therefore, in the subject, students are allowed to choose and read short stories, novels, and non-fiction, such as articles or chapters of textbooks. To monitor learners' activities, they required to write a brief comment and a summary of each of their reading materials in their reading logs. Here, reading logs assists the teacher to monitor students' accomplishment of the reading goal,

identify their strengths and weaknesses, and guide them to complete the tasks.

Practically, the Extensive Reading program carried out for sixteen meetings, including mid-term and final tests. Concerning the study, the first two weeks of the program were used to aid the students in evaluating their reading development. For the next eight weeks, the class meetings were facilitated the learners to share, discuss, and report what they had read. Besides, they did the activities both independently and in a group. For the rest of the meetings before the end of the semester, the student-generated comic project was given. Here, students worked in a group retelling the novel's story had been read in the form of a comic.

In creating the comic, students worked in a group consisting of five students for each one. They were allowed to choose the novels that they loved to read. Next, each group crafted a comic that represented the summary of the novel's story they had studied together with their peers. Here, implementing a supplementary method in Extensive Reading class by inquiring students to create their comics after examining a particular topic directs learners to have better mastery. In line with this, Evensen (2014) states that generating comic promotes students' creativity since comic provides an economy of information from the complex data, and it makes students more clearly and quickly understand a particular material. Besides, Leber-Cook & Cook (2013) suggest that integrating an adult ESL curriculum with educational comics can facilitate the learners' capabilities and ideas concerned in a large variety of literacy.

For assessing the student-generated comic, it based on the criteria developed by Issa (2017). The requirements are as follows:

1. *Content*. The comic should talk about the story's elements of the novel they have read, such as: plot, characters, setting, conflict, rising action, climax, resolution, and symbols.
2. *Design and layout*. The illustrations crafted should appropriate to the comic's theme and be straightforward to track the passage and illustration.
3. *Coherence and logical enlargement*. The comic should have a rational unit. Besides, the texts, pictures, the series of sections, the whole drawing, and the connection from one element to the others should give the general narrative theme.
4. *Grammar and spelling*. It is crucial to pay attention to grammar and spelling rules to make the readers unproblematic when reading the comic.
5. *Creativity*. Although it can be a rigid process, however, students should try to keep the originality of their comic. It also demands greater time and attempts in drafting for completing the whole quality of each part. By working in a group, it is expected that this obstacle will not appear.

This study is conducted to investigate the implementation of a collaborative project in an extensive reading class. Here, the product of the students' project was a student-generated comic. There are abundant studies investigate about the using of comics in classrooms as multimodal literacy (Calisto, et al., 2018; Merc, 2013; Yunus et al., 2012) to support the learners' cognitive and affective in learning English. Nonetheless, there has been little effort to examine regarding EFL learners to write their comics to reach their educational purposes. Specifically, the paper discusses the students' perception of the implementation of student-generated comic as a collaborative project in the Extensive Reading program.

METHODS

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The participants of the study were 30 students of the English Education Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, who joined the Extensive Reading program. The students consisted of 6 males and 24 females whose ages ranging from 19 to 20 years old.

This present study employed a quantitative research method. Therefore, to meet the objective of the study, the questionnaire was given to the participants at the end of the Extensive Reading program. Here, the survey was utilized to discover the students' perception toward the accomplishment of student-generated comic as a collaborative project in the Extensive Reading class they had followed. Further, the questionnaire included 12 items, and it was created and distributed through Google Forms™. The elements of the survey covered two aspects: students' preferences and problems in creating a student-generated comic. Specifically, the students' preferences consisted of three points: (1) enjoyment and motivation, (2) creativity, and (3) language proficiency. Besides, the survey was in the form of Likert scale questions that involve the participants to evaluate their level of

agreement or disagreement with several statements by selecting 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-uncertain, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree.

The study was conducted for five weeks. Participants were grouped according to their reading achievement to help struggling readers complete the project promoted by Grabe (2009). Each group consists of five students. Here, the class was taught by the researcher. For the first week, each group of learners was required to read a novel that they had chosen. The members of the groups discussed the elements of the novel: plot, characters, setting, conflict, rising action, climax, resolution, and symbols. Next, they started to simplify the story of the novel into the summary. For the rest of the week, students were writing their comics in 15-20 pages based on the novel's story in the medium of A5 paper size. The following are the sample of student-generated comic.



Figure 1: Parts of student-generated comic

After completing writing their comic, students were invited to fill the questionnaire. The students' responses then analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were in the form of graphic representation.

