

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examined the existing research on the use of online comics in educational settings, especially its impact on motivation and engagement in extensive reading for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The insight from this analysis will enrich the research questions guiding the study, especially in assessing whether online comics help to or slow down students' willingness to read in an academic context.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Online Comic in Reading Motivation

Online comics refer to comic strips or series of comic panels that are primarily published and distributed through the internet. These comics are available in various genres, styles, and themes, and they can be accessed through websites, social media platforms, or dedicated webcomic platforms such as Webtoon, KakaoWebtoon, MangaToon, and Wattpad. The development of mobile reading platforms has also enhanced the experience of reading digital comics, as they combine visual richness with interactive reading tools that support digital consumption (Rigaud et al., 2017).

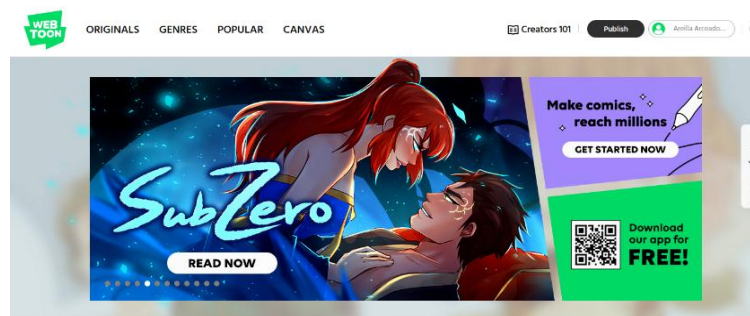


Figure 1 The Front Page of Webtoon

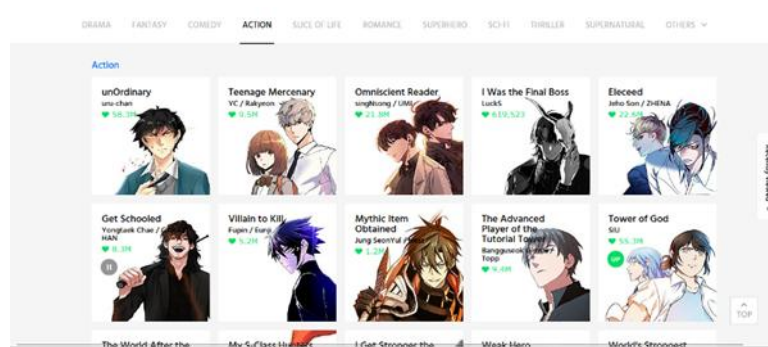


Figure 2 Multiple Genres of Comics in Webtoon

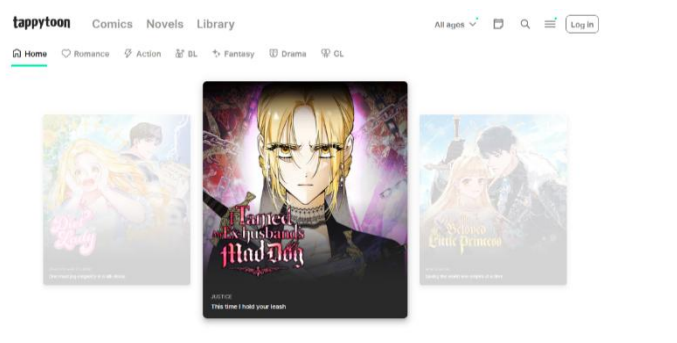


Figure 3 The Front Page of Tappytoon

Figure 1 presents the front page interface of Webtoon, which illustrates how online comic platforms organize and present comic content to readers. The platform provides easy navigation and allows readers to explore a wide range of comic titles through a visually appealing layout. This accessibility enables readers to quickly find comics that match their interests. While Figure 2 illustrates the variety of genres available on Webtoon, highlighting how online comic platforms provide readers with diverse reading options. Such variety supports the principle of extensive reading, which emphasizes learner autonomy and the ability to select texts based on personal interest. Similarly, Figure 3 presents the front page of another online comic platform, Tappytoon. This platform also organizes its comics using categorized displays and visual previews. Such features highlight how digital

comic platforms emphasize user-friendly interfaces and visual attraction to encourage readers to explore different stories.

Comics themselves are primarily composed of sequential images that may include text to convey a narrative or storyline (Hoffman, 2018). They represent a form of multimodal text that integrates words and images to deliver meaning. This combination of visual and textual elements provides a rich learning medium that can support students' motivation and creative learning processes (Chirkova et al., 2019; Gilakjani et al., 2011).



