ABSTRACT

This paper purposes to present, through practical examples, how Mobile Comics can be used as an alternative media to enhance young children’s literature sense. It examines thoroughly why Mobile Comics can be considered as precious and essential pedagogical instruments. In particular, it will discuss how Mobile Comics can assist teachers to enhance young learner’s literature sense. It is undeniable that the tremendous use of gadget supplies vast learning materials in the scholarly world. As Mobile Phone is the most utilized gadget in our community, Mobile Phone develops its many and sophisticated applications including mobile comics. Mobile Comics provide visual movement, sound and imagery characters which lead its user to so much pleasure when deal with it. Mobile Comics can be regarded as a strong motivator, simply because young learners delight pictures with colorful and wonderful characters. This feature can be maximized to sharpen young learner literature’s sense by arousing their literature curiosity through accommodating them to have enjoyable and meaningful experience. In this context, the story of the comics should cover those which belong to fairy tales, myth, fables, or legends. Having unique characteristics, young learners need special treatments and touch to get the idea of literature. Enjoyable and meaningful experience possibly covers activities which reflect children’s world such as games, singing, coloring, or art performing.

KEYWORDS: Mobile Comics, Mobile Learning, Young Learners, Literature Sense

MOBILE COMICS IN THE CONTEXT OF MOBILE LEARNING

Mobile comic is a sophisticated feature in smart gadgets from example smart phones, blackberry, or tablets. It is a digital comic which can be bought, downloaded, read via smart phones or other smart gadgets. This application could be purchased in android market, blackberry world, or iOS application. Mobile comics initially were introduced by Devil's Due Publishing or Devil's Due's at around 2008. Then mobile comics have been increasing in the last few years with the current available technology, thousands of digital content have been created to fit the small screen size (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_comic).

It is undeniable that educational institutions today extensively use Internet-based technologies and search ways to integrate the use of variety of mobile technologies to enhance the efficacy of language learning. As teacher, it is needed to use the innovative technologies since they provide excitement and opportunities of effective use. In similar way to e-learning, mobile learning utilizes innovative wireless technologies which help to make study activities both more accessible and more portable (Hulme, 2007).

The booming of smart gadgets used in nowadays era, may direct English teacher to take this opportunity to create exciting and meaningful learning activities through smart gadgets for example smart phones or tablets. These kind of method than is called mobile learning. Mobile learning has been defined as a certain type of a learning model which allows students to get and use learning materials through the portable devices anywhere and anytime (Dang, 2013). These handheld, portable and wireless devices include tablets, mobile phones, laptops, and etcetera.

Kukulska-Hulme&Traxlerin Madiope (2013) noted that mobile language learning possess seven desirable characteristics namely spontaneous, personal, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous and pervasive. Due those characteristics, mobile learning is an appropriate tool to deal with language learning activities. Moreover, mobile learning allows access to educational activities and materials at any time, incorporates the qualities of different media to make the experience of every learner personal by affective means and it also responsive to the factors of time, location, and learners’ present activity.

THE NEED TO ENHANCE YOUNG LEARNER’S LITERATURE’S SENSE

Children encounter various genres and forms of children’s literature from the time of their early childhood. Fairy tales, stories, nursery rhymes, songs and games form an important part of children’s lives. Before children begin school, they are familiar with many folk and fairy tales as well as with some of the English modern fiction translations, such as Winnie the Pooh etc. Either through books or television, they know characters like “Little Red Riding Hood”, “Snow White”, “Cinderella and many others”.

To reinforce that it is needed some efforts to increase young learner’s interest on literature. Thus, this paper will try to point out in what way that mobile comics will play important role in introducing literature to young learner. Indeed, comics as pictorial stories will give a unique touch to young children. It is well noted that pictorial short-stories such as comics have a potential to positively influence the personal and emotional
development of learners, to develop imagination and fantasy, improve reading and motivation to learn, raise interest, socialize, and explain some aspects of the culture and society of the target language nation.

In order to be loved by children, literature should be performed in such interesting way at a very early stage. Comics can be regarded as a strong motivator, simply because children like pictures on it with colorful and wonderful characters. In this digitalized era, the use of smartphones and tablets is a tremendous phenomenon which effect all aspects in life. As Mobile Phone is the most utilized gadget in our community, mobile phone develops its many and sophisticated applications including mobile comics. Through its sophisticated application, mobile comics offer fantastic experience in reading comics on small screen size with additional movement, sound and also different methods of display and interactivity. It has been noted that since the introduction of mobile comics in 2004, mobile comics have been evolving rapidly as a media to read comics other than web comics and paper comic books (Wandani, Wee and Moses, 2011).

