

Conference Paper

## The Role of Comic-Based Teaching Materials in German Language Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching materials are one of the external factors that will influence the atmosphere of learning because teaching materials contain curriculum components that students need to master in a subject. Teaching materials have various forms. Nowadays, comics can also act as teaching materials. Comics are one of the reading materials that students like. Comics, which are also known as graphic literature, are a form of visual communication that aims to convey information. Apart from images, there is also written text which is strung together to form an interesting storyline. The role of comics as teaching material is adapted to the learning carried out in schools. One of the lessons that can apply comics as teaching material is German. German is one of the foreign languages studied at the high school level. One way to get students interested in German is to use a variety of teaching materials, one of which is comics. This scientific article uses a qualitative approach in the form of a literature study method. This scientific article examines previous theories and research related to comics to determine the role of comic-based teaching materials in German language learning. The results of the analysis show that the role of comic-based teaching materials can motivate and improve various skills in learning German.

*Keywords: Teaching materials, comic, German language*

### Introduction

Foreign languages other than English are included in the curriculum of Indonesian education, considering that the era of globalization requires humans to develop. One of the skills that needs to be sharpened in the era of globalization is foreign language skills. Foreign language proficiency is a tool to broaden human horizons and make it easier to adapt and solve problems in a broader range of situations. One of the foreign languages studied in Indonesia is German.

In Indonesia, German is generally studied at the SMA/K (High School/Vocational) level. German language learning has a communicative orientation, which refers to four language skills, namely listening (*hören*), speaking (*sprechen*), reading (*lesen*), and writing (*schreiben*). So that students can communicate well orally and in writing, it is hoped that students can master these four skills (Purwanto, 2021).

Along with global demands, German language subjects also need to be studied in a way that is appropriate to the times. Following globalization and the reference for the German language education curriculum in Indonesia, it is necessary to form and create quality German language learning so that appropriate references are needed (Nurohmah et al., 2020). Besides curriculum references, German language learning also uses the *Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen* (GER). The curriculum and GER are the main references for educators to prepare syllabi, lesson plans, learning strategies, teaching materials, and German language learning media.

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Teaching materials and learning media are factors that support a good learning process. Teaching materials are used as a reference and guide for all educator activities in the learning process. Meanwhile, for students, teaching materials act as a guide in the learning process. One of the roles of learning media is to package teaching materials to make them attractive. The use of learning media also needs to be adapted to things that are close and familiar to students' daily lives, one of which is comics, one of the reading media popular with students.

Comics, also known as graphic literature, are a form of visual communication that aims to convey information and entertain. Apart from images, there is also written text in the form of narrative or dialogue, which is strung together to form an exciting storyline. The information contained in comics depends on the story put together by the comic artist.

Comics can also be used as a medium for packaging teaching materials. This aims to ensure that the learning process carried out by teachers and students can be enjoyable. Apart from that, students can also learn something independently. One lesson that can use comic-based teaching materials is German.

Based on the study above, there is a need for research regarding the role of comic-based teaching materials based on previous research. This aims to find out the role of comic-based teaching materials on German language skills.

## **Material and Methods**

This research uses qualitative methods with library research techniques. This technique is carried out by collecting research data and information, which generally takes the form of documents, data archives, or literary information from print media or other similar recording media (Muliawan, 2014) The data and information that have been collected are then studied, analyzed critically, constructed, and conclusions drawn.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Teaching materials***

Teaching materials are all forms of materials for use by students that are arranged systematically and designed following the applicable curriculum. The teaching materials must follow instructional principles because teachers and students will use them to help and support learning. In designing teaching materials, the role of a teacher determines the success of the teaching and learning process through teaching material (Magdalena et al., 2020).

One part of learning resources is teaching materials. Teaching materials are information to achieve learning objectives that students use, whether from printed, audiovisual, computer-based, or integrated technology products. The information in question is teaching materials for general learning purposes and some additional materials that act as enrichment or remedial per established competency standards and essential competencies (Cahyadi, 2019).

