

Developing Comic Strip Using Canva in Teaching Reading Recount Text

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Abstract

English language students frequently encounter challenges in comprehending recount text, and tend to lose interest when the reading material is presented without visual support. To address this issue, the study aims to develop a Comic Strip using Canva as a learning tool to teach eight-grade students how to read and comprehend recount text. The applied design was Research and Development (R&D) using ADDIE model. It involved 42 eight-grade students at SMP Budimulya as research subjects, along with two lecturers and one English teacher serving as expert validators. Instruments used to collect the data consisted of interview, observation, questionnaire and reflective journal. The results revealed that the comic strip was developed through five stages, from need analysis to evaluation. The developed product underwent a series of revisions made based on the observations from the small-scale trial. The product obtained an overall validation score of 87.15%, categorized as 'Very Feasible', while the student response questionnaire reached a score of 83.63%, falling within the 'Very Positive' category, with students showing particularly strong agreement that the visual illustration supported their comprehension of the recount text. These findings imply that comic strip developed with accessible design tools such as Canva can serve as a practical alternative learning media for supporting reading comprehension in EFL classroom contexts.

Keywords: Comic Strip; Teaching Reading; Recount Text

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a crucial skill for EFL students' academic achievement. Reading involves a range of cognitive processes, such as decoding written symbols, understanding meaning, and connecting newly acquired information with existing knowledge (Cahyani, 2023). This aligns with Kaygısız (2025) who notes that reading is complex cognitive process where readers actively engage with written text, and draw upon various sources of information to construct meaning and achieve comprehension. In addition, Rismawati and Somantri (2025) emphasize that through reading activities, students can gain knowledge and information while simultaneously enhancing their abilities to analyze, integrate, and critically assess the texts they read. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that reading is not a passive activity but an active, meaning-making process in which readers must integrate new information with prior knowledge to achieve genuine comprehension. Given its central role in learning, reading comprehension is deliberately positioned as a core competency within the junior high school English curriculum, as reflected in the following section.

Junior high school reading comprehension focuses on the English Curriculum's objectives. In this objective, students require to understand the meaning conveyed in interpersonal and transactional written text across different genres, including recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report text (Amaliya et al., 2023). Regarding one of these genres, Fahmi and Harahap (2025) define a recount text as a type of narrative that recounts past events in

chronological order. It contains three main components in its generic structure, namely orientation, events, and reorientation. It is characterized by several linguistic features, including the use of the simple past tense, action verbs, linking verbs, and chronological conjunctions (Hidayati, 2024). In line with this, Permanasari and Awalia (2023) emphasize that students must be able to comprehend a recount text to grasp the meaning and content of the text.

However, according to the preliminary study conducted at SMP Budimulya, many eighth-grade students struggled with reading comprehension of recount text and experienced boredom when reading long English texts presented without visual aids. Permanasari and Awalia (2023) found that students' reading abilities were relatively low, particularly in mechanical and comprehension aspects. Almost half of the students encountered difficulties in understanding reading texts and failed to comprehend the meaning and information presented in recount texts. Similarly, Amaliya et al. (2023) found that eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Anjungan experienced problems in comprehending and retaining information from recount texts. The students not only had difficulty understanding the content of the texts but also struggled to analyze the information presented. This indicates the need for more engaging media for teaching reading.

One of the media that has the potential to support the teaching of reading is the comic strip. Comic strips offer visual context that facilitates word recognition and meaning-making, particularly for students with limited vocabulary or literacy (Fahmi & Harahap, 2025). Sumual et al. (2025) state that comic strips are a useful tool for raising reading comprehension scores and stimulating students' curiosity, engagement, excitement, and enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, Hidayati et al. (2025) argue that using Canva as a graphic design tool provides numerous opportunities for the creation of innovative and easily accessible educational materials. Teachers and students may create captivating digital instructional comics with Canva's extensive collection of visual templates, icons, and interactive features.