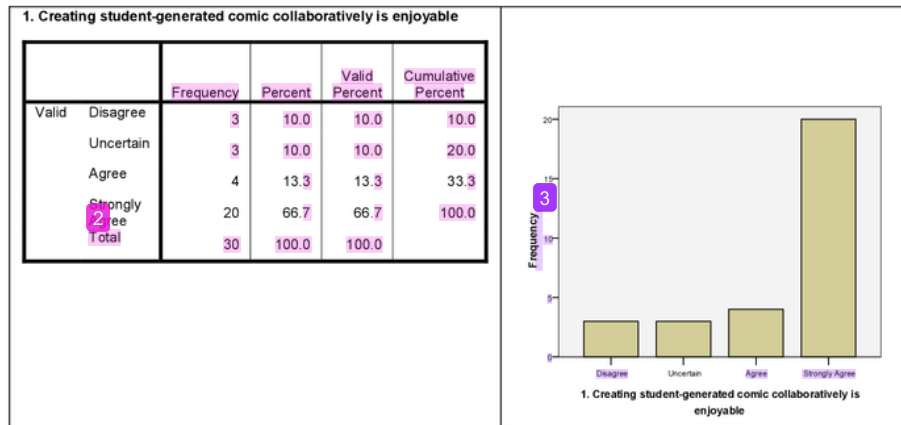
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' preferences towards student-generated comic collaboratively in Extensive Reading Program

In the students' preference questionnaire items, the respondents were asked about their responses covering students' enjoyment and motivation. The following are the data obtained from the survey.

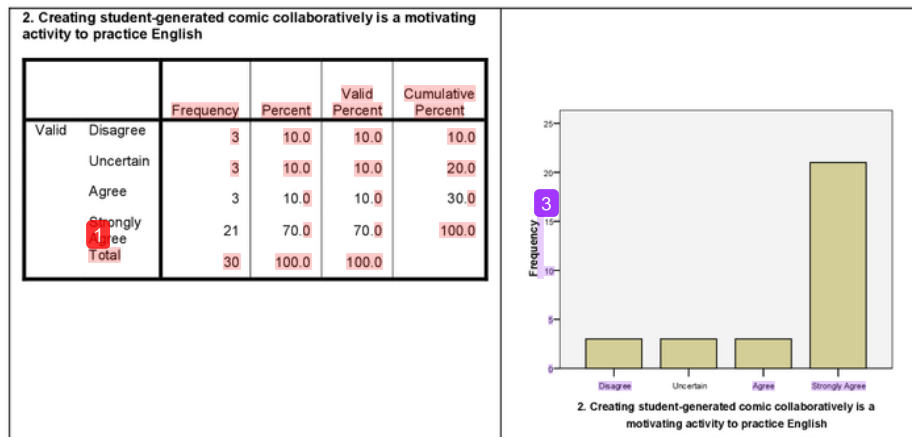
1. Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' sense of enjoyment and motivation

Table 1 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively is enjoyable.



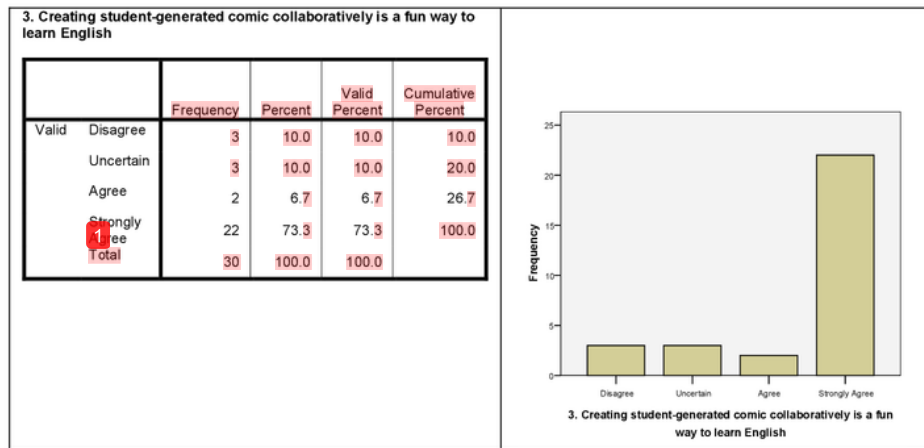
As shown in Table 1, there were 80% of participants agreed that creating student-generated comic collaboratively is enjoyable. Meanwhile, there were 10% of participants chose disagree with this statement. Besides, the rest of the participants were uncertain or the item.