It is usual to see a young child nowadays has already familiar with smart gadgets. At very young age, they are introduced to deal with the gadgets for examples mobile phones or even tablets. Moreover, many parents let their young children to have those gadgets as toys and play with them as their convenience. This occurrence should be enabled to enrich learning activity for young learners. In this context, the story of the comics should cover those which belong to fairy tales, myth, fables, or legends. The following discussions will present the good side of comics to be an alternative material in introducing literature to young children.

The Good Strength of Comics

Since mobile comics are displayed as visual and digital media, it assists to increase motivation of young learners. The visual of comic also contributes to improving communicative competence. Hence, comics include gestures, and the body language of the characters. These supply the development of communicative competence, which includes nonverbal communication. Thus, comics also cover life-like situation and expression which enrich the children’s capability communicative. Comic presents story through expression, concept, picture, accompanied by visual image in one mind, then the young learner will memorize and recall the story more easily.

Versaci claims (2001) that comic is an expansion upon the students’ understanding of the forms and voices of literature. This implies that comics open up a vital avenue of understanding concerning what literature is. The expansion of the understanding may covers the forms and voices of literature. Moreover Versaci (2001) explains comics are not typically perceived as ‘literary,’ but they encourage us to step back and ask larger, important questions about canon formation that sharpens critical thinking skills. It means that the feedback when the learners given comic activities would be critical thinking responds and comic will trigger their curiosity in literature.

Versaci proved that though comics in the class, student gave much more feedback in ‘traditional’ literary work--Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities or Alice Walker's The Color Purple. It showed that the feedbacks display meaningful participation and forthcoming ideas and opinion. From Versaci’s research, it is gained that comics is relevant media for the learners to engage literature’s sphere. In short, comics demonstrate literary presumption and convey the merits of literature.

In addition, based on Saleh’s research, he said that comics are just as sophisticated as other forms of literature (2012). Comics provide tailored visual story which portrays the value of literature through multisensory engagements. It involves sound, animation, or video which draw their interest more when they deal with literature. Thus, young learners will always want to know more by watching the next scene. It shows that comics just simply an alternative media to enhance young learner’s interest in literature due to its sophisticated media and visualization.

Practical Activities

As stated in previous paragraph, the term of young learner in this paper goes to the students whose age is under six years old. Having unique characteristics, young learners need special treatments and touch to get the idea of literature.

The first activity which can be done is asking them to color the picture which displayed the mobile comics. The visual object in the mobile comics should be printed out and let the young learner engaged more tightly with the objects then finally feel the joy of coloring of the objects. The Mobile comics as it is stated in last discussion, they should be about fairy tales or folktales. In this paper, the writer has chosen some fairy tales to be some of the alternative subject taken. Before they are coloring the print out papers, teacher should glimpse first about the papers.

Next, the learners can be instructed to put the part of the mobile comics in order. The learners are given with some part of the comics, and their job is arranging the papers into a story. Since the learners are under six years old, the part of paper should not in many part, they should consist not more than five parts.

Other activity that can be given to young learners is asking them to mention the things in comics. This activity can be done in variety exercises. It might be in groups or individuals. In groups, the teacher divides the
class into some groups, then she/he asks the students to mention the things in the comics based on criteria which the teacher requests. The criteria/s can be changed as many as possible based on variety subjects displayed in mobile comics. Besides, the teacher could ask the students to imitate or make a sound to the things that they mention. For example, if the criteria is animals and they mention a bird, the teacher can ask them, “what the birds usually do”! Then, the students should imitate how the birds usually do (flying): the students should move their both hands, waving the palm, as were they are moving wings. Drawing the same subject as portrayed in the comics is also can be done in class. Comics, indeed presents many pictures and some pictorial actions. These characters can be used to be the object. The teacher asks the students to draw objects which they can find in mobile comics, they can imitate or make their own creation. By doing activity, it is hoped that the learners are more engaged to the comics itself and they know what literature is and eventually they will fond of literature and enjoy it very much. Lastly, to introduce literature to young children using mobile comics could be done through singing. First, the teacher shows mobile comic that the class uses, then the teacher explains at glance what the comic is about. After knowing the main story of the comic, the teacher asks the students sing a song together. The song could be any kind of song.

Conclusions

As this article demonstrate, the ideas that come out of mobile comic can be very helpful in introducing literature to young learners. Those activities are not far away from young learner’s world, such as coloring, picking out the right pictures, singing, mentioning the object in the comics and getting the right pictures. Such activities provide meaningful and enjoyable exercises and they encourage young learners to engage more to the wonders of literature through mobile comics. Mobile comics also develop students’ intelligence by stimulating their imagination and creativity. Moreover, mobile comics facilitate learner’s understanding of the meaning of literature and feel and involve in it.

References


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