Based on the study by Syahesti and Al-Hafizh (2026), the use of English comics significantly improved junior high school students' reading proficiency and motivation. Comic-based learning materials improved students' comprehension of narrative texts, especially in terms of identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and comprehending vocabulary in context. Fahmi and Harahap (2025) demonstrated that the implementation of comic strips provided positive impacts on students' learning by encouraging motivation, supporting vocabulary development, and improving their understanding of the structural elements of recount texts. Moreover, Rismawati and Somantri (2025) reported that the use of comic strips improved students' understanding of narrative texts since the mix of text and images made it easier for them to understand both surface-level information and implied meanings more effectively.

The studies above have focused on the use of comic strips as instructional tools within action research or experimental designs. Unfortunately, there are still few studies that particularly discuss the development of comic strips for reading instruction. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explain the process of developing comic strip using Canva for teaching reading recount text, evaluate its feasibility, and explore students' responses to its usage in the classroom. This study is expected to produce comic strip that English teachers can use as an alternative learning media for junior high school students in teaching reading of recount texts.

METHOD

The study used a Research and Development (R&D) methodology to develop comic strip, assess the feasibility of product for classroom use, and investigate the students' responses to the developed product. Afriani (2025) states that the approach of Research and Development (R&D) in education involves a series of systematic procedures, starting with needs analysis, followed by the design of initial concepts, prototype testing, and continuous evaluation and revision based on feedback obtained from the field. This study's development process adhered to the five-stage ADDIE instructional design model: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Branch & Varank, 2009).

This study was carried out at SMP Budimulya, involving 42 eighth-grade students, consisting of 24 female and 18 male students, as the research subjects. The participants were selected because they experienced difficulties in reading comprehension and had not previously been exposed to comic-based learning media in their English lessons. A small-scale trial was conducted with 21 students, following Sadiman (2014, as cited in Safitri, 2018) who suggested that small-scale trial involves a relatively small number of participants, approximately 20 students. After the product was revised, a large-scale trial was conducted with all 42 students. In addition, two lecturers and one junior high school English teacher served as expert validators to assess the feasibility of product.

Instruments used to collect the data consisted of interview, questionnaire, observation, and reflective journal. The data collection procedures were organized according to the five-stage ADDIE instructional design model.

Analysis stage

During the analysis stage, interview adapted from Puspita (2014) and Anida (2019) were conducted with one English teacher and three students representing high, medium, and low reading achievement to identify students' reading difficulties and preferences for learning media. In addition, need analysis questionnaire from Triandari (2015), Wahyudi and Fadhilah (2025) was administered to identify students' target need, learning needs, and preferred topic. The data obtained in this stage served as the basis for design the comic strip.

Design stage

According to the result of the need analysis, the learning objective, comic strip story line, instructional activities, visual, and layout were designed. A reflective journal was used to document the planning process, design decision, and revision made during the stage.

Development stage

At the development stage, the comic strip was produced and subsequently evaluated through expert validation. The expert validation questionnaire adapted from Hidayati (2013) and Maknun (2022) was marked by two lecturers and one English teacher. A four-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to assess the product across content, language, presentation, and graphic design. The Likert scale formulation was then used to compute the result, and interpreted using the feasibility criteria proposed by Fadillah (2018) in the following table.

Table 1. Expert Validation Criteria	
81% - 100%	Very Feasible
61% - 80%	Feasible

41% - 60%	Fairly Feasible
21% - 40%	Less Feasible
<20%	Not Feasible

Meanwhile, suggestions from the validators were used to revise the product before implementation.

Implementation stage

The revised comic strip was implemented through small-scale trial and large-scale trials. Classroom observation were conducted to document students' engagement as well as difficulties during the implementation of the product. Observation data were then analyzed descriptively.