Table 2 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively is a motivating activity to practice English.



Similarly to the previous table, Table 2 shows that the majority of the participants (80%) agreed that creating student-generated comic collaboratively is a motivating activity to practice English. Besides, there were 10% of the participants stated disagree, and the other ones mentioned uncertain for responding to the statement.

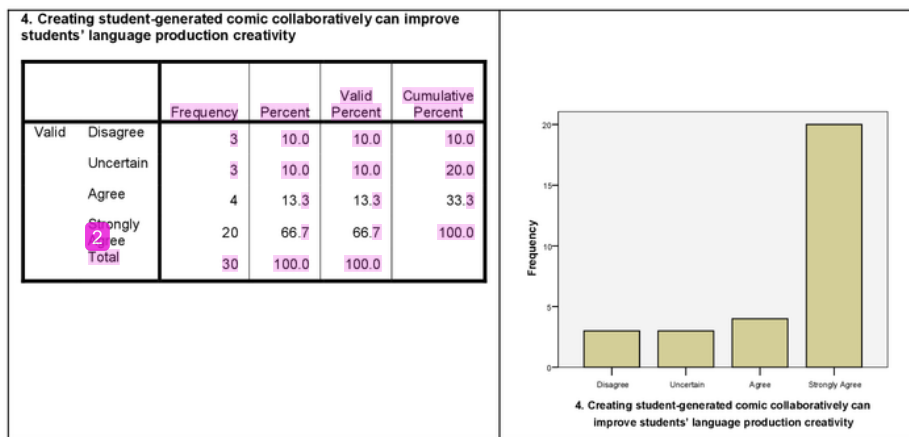
Table 3 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively is a fun way to learn English.



As can be seen from Table 3, most of the participants (80%) chose agree that creating student-generated comic collaboratively is a fun way to learn English. For the alternatives of *disagree* and *uncertain*, each of them reached 10% of the participants selecting the options.

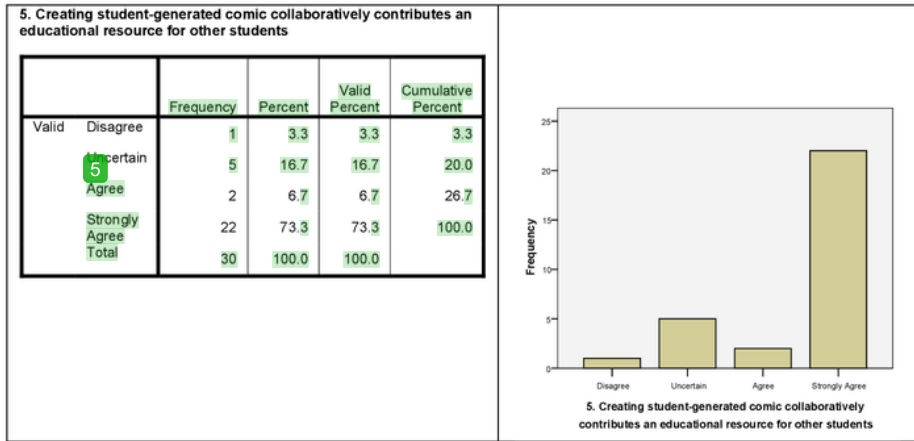
2. Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' creativity

Table 4 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively directs me to be more creative in my language production.



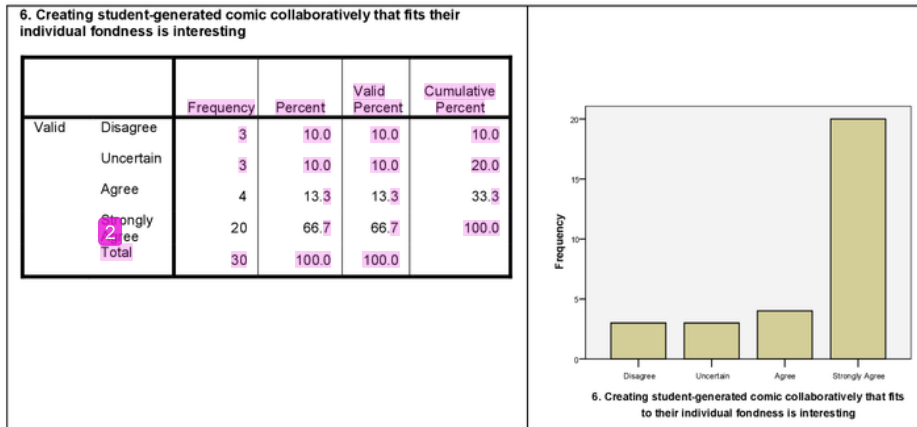
As illustrated in Table 4, there were 66.7% of the participants stated strongly agree that creating student-generated comic collaboratively can improve students' language production creativity. Additionally, there were 13.3% of the participants chose agree for the statement. Finally, for the options of *disagree* and *uncertain*, every alternative achieved 10%.

