

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students



Salsabila Shofia Rahma¹, Andayani², Raheni Suhita³

^{1,2,3} Department of Indonesian Language Education, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: In Indonesia as a Foreign Language (IFL) learning, it is necessary to have strategies and media that support the understanding of the Indonesian language and culture for foreign students from various cultural backgrounds. This study aims to develop and determine the effectiveness of culture-based webtoon comics as a learning media to increase advanced IFL students' cultural understanding. The research method used in this study is the ADDIE method (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) and used one group pre-test-post-test design on IFL academic class at Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia. This research used the Wilcoxon test with a 5% significance level and N-gain score to analyse the data. The validation results from IFL material and learning media experts indicate that "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" webtoon is a feasible product to use. The results showed the Wilcoxon Asymp test. Sig. (2-tailed) is $0.026 < 0.05$ and the N-gain score is 71.67%. From these results, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between IFL students' average results before and after using this webtoon. The use of culture-based webtoons as a IFL learning medium is quite effective to improve the cultural understanding of advanced IFL students compared to the use of conventional texts with illustrations.

KEYWORDS: comic, webtoon effectiveness, learning media, cultural understanding, foreign language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding cultural aspects play an important role in Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) learning. This is because basically IFL is one from several effort to introduce Indonesian culture to foreign people through learning Indonesian. In this regard, the development of IFL program depends on the number of foreign enthusiasts who want to learn the Indonesian language and culture. Suyitno (2018) states that the percentage of the number of IFL students who are closely related to cultural learning objectives is quite high, for example learning Indonesian (14.98%) and being interested in Indonesian culture (10.49%), compared to practical reasons such as vacations (6.37%) and social programs (8%). Thus, cultural material plays a significant role in IFL.

Culture introduction in IFL is usually done with material in class and then continued with excursions or direct experience. When cultural aspects integrated into language learning material, students could build sociocultural competence (Kasztelanic, 2011). This competence permits students to speak Indonesian naturally like native Indonesian speakers (Kusmiatun, 2017: 87). It is important for IFL students to have sociocultural competence and cross-cultural understanding skills to communicate well and create a sense of tolerance which in turn creates a harmonious life. By understanding the cultural aspects, students could avoid culture shock when they live in Indonesia.

In synchronous learning, teachers can provide material and open discussions about the Indonesian language and culture. On the other hand, asynchronous learning depends on the motivation and desire of students to learn. In Covid-19 pandemic, almost all educational institutions switched to online distance learning. From that we could grasp that apt learning media is very important to support synchronous and asynchronous learning. Even though the pandemic has ended and learning is back to offline classes, it is necessary to use an effective media which also accessible for independent learning. This media should be able to deliver Indonesian language as well as culture material according to the target in class.

Comics as one of the media in IFL learning are highly recommended because of their position as a form of multimodal text (Watkins, 2018). Combining text in which there are elements of grammar, storyline, and Indonesian culture with illustrations as a visual form will further increase the interest and enthusiasm of IFL students. Zamzamy (2021) in his research emphasized that a multimodal text material that is integrated with local culture in online IFL learning is needed so that it can create sociocultural competence even though students are not living in Indonesia. Furthermore, in supporting the IFL digitalization, it is necessary to

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students

have a comic that is specifically in digital form that is easily accessible anywhere and anytime in an easy-to-understand and attractive format. Therefore, comics in the form of webtoon is the best choice as one of IFL learning medias.

Although there have been several developmental research in IFL learning, there has not been any research that specifically targets cultural knowledge through learning media in the form of webtoons for IFL students at intermediate level and above. Arumdyahsari et al. (2016: 829) asserts that advanced IFL students expect material that is formed attractively both in design and content: easy to understand, can be practiced directly, using illustrated images, and cultural learning integrated. This research was conducted to develop a webtoon as a culture based IFL learning media and its effectiveness in increasing the cultural understanding of advanced IFL students.