Figure 4 Expression of Action in Comics

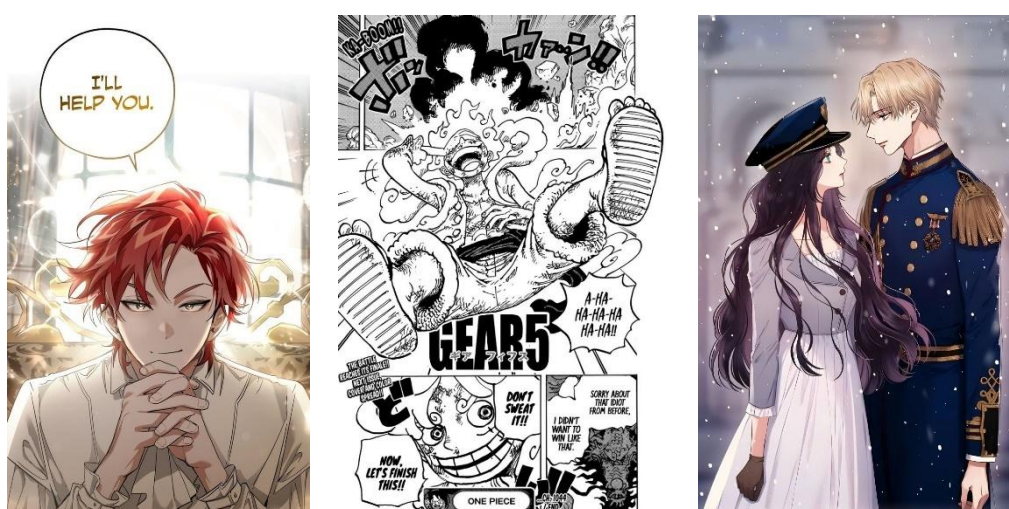


Figure 5 Different Genres and Styles in Comics

In Figure 4, online comics illustrate how actions and emotions are visually expressed in comics through character gestures, facial expressions, and panel arrangements. These visual cues help readers understand the storyline even when the textual content is limited. As a result, readers can infer meaning from both the images and the dialogue presented in the comic panels. Meanwhile, Figure 5 demonstrates the diversity of artistic styles and genres that can be found in comics. Different drawing styles and storytelling approaches contribute to the appeal of comics and allow readers to experience a wide variety of narratives and visual interpretations.

Numerous studies highlight the role of comics as effective learning materials in enhancing students' motivation and improving vocabulary acquisition. Asmara (2021) argue that comics could help students understand the text effectively and cope with the students' difficulties in their reading comprehension through a sequence of pictures and could help in students' vocabulary acquisition through the bubble text, action, and expression text. Comics are full of interesting pictures and panels so that the students would not be bored when they read them, rather the students find it enjoyable and an interesting activity more than reading traditional textbooks (Juliana, 2022; Maharani, 2021; Suryani et al., 2023).

The use of online comics as reading materials in EFL contexts is pedagogically grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which advocates for authentic, meaningful, and engaging materials that situate language learning within real communicative contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Online comics have been widely explored as reading materials in EFL contexts due to their multimodal nature, combining visual and textual elements that support comprehension and engagement, which are the characteristics that align with CLT's emphasis on authentic input and meaningful language exposure. Consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), which proposed that language acquisition is facilitated by comprehensible input encountered in low-anxiety, enjoyable contexts, online comics provide a visually supported, self-selected reading environment that lowers affective barriers while sustaining engagement.

The presence of images, character expressions, and contextual visual cues assists readers in interpreting meaning and understanding the storyline more easily. This multimodal support allows learners to stay engaged with the reading material and lowers the anxiety often associated with reading in a foreign language. Furthermore, the digital format of online comics enables easy access and offers a wide range of genres that readers can freely choose according to their interests. According to extensive reading principles, allowing learners to select reading materials based on their preferences can significantly increase their willingness to read and sustain their motivation to engage in reading activities.

In today's digital era, students frequently use devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, which makes online comics easily accessible. The combination of visual illustrations, engaging artwork, and concise dialogue can capture students' attention and sustain their interest in reading. Furthermore, the availability of multiple genres allows students to choose comics that align with their personal preferences. Thus, reading comics may become an enjoyable activity for EFL students while also supporting their comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall reading motivation.

2.1.2 Extensive Reading

Traditionally, Extensive Reading (ER) has been conceptualized as a meaning-focused approach in which students read a large amount of relatively easy texts for pleasure and general understanding. Extensive reading can be defined as the independent reading of a large quantity of reading material for information or pleasure, and the primary aim of extensive reading is to get students to read and like it (Day et al., 1998). While this definition highlights quantity and pleasure, more recent scholarship views ER as more than simply reading a large number of texts. It is now considered a long-term literacy development approach that depends on learner autonomy, access to suitable materials, and sustained motivation.