Table 5 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively as an educational resource for other students



As depicted in Table 5, most of the participants (80%) selected agree for the item creating student-generated comic collaboratively contributes an educational resource for other students. While there was only 3.3% of the participants chose disagree, and 16.7% of participants opted uncertain.

Table 6 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively that fits their individual fondness



In the sixth questionnaire item, the respondents were asked about their fondness of creating a student-generated comic. As shown in Table 6, there were 66.7% of the participants stated strongly agree that writing comic was interesting if it fitted with their keenness. Moreover, 13.3% of the participants said agree. However, for the options of *disagree* and *uncertain*, each alternative gained the same result (10%).

3. Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' language proficiency

Table 7 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' English fluency

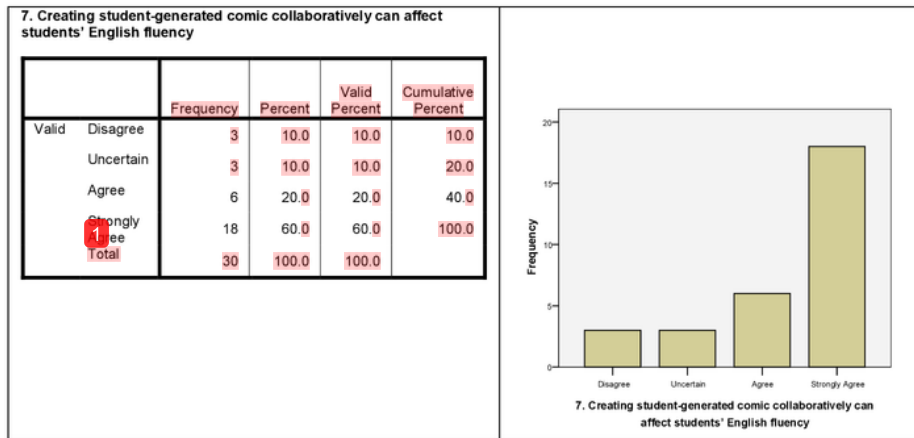
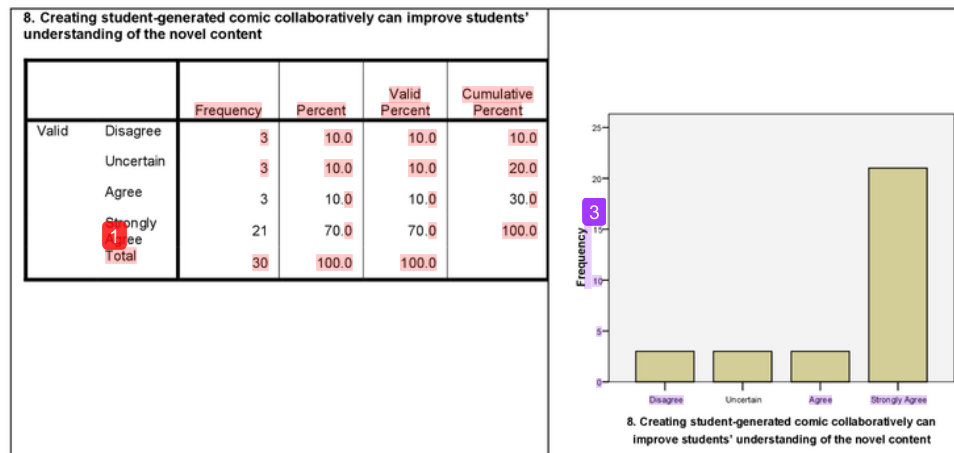


Table 7 illustrates that there were 60% of the participants responded strongly agree for the statement, “Creating student-generated comic collaboratively can affect students' English fluency.” Also, about 20% of the participants agreed with the item stated in the questionnaire. On the other hand, there were 10% of the participants claimed disagree. Then, the rest of the respondents said uncertain.