Evaluation stage

Following large-scale trial, students completed a response questionnaire adapted from Santika et al. (2023) to evaluate the developed comic strip. Similar to expert validation, the questionnaire used four-point Likert scale consisting of 10 questions. The questionnaire data were calculated and categorized according to the criteria proposed by Pranatawijaya et al. (as cited in Loviasyuni & Bhuana, 2023).

Table 2. Students' Response Interpretation Criteria

81% - 100%	Very Positive
61% - 80%	Positive
41% - 60%	Neutral
21% - 40%	Disagree
0 - 20%	Strongly Disagree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aimed at developing comic strip using Canva to teach reading recount text to eighth-grade students at SMP Budimulya. The results are presented in accordance based on the three research questions formulated in this study.

1. The Process of Developing Comic Strip Using Canva in Teaching Reading Recount Text

Analysis

At this stage, data were collected through interviews and a questionnaire to identify students' reading difficulties, their learning preferences, and their needs. Interviews were conducted with one English teacher and three students. The interview with the English teacher revealed that teaching reading, particularly recount text, presented a significant challenge at the eighth-grade level. The teacher noted that students' reading comprehension was generally low and that most students remained passive during reading activities. The teacher also mentioned that students tended to be more engaged when learning involved visual or activity-based approaches.

Student interviews revealed similar concerns. All three students admitted that reading English texts was difficult. They expressed that they found reading more accessible and enjoyable when accompanied by images or illustrations. One student said that if the text were presented in shorter sections accompanied by pictures, it would be easier to understand the main points. A

questionnaire was distributed to 42 eighth-grade students to obtain more comprehensive data regarding their learning needs and topic preferences. The questionnaire findings revealed that the most of students frequently felt bored when reading plain English texts without visual support, while most students indicated that they comprehended material more effectively when it was accompanied by images or illustrations. Nearly all of the students expressed an interest in studying recount texts through comics. In terms of topic preferences, students showed strong interest in content related to historical events, holidays, embarrassing moments, and biographical content about well-known figures. These findings confirmed the necessity of developing an engaging, visual-based learning media specially for teaching reading recount texts.

Design

According to the need analysis results, the design stage was carried out to plan the structure and content of the comic strip product. At this stage, determining the learning objectives, developing a concept for the comic, outlining the content, gathering materials, and designing a preliminary draft of the product. The learning objectives were aligned with the eighth-grade English Curriculum, focusing on reading recount texts. The comic strip was conceptualized to contain materials that cover the definition, purpose, generic structure, and linguistic features of recount text, as well as three types of recount text, including personal recount, historical recount, and biographical recount. The overall design was developed using Canva, which provides a wide variety of comic panel templates, character elements, and icons. The result of this stage was the first draft of the comic strip, which was then validated by experts during the development stage.

Development

The initial draft developed in the design stage was submitted to three expert validators, including two lecturers and one English teacher, who evaluated the product in terms of content, language, presentation, and graphics aspects. Following the validation process, the validators provided qualitative suggestions for improvement. Based on this feedback, a series of product revisions was carried out. The details of these revision are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Product Revisions Based on Expert Validation Feedback

Before Revision	After Revision
There was no warm up session	 The comic strip illustrates a classroom scenario. In the first panel, a teacher asks a student to explain a concept. The student is confused. In the second panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the third panel, the teacher shows another video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the fourth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the fifth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the sixth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the seventh panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the eighth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the ninth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused. In the tenth panel, the teacher shows a video of a person speaking. The student is still confused.