In second language contexts, ER is valued because it provides learners with rich and repeated exposure to comprehensible input. Students who read a lot of texts can gain a deeper comprehension of the material, which can increase their interest

and enjoyment of the reading process. Teachers may assign extensive reading to their students, allowing them to select texts that pique their interest in reading (Fatimah et al., 2022). By allowing students to choose texts according to their own interests and proficiency level, extensive reading promotes reading with comprehensible text for enjoyment, and vocabulary acquisition (Robbani & Khoirutunnisa, 2021; Suzzanna, 2021). However, these benefits are not automatic. The success of ER depends on whether students read consistently, select materials appropriate to their proficiency level, and experience reading as an enjoyable activity rather than as a heavy academic task.

In university settings, ER is often implemented as a specific course designed to build long-term reading habits. Such courses typically allow students to choose reading materials, set reading targets, and reflect on their reading experiences. Although assessment may be included, excessive testing can reduce intrinsic motivation and shift the focus from enjoyment to performance. Recent research showed that ER has measurable benefits for second and foreign language learners. A meta-analysis showed that ER produced statistically significant gains in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and overall language proficiency (Sangers et al., 2025). This suggests that how the Extensive Reading course is structured is crucial to achieving its intended outcomes.

2.1.3 Students' Perception

Student perception has a big impact on increasing reading motivation. It has to do with one's perception, beliefs, and state of mind when it comes to reading (Indrayadi, 2021). In the context of reading, perception involves interpreting and understanding written text, which is a complex cognitive process that involves multiple mental processes, including attention, memory, and comprehension.

In this study, students' perception toward reading online comics is examined through three components of perception, namely cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions as proposed by Baron and Byrne (1991) and Eagly and Chaiken (1993). The cognitive component relates to students' knowledge, understanding, and evaluation of online comics as reading materials in the Extensive Reading

course, including how they perceive the accessibility and usefulness of online comics for supporting reading activities. The affective component refers to students' emotional responses toward reading online comics, such as their level of interest, enjoyment, and engagement while interacting with this digital reading material. Meanwhile, the conative component concerns students' behavioral tendencies or intentions toward reading online comics, including their willingness to read, their reading habits, and the amount of time they spend engaging with the material. These three components provide a conceptual framework for analyzing students' perceptions and serve as the theoretical basis for constructing the interview indicators used in this research.

2.1.4 Reading Motivation

Reading is a cognitive activity that involves interpreting written symbols in order to construct meaning from a text. Through this process, readers gather information, interpret ideas, and develop understanding based on the linguistic and structural elements presented in the text (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Wixson et al., 1987). As an essential language skill, reading plays a significant role in the development of learners' language competence because it enables them to access information and interact with written discourse. In language learning contexts, reading engagement is strongly influenced by the learner's willingness to participate in reading activities (Ma & Zhao, 2025).

One important factor that influences students' engagement with reading materials is reading motivation. Reading motivation refers to the internal reasons that encourage individuals to read and interact with texts in order to gain knowledge, enjoyment, or personal satisfaction (Guthrie et al., 2012). In educational psychology, reading motivation is generally categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to an individual's internal desire to read because the activity itself is enjoyable or interesting. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to reading behavior that is driven by external factors such as academic tasks, rewards, or evaluation.

In learning contexts, both forms of motivation can influence students' reading behavior in different ways. Extrinsic motivation may initially encourage students to participate in reading activities through structured assignments or classroom requirements. However, intrinsic motivation is often associated with more sustained engagement, as students read voluntarily due to their personal interest in the material. Therefore, creating learning environments that encourage students to develop intrinsic motivation becomes an important goal in reading instruction.

In the context of extensive reading, students are often encouraged to select reading materials based on their personal interests. This approach suggests that engaging and enjoyable texts may help transform reading from a required academic activity into a voluntary habit. Therefore, understanding students' reading motivation becomes important when examining how different types of reading materials, such as online comics, influence students' willingness to read and continue reading beyond classroom requirements.

2.1.4.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic reading motivation refers to an individual's willingness to engage in reading because the activity itself is enjoyable or personally meaningful. Research consistently shows that students with higher intrinsic motivation tend to demonstrate stronger reading engagement and better reading outcomes (Wang et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2018). Intrinsically motivated readers often experience deeper concentration and sustained interest while reading, which can expand their perspectives and comprehension of texts (van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2023). This form of motivation arises from personal curiosity or interest in the topic, leading readers to perceive reading as satisfying and rewarding (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006).