Table 8 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' understanding of the novel content



As described in Table 8, interestingly, there were 70% of the respondents chose strongly agree to respond to the statement, “Creating student-generated comic collaboratively can improve students' understanding of the novel content.” Besides, 10% of the respondents selected agree, 10% of them pointed uncertain, and the rest of the respondents stated disagree.

Table 9 Creating student-generated comic collaboratively and students' writing skill

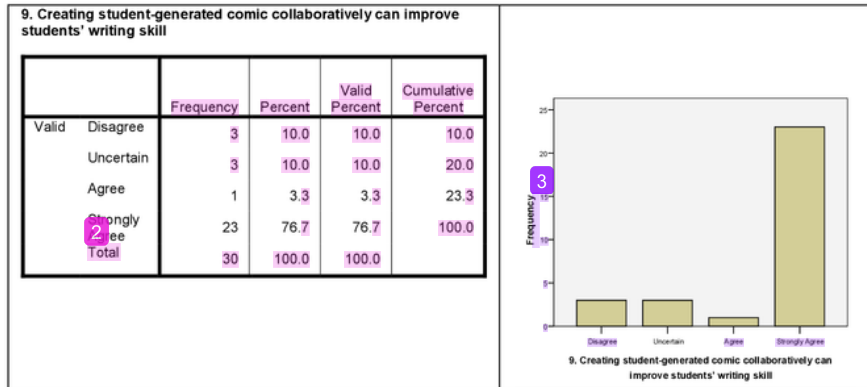
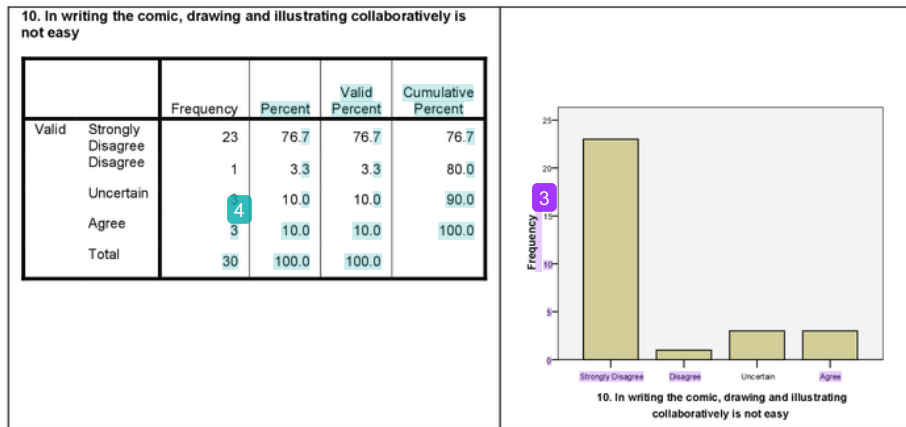


Table 9 shows that there were 80% of the participants stated agree for the item “Creating student-generated comic collaboratively can improve students' writing skill.” Moreover, 10% of the participants selected disagree, and the other ones opted disagree.

Students' problems in creating student-generated comic collaboratively in Extensive Reading Program

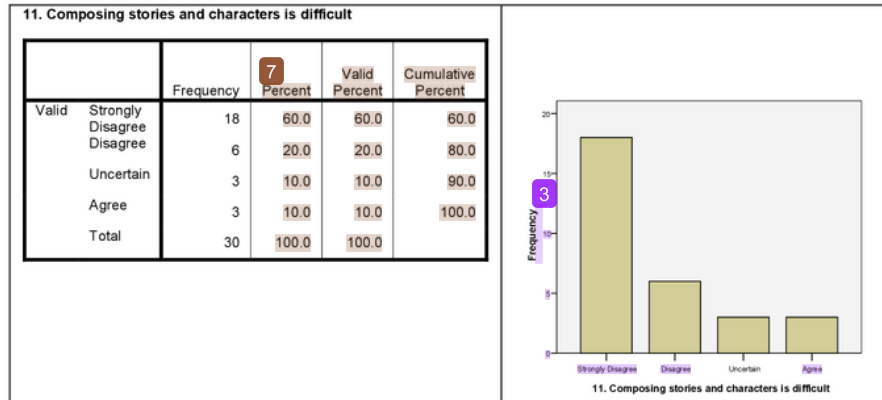
The following tables are the shreds of evidence of the students' problems that may come when they write their comics. There are three items of this part: “In writing the comic, drawing and illustrating collaboratively is not easy”; “Composing stories and characters are difficult”; and “Revealing the novel's aspects into a comic is complicated.”