Figure 1. Add Warm-up Session

Before Revision

There was no detailed explanation of the material

After Revision



Figure 2. Detailed Explanation of the Material Was Added

There was no exercise

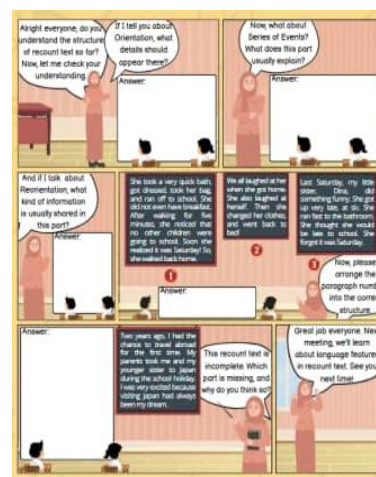


Figure 3. Exercise Was Added



Figure 4. There Was No Prologue



Figure 5. Prologue Was Added

Before Revision

Read the comic strip carefully, then answer these questions:

A. Answer the questions below:

1. Who went to the zoo?
2. What did they visit first after entering the zoo?
3. What did her Dad cook for lunch?
4. Where did the family go in the afternoon?

B. Look at the comic strip panels. Match each panel to the correct structure of recount text:

Structure	Panel Number
Orientation	
Series of Events	
Reorientation	

C. After identifying the structure above, let's analyze what each part tells us!

- Orientation:
- Series of events:
- Reorientation:

Figure 6. Exercise Sections before the Redesign

After Revision

Why did Lisa and her family feel very tired after the trip to the zoo?

Answer:

What can be inferred about Lisa's feelings during the trip?

Answer:

What does the word "adorable" mean in Lisa's story?

Answer:

In Lisa's story, she said "When we got there..." "Who does 'we' refer to?"

Answer:

Excellent work everyone! Next meeting, we'll talk about historical recount text. Try to find out the example first! See you next week!

Figure 7. Exercise Sections Were Redesign

TABLE OF CONTENT	
Table of Content.....	i
Introduction.....	ii
Definition of Recount Text.....	1
Purpose of Recount Text.....	3
Generic Structure of Recount Text.....	5
Language Features of Recount Text.....	7
Kind of Recount Text.....	9
Personal Recount Text.....	11
Historical Recount Text.....	14
Biographical Recount Text.....	18
QR Code for Digital Version.....	22
References.....	23

Figure 8. Table of Contents before Restructuring

TABLE OF CONTENT	
Table of Content.....	i
Introduction.....	ii
How to Use This Comic.....	iii
A. Material of Recount Text.....	1
1. Definition of Recount Text.....	2
2. Generic Structure of Recount Text.....	10
3. Language Features of Recount Text.....	16
4. Kinds of Recount Text.....	23
B. Reading Comprehension Check.....	27
1. A Trip to the National Zoo and Aquarium.....	28
2. The Proclamation of Indonesian Independence..	34
3. The Life of Raden Adjeng Kartini.....	40
QR Code for Digital Version.....	46
References.....	47

Figure 9. The Table of Contents Was Restructured



Figure 10. There Was No Publication Year



Figure 11. The Publication Year Was Added

Before Revision

After Revision

There was no instruction on how to use the comic strip.