II. METHOD

This study used a research and development (R&D) method to produce certain products, and to test the effectiveness of these products (Sugiyono, 2015:407) in a quasi-one group pre-test-post-test experimental research design. Of the many R&D research models, this study uses the ADDIE model development method which consists of five stages, namely Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The types of data used in this research are qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data in this study were obtained based on observation, interviews, and needs analysis before and during the research. While the quantitative data in this study were obtained from the test scores of reading comprehension results in the form of multiple-choice tests. Sources of data in this study include informants consisting of media experts, material experts, teachers and advanced IFL students in the Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia. Product validity using expert judgment through materials and learning media experts to provide comments, criticisms, and suggestions to achieve product feasibility.

III. RESULT

Table 1. List of IFL Student Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Subject	Pre-test Score	Posttest Score
1	10	10
2	5	10
3	7	10
4	6	8
5	8	10
6	5	9
7	7	7

Descriptive statistical data of pre-test and post-test scores can be seen from the following table:

Table 2. Descriptive Table of Pre-test and Post-test Results

	Pre-test Score	Posttest Score
Mean	6,86	9,14
Median	7	10
Modus	7	10
Standard Deviation	1,77	1,22
Varians	3,14	1,48
Maximum Score	10	10
Minimum Score	5	7

From the descriptive analysis table above, there was difference in the results of each test carried out. It can be seen that there is an increase in the average value (mean) of the pre-test and post-test results of 2.28 points. The results of the post-test average score which were higher than the pre-test showed that the webtoon learning media given to advanced IFL students succeeded in giving an effect in the form of increasing their cultural understanding. From the data described above, it can be concluded that there are differences in the average reading comprehension results of IFL students before and after using webtoon as a culture based IFL learning medium.

The results of the normality test calculation of test data are as follows.

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students

Table 3. Normality Test Output

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			
	Test	Statistic	df	Sig.
Culture Understanding Test Result	Pre-test	0,182	7	0,200
	Post-test	0,331	7	0,020

From the output table of the normality test of the research data above, it could be seen that the significance value of the pre-test data is 0.200. This value is greater than 0.05 thus the pre-test data is normally distributed. As for the post-test data, the significance value is only 0.020 and smaller than 0.05, so it is not normally distributed. To proceed to the t-test which is a parametric test, data must be normally distributed. Because the requirements for parametric statistical tests are not met, the data of this study will then be tested using the Wilcoxon test, a non-parametric statistical test.

Based on the calculation of the results of the pretest and posttest, it is known that Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) has a value of 0.026 and a Z value of -2.232 based on negative ranks. Because the value of 0.026 is smaller (<) than 0.05, referring to the decision-making of the Wilcoxon test, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a difference between the reading comprehension results of IFL students between the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. N-gain Score of Pretest and Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
N-gain Score	6	0,00	1,00	0,7167	0,40208
N-gain Percent	6	0,00	100,00	71,6667	40,20779
Valid N (listwise)	6				

The effectiveness test obtained by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores is shown in the mean column of 0.7167 (rounded to 0.72). If it is included in the category of distribution of the N-gain score according to Meltzer (2002), then the score of 0.72 can be categorized as 'high'. For the percentage of N-gain scores, the data shown above shows a result of 71.6667% (rounded to 72%). Referring to the effectiveness category of the N-gain score according to Hake (1999), it can be concluded that the use of "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" (Learning the Culture with Joko and Fred) webtoon as a culture-based IFL learning medium is quite effective (compared to the use of conventional texts with illustrations) in increasing cultural understanding of advanced IFL students.

IV. DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of the Webtoon as a Culture-Based IFL Learning Media

One of the appeal of the webtoon "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred", which is a digital comic devoted to IFL learning with cultural content, is the use of images that are far more than plain text. The use of illustrations and images in the text, especially the dominant types such as graphic novels, comics, and webtoons according to Sabbah et al., (2013) is more attractive to visual learners. Beyond its scope as a learning medium in the classroom, this webtoon is expected to be able to assist students in consuming materials that are easily accessible via devices such as smartphones, tablets, or laptops. This is because, in language learning, media and materials are needed that are familiar and close to the daily lives of students (Faqih & Setyawan, 2021).