*Lernmaterial ist eine Sammlung von Lerninhalten, die aus Wissen, Fähigkeiten und Einstellungen bestehen, die systematisch angeordnet sind und vom Lernenden beherrscht werden müssen, um die festgelegten Kompetenzstandards zu erfüllen. Das Lernmaterial spielt eine sehr wichtige Rolle im Lehrplan, der vorbereitet werden muss, damit der Lernprozess das Ziel gemäß den Kompetenzstandards des Kurses erreichen kann. Daher sollte das für Lernaktivitäten festgelegte Material den erwarteten Kompetenzen entsprechen und das Erreichen von Kompetenzstandards, Grundkompetenzen und Indikatoren unterstützen (Sari & Hutagalung, 2012).* Teaching materials are a collection of learning content containing knowledge, skills, and attitudes arranged systematically and must be mastered by students to meet predetermined competency standards. The material in the teaching materials determined for learning activities must be by the expected competencies and support the achievement of competencies, essential competencies, and indicators.

Open materials act as a learning resource that has various forms of media. Teaching materials must be prepared and designed per the curriculum and processual rules to support the learning process for educators and students. The content of teaching materials includes a collection of

learning that contains knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are prepared and expected to be mastered by students. Because teaching materials must comply with the criteria, the material in the teaching materials must also comply with the criteria to achieve the expected competencies.

Three main functions of teaching materials are related to implementing the learning and learning process. The three primary functions are:

- a) Teaching materials function as guidelines for teachers who direct all activities in the teaching and learning process and as the substance of competencies that should be taught or trained to students.
- b) Teaching materials function as guidelines for students who will direct and participate in activities in the learning and learning process and substances they should learn or master.
- c) Teaching materials are a tool for evaluating achievement or mastery of learning outcomes. The teaching materials must follow the indicators and essential competencies the teacher wants to achieve. The subject syllabus has formulated Indicators and essential competencies (Aisyah et al., 2020).

Based on the function of these teaching materials, it can be concluded that teaching materials have a function that has a positive impact on both educators and students. Educators use teaching materials as a guide so that the material presented is systematic, and students know what material is being studied during the learning process, and also as an evaluation tool that will show educators and students the extent of competencies that have been achieved and what needs to be improved again.

Teaching materials have various forms. The following is the form of teaching materials described by (Sholeh & Sutanta, 2019), namely as follows.

- a) Visual teaching materials, namely teaching materials require the sense of sight to use. Visual teaching materials consist of printed materials, such as handouts, books, modules, student worksheets, brochures, leaflets, wall charts, photos/drawings, and non-printed, such as models/mockets.
- b) Audio teaching materials, namely teaching materials that require the sense of hearing to use, namely teaching materials in the form of sound. Audio teaching materials include cassettes, radio, vinyl records, and audio compact disks.
- c) Audio-visual teaching materials, namely teaching materials require the sense of hearing and the sense of sight to use. The forms of audio-visual teaching materials include video compact disks and films.
- d) Interactive multimedia teaching materials, namely teaching materials use various types of interactive facilities. The forms of interactive multimedia teaching materials are CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction) compact disk (CD).
- e) Web-based teaching materials, namely teaching materials use a system to access, download, or upload learning materials that need help from an internet network.

The form of teaching materials used needs to be adapted to school facilities and infrastructure conditions. This is necessary so that the form of teaching materials selected and arranged can be used optimally in learning. So that the learning process is not hampered in terms of teaching materials.

### **Comic**

The famous comic artist, Will Eisner, used the term sequential art to describe comics. Even though there are only two image sequences, the work can be called a comic. Comics are images that are juxtaposed and have a sequence to convey information and produce an aesthetic response in the reader (McCloud, 1994). Based on their content, comics are divided into several types, namely biographical and scientific comics, educational comics, promotional comics (advertising), wayang comics, and martial arts comics.