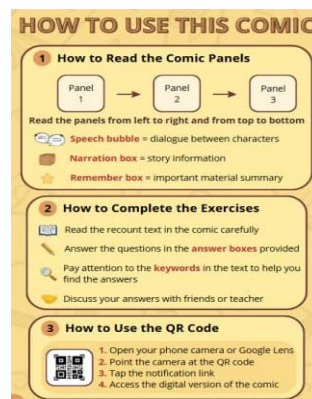


Figure 12. The Instruction on How to Use the Comic Strip Was Added

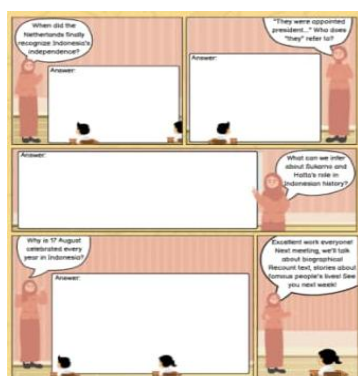


Figure 13. Comic Strip before the Addition of Reading Comprehension Question

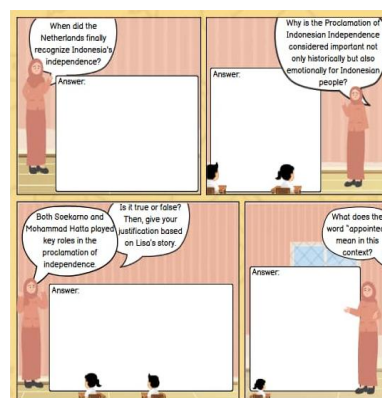


Figure 14. Reading Comprehension Questions Were Added

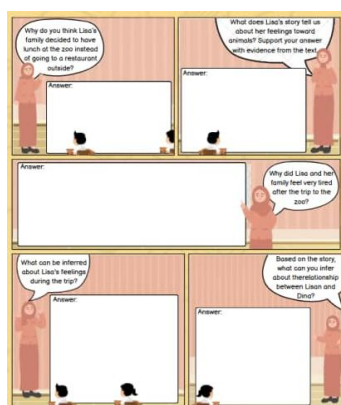


Figure 15. Background before the Redesign

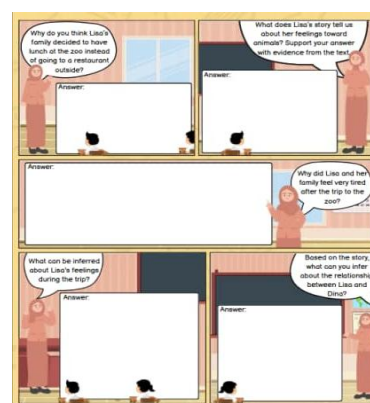


Figure 16. Background Was Redesign

Based on feedback from validator 1 (Lecturer 1), four revisions were made. First, the learning flow of the comic was restructured. The initial draft jumped straight to the material, so the flow was not smooth. Following the feedback, a structured learning sequence was applied across each section, including the material that now begins with warm-up activities and trigger questions to activate prior knowledge, followed by an explanation of the material, a more

detailed elaboration accompanied by examples, and finally the exercises. Second, prologues were added at each scene transition to prevent sudden shifts in the plot and to maintain continuity throughout the story. Third, the exercise sections were redesigned to present comprehension activities in comic strip format. In addition, reading questions were revised to incorporate varied reading elements, and additional answer boxes were included to guide students' responses. Fourth, the table of contents was restructured into two clearly differentiated focus points, including part A, containing the material section for foundational understanding, and part B, covering reading comprehension activities.

In response to the feedback from validator 2 (Lecturer 2), three additional revisions were constructed. First, the comic cover was updated to include the year of publication. Second, instructions on how to use the comic strip were added. Third, additional reading comprehension questions were incorporated into the exercise sections in accordance with the validator's recommendation.

Meanwhile, feedback given from validator 3 (English teacher) resulted in one revision. The background design of the reading comprehension exercise pages was revised, replacing the previous plain layout that looked monotone. The result of expert validation scores are reported in Section 2.

Implementation

Following the product revision, the implementation stage was carried out in two phases. A small-scale trial involved 21 students, followed by a large-scale trial involving all 42 students. During the small-scale trial, observation field notes were used to record students' engagement and identify any issues with the product. One significant finding from this phase was that several unfamiliar words in the material section caused students to struggle with fully comprehending the overall meaning. However, when students reached the reading comprehension text section, they were generally able to infer unfamiliar word meanings with the assistance of the visual cues provided in the question sections. Based on this finding, a product revision was carried out by adding a vocabulary list accompanied by pictures and their meanings, placed before each material section, as presented in table 4.