Table 10 In writing the comic, drawing and illustrating collaboratively is not easy.



As portrayed in Table 10, mostly of the participants stated disagree for the statement, “In writing the comic, drawing and illustrating collaboratively is not easy (80%). Meanwhile, 10% of the participants chose agree, and the rest of them pointed uncertain.

Table 11 Composing stories and characters are difficult.



As presented in Table 11, there were 60% of the participants’ responses strongly disagree with the item, “Composing stories and characters is difficult.” Further, 20% of the participants answered disagree. Furthermore, 10% of the participants selected disagree, and the other ones opted disagree. Moreover, 10% of the participants selected disagree; the other ones opted disagree.

Table 12 Revealing the novel’s aspects into a comic is complicated.

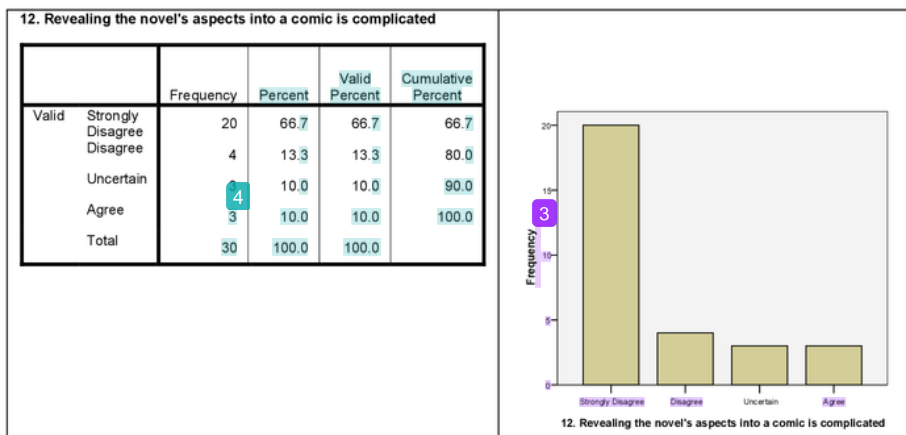


Table 12 depicts the participants’ answers to the statement, “Revealing the novel’s aspects into a comic is complicated.” 66.7% of the participants responded strongly disagree and 13.3% of them stated disagree. Meanwhile, 10 % of the respondents chose uncertain, and the rest selected agree.

CONCLUSION

The study determines the students’ perception of the accomplishment of the Extensive Reading program using student-generated comic as a collaborative project. It consists of the students’ preferences and problems in writing their comics. Regarding the students’ preferences, there are three aspects can be measured in the study. They are enjoyment and motivation, creativity, and language proficiency. Here, the students’ enjoyment and motivation are assessed through three items. From the findings, it can be concluded that creating a student-generated comic is enjoyable, and it is a motivating activity for the students to practice English. Moreover, writing a student-generated comic is a fun way for the students to learn English.

Additionally, the students' creativity in writing their comic also evaluated in three ways. First, students believe that student-generated comics can improve students' language production creativity. Further, bringing student-generated comics into Extensive Reading activity can contribute an educational resource for other students. Also, creating students' comic collaboratively that fits their fondness is interesting for the learners.

Meanwhile, there are three items for appraising the students' perception concerning the improvement of students' language proficiency as a result of writing their comic as the representation of the novel they have read. From the results of the study, it can be summarized that students consider that generating the comic collaboratively can affect their English fluency, understand the novel's content quickly, and improve their writing skill.

Besides reviewing the students' preference, the study also examines the students' difficulty in crafting student-generated comic. Surprisingly, most of the participants respond negatively to the three items given. Here, the students do not think that drawing and illustrating the comic is difficult. Additionally, composing stories and characters is effortless for the students, and revealing the novel's aspects into a comic is not a complicated thing for students.

All in all, the study supports recent research done by Leber-Cook & Cook (2013) and Evensen (2014). They state that combining the curriculum of adult ESL with educational comics can promote the students' skills and concepts involved in a broad range of literacy. Besides, it enables the students to be more creative and promptly comprehend a particular material they learn. However, the study also has a limitation. The number of participants might not be passable to be the reference of similar research. Future research could engage more samples to find out the students' perception of integrating student-generated comic and EFL curriculum in university.

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