This type of educational comic is a comic that has an educational story theme about something. Educational comics are informative because educational comics are related to knowledge

(Ananda, 2022). Educational comics are comics with educational content and information related to the subject of the presented lesson, so they are suitable for use in learning (Dewi et al., 2020). (Faidah and Sulandjari (2020) state that educational comics are comics with didactic messages, making it easier for kindergarten, elementary school, and even tertiary students to understand information or messages. Educational comics display a sequence of images guided by words that tell a story and emphasize the movements and actions in the images. Educational comics cover a variety of themes and subjects, such as science, history, how to save money, and how to dress. Educational comics can be understood, comprehended, and simultaneously entertain students utilizing educational comics, which consist of visual elements, learning materials, and comic storytelling packaged in an exciting and educational form (Kurniawan et al., 2019).

When preparing comics, there are main elements that need to be considered. Comics have four main elements: panels, reading bubbles (bubble text), narration, and sound effects (Suparmi, 2018). (Masdiono (1998) divides the elements of comics into three parts: the front part, the content part, and the end part.

The front part, or what can be called the opening page, has four elements. The first element is the series title. The series title must be included if the comic artist creates a serial or ongoing comic. The second element is the story title. The third element is credits, information about the author, the type of tool used to draw the comic, and so on. The final element, *indicia*, is information about the publisher, time of publication, copyright holder, and so on.

The contents section or contents page has six elements: closed panels, open panels, word balloons, narration, sound effects, and aisles. Panels are boxes that limit the images in each scene. A closed panel is a box that has a dividing line, while an open panel does not have a dividing line around it. Word balloons or speech balloons contain the words of the characters created. The shape of the word balloon is adjusted to its function, such as speaking typically, thinking or speaking silently, whispering, or speaking loudly/shouting. Apart from that, the shape of the word balloons is also adapted to the story, such as having a computer voice, a robot voice, remembering the teacher's advice, and speaking in a cold voice. Comic artists can also create word balloons according to the story they are creating. Narrative is information about the time, place, and situation of the story. Sound effects or sound effects in comics have the function of explaining a situation with sounds, such as the sound of screeching brakes (*chiiit*), the sound of rain (*zasss*), the sound of gunshots (*bang!*), and other sounds. Meanwhile, the *gang* element in the content section is the distance between a panel and other panels.

After the front and contents, there is the end or closing part of the comic. The end of the comic contains a summary of the story or the completion of the story. The story summary at the end of the comic can act as a general description of the contents of the comic.

#### *Comic-based teaching materials for German language learning*

Several teaching materials in the form of comic books and digital comics developed for German include a comic entitled *Komik Belajar Bahasa Jerman untuk Pemula* by Frank Plein and Dr. Christine Breslauer published in 2022, then the comic *Echt Spaß* by Lestari and Afifah (2021), the comic *Märchen: die Abenteuer von zwei Geschwister* by (Nikmah & Retnantiti, 2021), and the comic *Deutsch macht Spaß* which was developed by (Mayasari et al., 2018).

*Komik Belajar Bahasa Jerman untuk Pemula* is a printed comic in the form of a book containing several themes that beginners need to learn. This comic was published by Kesaint Blanc Publishing in 2022 and sold on the market. Each chapter in this printed comic begins with an opening page containing the theme that will be studied in that chapter. On the next page, readers can find comic stories from the lives of Felix and Sofia. Then, readers will find many pictures with essential vocabulary related to the theme of the chapter. In the communication section, readers learn how to express something in different situations and conditions. Then, there is a section about grammar, which is studied and practiced. In the appendix at the end of the book, readers can find a list

of answers to all the exercises. There is also a whole vocabulary list based on the vocabulary contained in the book, a list of irregular verbs, and important grammatical terms.

This comic book consists of twelve chapters. This book covers a variety of themes that are suitable for beginners. The stories in this comic book are about family, education, work, routine, dating, housing, health, food, and holidays. This comic book has 206 pages in A5 size.