Picture 1. "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" Webtoon Logo

The finding of Jalilehvand (2012) states that pictures/illustrations are key variables in influencing students' reading comprehension in foreign language learning. This finding is in line with the results of this study which showed that IFL students performed better on the use of webtoon media than in conventional texts without illustrations or those with illustrations. The

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students

pedagogical implications that can be concluded are in line with Paivio's theory of Dual Coding (1991) because the dominance of more images in webtoons than in ordinary reading texts can facilitate IFL students' reading comprehension.

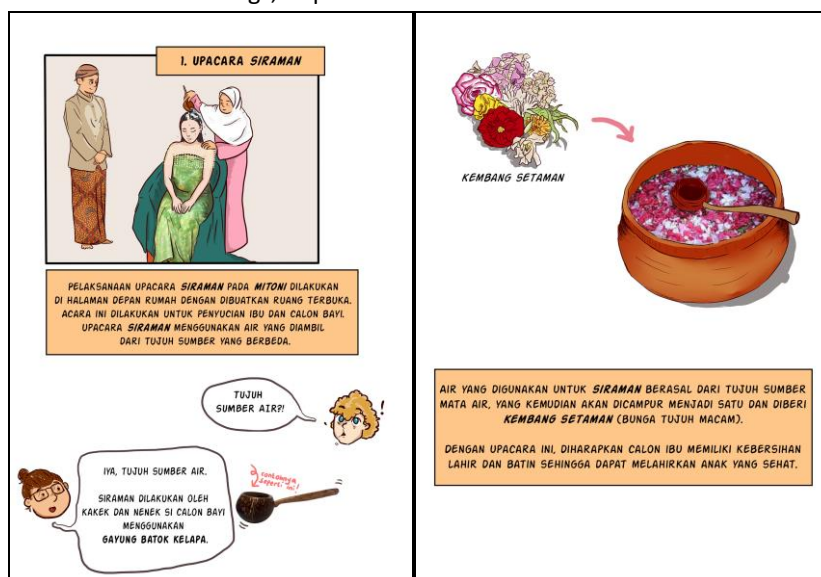
The illustrative storyline about Mitoni culture in the webtoon "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" has an important role in facilitating IFL students' understanding. This is because the shape is in the form of a sequence. Like verbal language in audio media, language structures in visual media are stored in memory in a sequence (Cohn, 2013: 62-63). If implemented in this study, individual understanding in learning using webtoons depends on interacting parts and panels and the sequence of storylines within and between episodes to create coherence. Cohn called this phenomenon a virtual language lexicon, that is, patterns stored in memory to understand images placed in sequence.

According to Oller's (1983) Episode Hypothesis theory, discourse texts in the form of organized serials (episodes) will be easier to remember than unserialized discourse texts. In conclusion, students will find it easier to learn the language and the information in it if the discourse given has a logical flow with interrelated sentences. Although this is closely related to context, Oller emphasizes the importance of logical structure and conclusions, which can be applied to webtoon comics.

From interviews conducted with several IFL students in the P3B UNS Academic class, the use of webtoon media was considered more attractive than conventional texts. They agree that the teacher occasionally uses this media on the sidelines of the routine use of conventional text media during reading comprehension sessions. By using a webtoon, students will be more motivated to improve reading comprehension literacy because of its ease of access and attractive features (such as audio features that can be included by webtoon writers). (Erya & Pustika, 2021; Indah & Wibowo, 2021).