Table 4. Product Revision Based on Observation from the Small-Scale Trial

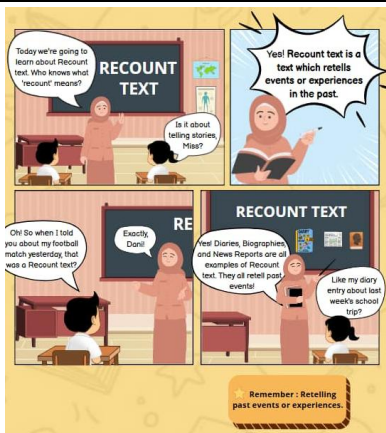
Before Revision	After Revision
	

Figure 17. Material Page, No Vocabulary Support

Figure 18. Vocabulary Building Page Inserted before the Material Page

The large-scale trial then proceeded smoothly, and students demonstrated more active engagement throughout the learning sessions. This can be seen in more detail in the results reported in point three, Students' Response toward the Developed Comic Strip Using Canva in Teaching Reading Recount Text. The final version of the developed comic strip is accessible online at <https://canva.link/fo35urqad1j8gep>.

Evaluation

The summative evaluation was conducted through a students response questionnaire to measure student's responses to the developed comic strip. The results of the student response questionnaire are presented in Section 3.

2. The Feasibility of the Developed Comic Strip Using Canva in Teaching Reading Recount Text

The feasibility of the developed comic strip was determined through expert validation conducted by two lecturers and one English teacher. The results of this validation are reported in Table 5.

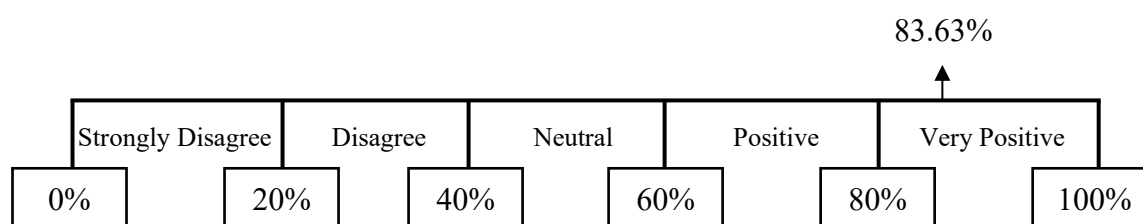
Table 5. Expert Validation Results

Aspect	Validator 1	Validator 2	Validator 3
Content	83.33%	95.83%	87.50%
Language	75.00%	91.67%	75.00%
Presentation	83.33%	95.83%	91.67%
Graphic	95.83%	91.67%	79.17%
Average Scores	84.38%	93.75%	83.33%
Overall Avarage	87.15%		
Category	Very Feasible		

As shown in Table 5, all three validators rated the comic strip positively across all four aspects: content, language, presentation, and graphics. Validator 1 (Lecturer 1), validator 2 (Lecturer 2), validator 3 (English teacher) achieved individual average scores of 84.38%, 93.75%, 83.33% respectively. The overall average score across all validators and all aspects was 87.15%, which falls within the 'Very Feasible' category. This result suggests that the comic strip was appropriate for use as a learning media in teaching reading recount texts.

3. Students' Response toward the Developed Comic Strip Using Canva in Teaching Reading Recount Text

Students' responses to the developed comic strip were measured through a student response questionnaire administered following the large-scale trial. A four-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4), was used in the questionnaire. The response categories interpreted from most negative to most positive. The result of questionnaire are presented below:



The overall responses score obtained was 83.63%, which falls within the ‘Very Positive’ category. Students showed agreement that the images in the comic strip corresponded with the content of the material, indicating that they perceived the visual illustrations as directly supportive of their comprehension of the recount texts. Students also indicated that the comic strip increased their interest in learning and motivated them to engage with the recount text. These responses suggest that the comic strip effectively supported students’ reading experiences.

Discussion

The results revealed that the development of a comic strip using Canva through the ADDIE model produced a learning media that is both feasible and positively received by students in teaching reading recount text. This discussion covers three interrelated aspects: the development process, the product feasibility, and students’ responses.