The *Echt Spaß* comic is a digital comic developed by Lestari and Afifah (2021), intended as a German language learning medium for class X high school students. The development of this comic was motivated by a lack of visualization of German language learning materials. The *Echt Spaß*, comic uses material, studied by high school students in class X semester 2, namely Schule or school life. The contents of the *Echt Spaß* comic include Grammatic und Wortschatz (grammar and vocabulary) and practice questions. Through the *Echt Spaß* comic, it is hoped that students can practice reading (*lesen*) and writing (*schreiben*) skills. Based on the results of the feasibility trial, the majority of students from SMAN 1 Gondanglegi Malang agreed that the digital comic *Echt Spaß* could help students in the German language learning process. Students feel that the comic medium *Echt Spaß* is a very interesting media because it follows developments with the times.

Students assess that the *Echt Spaß* digital comic application has a good structure, is not too complicated, and is easy to use. In terms of material, according to students, the material presented is easy to understand because it is presented like a story, and the language used is easy to understand. The presence of animated images makes it easier for students to understand the material. The practice questions that students work on can also be done efficiently after reading the material presented in comics.

The next comic is a fairy tale, *Märchen: Die Abenteuer von zwei Geschwister* (The Adventures of Two Siblings), developed in 2021 by Nikmah and Retnantiti (2021). This comic was developed based on the conditions of students majoring in German Literature at the State University of Malang who experienced difficulties when studying German literature, especially in understanding the meaning of a literary work. *Märchen Comic: Die Abenteuer von zwei Geschwister* is a fairy tale developed from the fairy tale *Hänsel und Gretel* by the Grimm brothers in 1997 in the book *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. The fairy tale comic includes fairy tale material and practice questions. The grammar and vocabulary used in the comic are arranged relatively long so that the comic teaching material can act as an effective literary learning tool.

Based on the results of trials and analysis of questionnaire data, the comic *Märchen: Die Abenteuer von zwei Geschwister* is an interesting comic teaching material, has illustrations that can facilitate understanding of fairy tale literary works, help understand the material of fairy tale literary works, and motivate students' interest in reading German literary works. The practice questions contained in the comic can also help strengthen understanding of fairy tale material. Based on the results of this research, the comic *Märchen: Die Abenteuer von zwei Geschwister* can help students understand the material of fairy tale literary works and increase student motivation in studying literature.

Next, there is the *Deutsch macht spaß* comic, which was developed in 2018. The aim of developing this comic is that the *Deutsch macht spaß* comic can improve speaking and vocabulary skills for even semester class X high school students of German. This comic is in printed form and consists of three main components: the opening, main, and closing.

The opening section of the *Deutsch macht spaß* comic includes the cover, foreword, table of contents, study instructions, and learning objectives. The core part of the comic consists of an introduction to the material, a description of the material, and exercises. The core section has a school theme with four sub-mains that are discussed and accompanied by example questions and exercises. The sub-subjects are *Studeplan, Uhrzeit, Adjektive, and Aktivitäten in der Schule*. The exercises in this comic focus on oral skills. The training includes dialogue variations in pairs, students creating conversations based on pictures, and written exercises in the form of practicing conjugating verbs or verbs.

Meanwhile, the closing section includes an evaluation, supporting information, and an answer key. In the evaluation sub-section, there are multiple-choice questions and oral descriptions. Evaluation with multiple choice questions aims to assess students' vocabulary mastery, while description evaluation measures students' speaking skills according to the material being studied.

Based on the *Deutsch macht spaß* comic test results, this comic is included in the appropriate category and can be used in class. The results of the effectiveness test also show that comic-based German language teaching materials effectively improve students' speaking skills and vocabulary. This shows that the learning outcomes of the experimental class are higher than those of the control class.

## Conclusion

Based on these results and discussion, comic-based teaching materials have a meaningful role for students, especially German language students, in communicative and literary learning. The role of comic-based teaching materials is to motivate students and also train and improve students' German language skills.

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