Culture Understanding of Advanced IFL Students through a Culture-Based Webtoon

IFL as a language learning can foster empathy and cross-cultural and social understanding when pedagogical activities are based on adequate language and cultural materials. Global developments that continue to move require a dynamic cultural conception of language learning in the classroom (Kim, 2020). This dynamic cultural conception can be achieved through dialogue and critique discussion activities that can be carried out after students read the cultural material contained in the webtoon. In addition, there is a public comment feature provided by the webtoon, so that if learning is carried out asynchronously, students can still express their opinions and understandings, or provide criticism of comments from other readers.



Picture 2. Learning Mitoni Culture Through "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" Webtoon

The use of webtoons as culture-based IFL learning media can meet these requirements while preparing them for the demands of 21st-century learning. Flexible webtoon access can also improve the multimodal literacy of IFL students by exploring and discovering their knowledge. If teachers can use webtoon media optimally, then the class will be able to involve students and teachers in discussing cultural and social events that are intertwined in the characters and conflicts told (Issa, 2018; Yecies et al., 2020) which will then foster linguistic competence, communicative, and cultural.

Webtoon's Disadvantages as Culture-Based IFL Learning Media

Although there are many advantages in using webtoon media in the IFL class, the research conducted by Wulandari et al. (2019) states that there are shortcomings that need to be underlined. The use of webtoons according to Wulandari et al. turned out to

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students

be ineffective in learning foreign languages, especially in learning vocabulary. The webtoon used in this study is less able to provide the required reading text, less familiar and non-standard vocabulary, and the focus of the learner is more dominant on the story.

The results of this study can answer the shortcomings presented by Wulandari et al., First, by using a webtoon that is specifically formulated for IFL students at a certain level, namely the webtoon "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred". The implication is that in the IFL class, vocabulary learning is possible along with the learner's knowledge of grammar. There is no doubt that there may be some words that students do not know when reading the webtoon. However, by using standard grammar and simpler sentence structures to accommodate students, IFL learning can run well.

The second drawback, namely the lack of a more dominant focus on the story, can be an advantage of using webtoon learning media. The integration of cultural content and language learning is part of the CLIL approach. The focus of the story given is in the form of cultural material so that the cultural competence of IFL students is honed along with their linguistic competence. The effectiveness of using webtoon learning media lies in how the teacher triggers discussion and provokes student opinions after reading comprehension activities.

Apart from what Wulandari et al.'s state, this research found two shortcomings of the webtoon "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" in the P3B UNS Academic IFL class as a learning media. These two weaknesses are quite fatal if the class is not properly conditioned: an impractical teaching then waste learning time. The results of interviews with several IFL students showed that although they were enthusiastic and appreciative of the use of webtoons as learning media and the cultural materials presented in it, students only wanted to use them occasionally. This is possible due to several factors such as unstable internet speed, students who are not used to using the Line Webtoon application, or devices that do not facilitate students. This opinion is supported by the findings of Yunus et al. (2012: 3462) in their research survey which proves that among as many as 30 language teachers, the majority think that the use of digital comics is considered less practical and time-consuming.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on research result and discussion, it could be concluded that (1) There is a difference between the reading comprehension results of IFL students between the pre-test and post-test by using webtoon as culture-based learning media, with 0,026 value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) on Wilcoxon test; (2) the use of "Belajar Budaya bersama Joko dan Fred" (Learning the Culture with Joko and Fred) webtoon as a culture-based IFL learning medium is quite effective (compared to the use of conventional texts with illustrations) in increasing cultural understanding of advanced IFL students, which indicated by 72% N-gain score; and (3) impracticality and time-consuming as drawbacks factor in using webtoon as learning media could be overcome as long as the teacher can conditioning the class and make optimal use of learning media. For this reason, the researcher proposes that there should be further research on the effect of teacher readiness in using webtoon media in advanced IFL classes.