In the development process, the needs analysis identified that the majority of students experienced difficulty in comprehending English reading texts and strongly preferred visual-based materials. This finding suggests that students require learning resources that integrate visual support with written texts to facilitate comprehension and maintain engagement during reading activities. These findings align with the Permanasari and Awalia (2023) and Amaliya et al. (2023), who documented similar patterns of low reading comprehension and lack of engagement among junior high school EFL learners. In terms of topic preference, students’ strong interest in historical events, holidays, and biographical content directly shaped the selection of recount types incorporated into the product. An alignment between students’ interests and instructional content is recognized as a key factor in sustaining reading motivation (Kaygısız, 2025; Hermoso & Valle, 2023; Efriza et al., 2023). Therefore, the findings became the basis in developing comic strip.

Based on the need analysis, the design stage resulted in a structured comic strip product covering the definition, purpose, generic structure, linguistic features, and types of recount text. These components can indirectly help students understand various types of recount text. This is in line with Cahyani (2023) and Mohammed et al. (2025), who describes the need for scaffolded reading experiences that progressively build students’ capacity to interact with and decode written texts. The application of this principle within a comic-based format allowed visual and textual guidance to work together in guiding comprehension.

The validation result indicated that the development product achieved the score of 87.15%, suggesting it met high quality standards across content, language, presentation, and graphic aspects. This implies that the product is not only of high quality, but also refines enough through the revision process to be considered ready for classroom use. Wahyuni (2025) and Ananda et al. (2024) similarly found that digital comic strip media designed for EFL reading received high feasibility ratings from both media and material experts, with strong student acceptance attributed particularly to visual clarity and content organization. The iterative revisions process guided by expert feedback was essential in producing a final product that was not only visually appealing but also pedagogically sound and contextually appropriate for the target students.

Regarding students’ responses, the overall average score of 83.63% in the Very Positive category confirms students’ acceptance of the comic strip as an instructional media. This finding directly corresponds with the observation data obtained during the small-scale trial, in

which students who initially struggled with unfamiliar vocabulary were able to infer meaning through the visual cues provided in the reading comprehension sections. This suggests that students' positive response is not merely to the visual presented in the comic strip, but is closely linked to how the visual elements actively supported their reading process. This is consistent with Fahmi and Harahap (2025), who argue that comic strips specifically support vocabulary development as well as a structural understanding of recount texts, particularly when the visual and textual components are well integrated. Rismawati and Somantri (2025) reinforce this point by demonstrating that the combination of visual and textual elements in comic-based materials enables students to grasp both literal and implied meanings more effectively than through text-only instruction. Sumual et al. (2025) note that comic strips function as effective tools for stimulating curiosity, engagement, and enthusiasm in reading, which aligns with the increased engagement documented in the observation field notes during the large scale trial.

In general, the findings demonstrate that the developed comic strip successfully addressed students' learning needs by providing visually supported reading materials that were considered feasible by experts and positively accepted by students. The integration of visual narratives and recount text elements not only enhanced students' engagement but also supported their comprehension of the reading materials. Therefore, comic strips have the potential to serve as an effective supplementary media for teaching recount texts in junior high school EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study developed a comic strip using Canva as a learning media for teaching reading recount texts to eighth-grade students through the ADDIE model. The findings indicate that the developed comic strip is a feasible and well-accepted instructional media, as evidenced by the expert validation and students' positive responses. These findings demonstrate that integrating visual narratives into reading instruction can provide an engaging learning experience and address students' preferences for visually supported learning materials. The study also suggests that Canva can be utilised as an accessible tool for developing instructional media that are both pedagogically appropriate and visually engaging for junior high school EFL learners. Therefore, the developed comic strip has the potential to serve as an alternative supplementary media for teaching recount texts in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, this study focused on product development, feasibility, and students' response and did not examine the effectiveness of the comic strip in improving students' reading comprehension achievement. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ an experimental or quasi-experimental design using pre-test and post-test measures to investigate the effectiveness of the developed media on students' reading comprehension and other learning outcomes.

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