Intrinsic motivation is frequently associated with autotelic activities, in which the activity itself provides the reward rather than external rewards (Graham et al., 2020). When reading becomes an autotelic activity, individuals may become fully immersed in the experience and read primarily for enjoyment or personal satisfaction. Because of this, intrinsic motivation is often considered a key factor in sustaining long-term reading habits. In the context of extensive reading, providing

engaging and appealing reading materials is then important, as students' personal interest in the texts may encourage them to read voluntarily and maintain their reading engagement.

2.1.4.2 Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic reading motivation refers to reading behavior that is driven by external factors such as rewards, recognition, or academic requirements. In educational contexts, students often engage in reading activities because they are required to complete assignments, achieve academic success, or meet expectations set by teachers and institutions (Diseth et al., 2020; Suárez-Fernández & Boto-García, 2019). Such external influences can initially encourage students to participate in reading activities, especially when intrinsic interest in reading has not yet developed.

Although intrinsic motivation is often linked to deeper engagement with reading, extrinsic motivation also plays an important role in educational settings. External expectations from teachers, parents, or institutions may encourage students to practice reading regularly and develop their reading skills over time (Kanonire et al., 2022). In many cases, extrinsic motivation serves as an initial stimulus that introduces students to reading activities before intrinsic interest develops. Therefore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations contribute to students' reading engagement, especially in structured learning environments such as extensive reading courses.

2.1.5 Enhancing Reading Motivation Through Extensive Reading

Extensive reading refers to the practice of reading large amounts of material, often for pleasure and general understanding. It is a crucial aspect of language learning and has been connected to improvements in various aspects of language proficiency, including vocabulary, grammar, and reading skills. Extensive reading is a language-learning approach that involves reading a large amount of material for pleasure and general understanding. Additionally, it allows students to pick what they want to read and focus on topics and genres that interest them, which could increase their motivation and engagement in the reading process.

Extensive reading can foster intrinsic reading motivation by providing interesting and enjoyable reading materials (Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023). The extensive reading activity provides students with the opportunity to enjoy reading and engage in a variety of topics, which could help students develop a habit of reading regularly and lead to increased reading motivation and proficiency over time (Antúnez, 2019; Garvey, 2018; Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023). Extensive reading, particularly with engaging materials like comics, fosters an interest in reading. When students enjoy what they read, they are more likely to continue reading independently, leading to a self-sustained reading habit that extends beyond the classroom.

2.2 Study of the Relevant Research

Many researchers find that the use of comics strips and online comics enhances students' reading motivation. A previous study conducted by Nafisah and Pratama (2020) investigated how comic strips can improve students' motivation and reading comprehension through the Classroom Action Research (CAR) and post-intervention assessment, which includes reading tests and questionnaires, in a Senior High School. The result of this study shows that the majority of the students got high motivation to read after using comic strips. This study provides evidence that comics strips could help students increase their reading motivation and comprehension; thus, it supports the current study's premise that comics, including online comics, are valuable tools for reading motivation. However, this study used a single-cycle implementation, which the data may not be sufficient to find out long-term effects or fully address all students' learning challenges.

The second study conducted by Robbani and Khoirutunnisa (2021) investigated the perception of English Education Department students, solely focusing on students' perceptions of online English comics as learning tools based on students' experiences. The findings revealed that reading online English comics can enhance vocabulary development, reading fluency, reading comprehension, critical thinking, creativity, and reading motivation among English Language Education Department students. This study widens the scope of the current study

by showing the multifaceted benefits of online comics beyond just motivation. However, this study solely focuses on the benefits of using online English comics as learning tools and does not explore potential challenges or difficulties students face when using online comics, such as internet access issues.

The third study conducted by Fatimah et al. (2022), focused on the implementation of diverse reading materials and digital activities such as short stories, comics, biographies, and descriptive texts to enhance students' reading motivation and engagement, especially in an online learning environment. Through the use of interactive platforms as mediators, such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and video presentations, the study shows that students' perceptions are generally positive, and many students found the activity to be motivating and enjoyable, especially when it involved choices and other interactive elements. This study shows that using diverse reading materials, including comics, combined with interactive digital platforms, can enhance students' motivation and engagement, especially in online learning environments. The reliance of this study solely on questionnaires as the data collection method limits the depth of understanding regarding students' actual experiences and perceptions, which further suggests that future research should include additional techniques, such as interviews or observations, for richer data.

The previous studies reveal certain limitations, such as single-cycle implementation Nafisah and Pratama (2020), lack of exploration of students' challenges Robbani and Khoirutunnisa (2021), and reliance on questionnaires alone Fatimah et al. (2022). Thus, the researcher tries to fill in the gaps by using online semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into students' perspectives and experiences. Collectively, these studies provide a theoretical and empirical foundation that validates the use of comics and online comics as effective reading materials to enhance motivation. The current study builds on this foundation by focusing specifically on students' viewpoints and experiences in an extensive reading context.