REFERENCES

- 1) Suyitno, I., Susanto, G, Kamal, M., & Fawzi, A. (2018). *Perilaku Belajar dan Pembelajaran BIPA: Acuan Dasar Pengembangan Literasi Komunikatif Pelajar BIPA*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.
- 2) Kasztelanic, A. O., (2011). "Do we need to teach culture and how much culture do we need?". In: Arabski, J., & Wojtaszek, A. (Eds.) *Aspects of culture in second language acquisition and foreign language learning* (pp. 35- 48). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.
- 3) Kusmiatun, A. (2017). "Integrasi Budaya dalam Materi Ajar BIPA". Artikel, Kumpulan Esai Pengajaran BIPA, Simposium Internasional Pengajaran BIPA 2017, Yogyakarta, 23 s.d.24 Agustus 2017, hal. 87-93.
- 4) Watkins, R. (2018). Comic Con(nection): Envisaging Comics as a Multimodal Ensemble that Teaches Core Visual Writing. *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 33(2).
- 5) Zamzamy, D. A. (2021). *Development of Multimodal Language Teaching Materials for Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (Bipa) During Pandemic Time*. 4, 21–31.
- 6) Arumdyahsari, S., Widodo, Susanto, G. (2016). Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) Tingkat Madya. *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan*, 1 (5). Pp. 828-834
- 7) Sugiyono. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- 8) Sabbah, M., Masood, M., & Iranmanesh, M. (2013). Effects of graphic novels on reading comprehension in Malaysian year 5 students. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 4(1), 146–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21504857.2012.757246>

Using Webtoon Comic as Media to Improve Cultural Understanding of Advanced Indonesian as Foreign Language (IFL) Students

- 9) Faqih, F., & Setyawan, A. (2021). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Pada Tema Cerita Fantasi Berkearifan Lokal Madura Berbasis Android. *Indonesian Language Education and Literature*, 7(1), 71-87.
- 10) doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.24235/ileal.v7i1.9032>
- 11) Jalilehvand, M. (2012). The effects of text length and picture on reading comprehension of iranian EFL students. *Asian Social Science*, 8(3), 329–337. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n3p329>
- 12) Paivio, A. (1991). Dual-coding theory: Retrospect and current status. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 45, 255-287. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0084295>
- 13) Cohn, N. (2013). *The visual language of comics: Introduction to the structure and cognition of sequential images*. London: Bloomsbury.
- 14) Oller, J. W. 1983. Story writing principles and ESL teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17 (1), 39-53.
- 15) Erya, W. I., & Pustika, R. (2021). Students' Perception Towards the Use of Webtoon to Improve Reading Comprehension Skill. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JELTL)*, 2(1), 51–56. <http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/english-language-teaching/index>
- 16) Indah, D. O., & Wibowo, H. (2021). An Analysis of Reading Literacy for College Students Through Webtoon as Interactive Learning. *Lingua: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.34005/lingua.v17i1.1367>
- 17) Kim, D. (2020). Learning Language, Learning Culture: Teaching Language to the Whole Student. *ECNU Review of Education*, 3(3), 519–541. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120936693>
- 18) Issa, S. (2018). Comics in the English classroom: a guide to teaching comics across English studies. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 9(4), 310–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21504857.2017.1355822>
- 19) Yecies, B., Yang, J. J., & Lu, Y. (2020). Korean webtoons and collective innovation: expanding Europe's creative industries through competitive localization. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 33(4), 459–473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2020.1828839>
- 20) Wulandari, R. A., Lestari, R. E., & Utami, S. L. (2019). The Effectiveness of Webtoon for EFL Student in Mastering Vocabulary. *CELL- Conference of English Language and Literature*. <https://semnas.untidar.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Rizqi-Ayu-Wulandari-Rodhiana-Eka-Lestari-Siti-Laras-Utami-The-Effectiveness-of-Webtoon-for-Student-in-Mastering-Vocabulary.pdf>
- 21) Yunus, M., Salehi, H., & Embi, M. (2012). Effects of Using Digital Comics to Improve ESL Writing. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology*, 4 (18), 3462-3469. ISSN : 2040-7467.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.