

# The Influence of Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media on Fantasy Text Writing Skills in Junior High Schools

Nugraheni Eko Wardani\*

Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This study aimed to describe (1) influence of digital comic folktale learning media on fantasy text writing skills; (2) students' perceptions of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy text writing skills through the adoption of quantitative and qualitative mixed methods. The data were sourced from pretest, posttest, student's interviews, and questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. Quantitative methods used t-test in SPSS 27 with questionnaire, while qualitative methods used student interviews. Subsequently, the qualitative and quantitative data were integrated through thematic analysis. The results showed that students' posttest scores increased compared to the pretest. The maximum score for fantasy text writing skills in the pretest was 90, with minimum and average scores of 70 and 78.57, as well as a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the maximum score for fantasy text writing skills in the posttest was 95, with minimum and average scores of 72 and 83.87, as well as a standard deviation of 5.17. Based on the questionnaire results and interviews, students were interested and motivated to participate in fantasy text using digital comic folktale learning media.

**Index Terms**—digital comic, folktale, learning media, fantasy texts, writing skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Folktale is a type of folklore found in oral form among the community and a story passed down over generations (Fang, 2011; Danandjaja, 2007). According to Bascom (1991), folktale consists of myths, legends, and fairy tales. McNeill (2013) stated that myth was a story about truth and holiness in society. Meanwhile, legend is a type of semi-historical folktale in which a historical figure or a place is shown (Haviland, 2003). Rusyana et al. (2000) reported that the characters in legend were figures who lived in the past and were prominent in society. Additionally, Haviland (2003) stated that a fairy tale was a creative fictional story recognized as someone's imagination for entertainment. Rusyana et al. (2000) classified the concept into 2, namely fairy tales with human and animal characters. In the real world, fairy tales with animal characters represent human behavior (Wardani, 2022).

Folktale is an intangible cultural heritage recognized worldwide UNESCO (2022) and contains various local wisdom still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The story should be preserved as part of learning in schools and universities. Different efforts are carried out to conserve folktale by transferring oral to written and digital stories. To adapt to the demands of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) based learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, folktale transfer is developed into digital comic and becomes learning media in schools. The development is a conservation effort that must be implemented.

Education today has the aim of creating a future generation that has 21st century life skills. 21st century life skills are the government's efforts for the future young generation to be able to face the challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0. A future life full of challenges not only requires young people who have good quality hard skills, but also have good quality soft skills too. 21st century skills consist of (1) critical thinking competencies; (2) creative and innovative thinking; (3) communication skills; (4) ability to collaborate; (5) self-confidence (Ariyana & Pujiastuti, 2018). Modern learning must also be technology-based (TPACK). The use of technology increases students' curiosity and improves their critical thinking skills (Rubio, 2024). Based on TPACK, technology is an important part of learning (Heleem et al., 2022). Technology can be applied in the use of technology-based learning media or in technology-based textbooks and textbooks. One form of technology that is applied as a learning medium is digital folktale comic media.

21st century learning must also be HOTS based. Resnick (1987) states that Higher Order Thinking Skill is a complex process of describing material, making conclusions, building representations, analyzing, and building relationships involving the most basic mental activities. Lewis and Smith (2019) stated that higher order thinking skills will occur if someone has information stored in memory and obtains new information, then connects, organizes and develops this information to achieve goals or obtain solution answers. HOTS includes critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making. HOTS and TPACK aspects should be integrated in learning plans, learning implementation, textbooks, learning models, learning media, and learning assessments.

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\*Corresponding Author. Email: [nugraheniekowardani\\_99@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:nugraheniekowardani_99@staff.uns.ac.id)

Much research has been conducted on learning media. Dwiputra et al. (2020) researched comics that can be used in social studies learning. This comic integrates the concepts of geography, sociology, economics, and history in the learning process. Research by Maharani et al. (2019) examines comics used in physics learning. Research by Yonanda et al. (2019) examines printed comic learning media used for learning in elementary schools. Rokhayani et al. (2014) researched printed comic strip learning media for learning English vocabulary. Research by Yulianda et al. (2019) researched printed comic learning media for learning narrative stories. There has not been much research regarding the learning media for digital folktale comics for learning to write fantasy texts for junior high school students. Thus, the research questions proposed for this research are:

1. How does the use of digital comic folktale learning media influence students' fantasy texts writing skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy texts writing skills?

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. *Digital Comic as Learning Media*

Comic is defined as juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequences, intended to convey information and produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. Digital comic are media that can attract the attention of people of all ages due to the advantage of being easily understood. Simple pictures and words in daily language increase the readability of digital comic (McCloud, 1994). According to Darmawan (2012), the language of images is a system of visual symbols to convey certain information or messages using special drawings. The comic is identical to cartoon images of characters and drawn either in traditional or digital stationery (Fatimah et al., 2019).

Comic that combines visual graphics, as well as textual information is developed to be educational resources. Educational comic, which are designed to entertain and educate, can engage students in complex literacy practices crossing formal and informal experiences (Matuk et al., 2019). The sequence consists of stories, containing pictures and several words (Marianthi et al., 2001). The use of pictures allows students to create a story by generating ideas without difficulty and in chronological order. Comic combines pictures, text, and other visual components permitting students to receive information as well as express ideas. The usage can be an effective and efficient tool in bridging knowledge or learning concepts formally presented into a language closer to students' daily personal experiences (Matuk et al., 2019).

### B. *Folktale*

Folktale is a story that developed among the people, is oral, contains moral values and local wisdom for the community (Rusyana et al., 2000; Danandjaja, 2007; Wardani, 2022). The oral folktales are then collected, re-recorded, and can be published in print. These folktales, which are very useful for the younger generation, are then used in learning in schools. Many efforts have been made to make Indonesian folktale attractive to the younger generation because it is an intangible world heritage for Indonesia, one of which is through inventions in the form of digital folktale learning media. Through this invention, it is hoped that learning media that uses folktale in the form of digital technology can attract students' interest in language learning, especially learning to write fantasy texts.

### C. *Learning to Write Fantasy Texts*

Writing skills are HOTS-based learning in developing C6 competency, namely being creative with the operational verb. In learning to write, students' critical and creative thinking aspects are developed. These skills are reasoning and imagination activities that show a person's cognitive style. According to Vygotsky (2004), imagination is the basis of all creative activities and part of the cognitive process that plays a role in all aspects of life. Individuals with writing skills as part of daily life are certainly more organized in language, critical thinking, reasoning, and creative thinking competence. As an important skill, writing is part of learning outcomes in Elementary and Junior High Schools as well as College.

Writing fantasy texts is an important part of learning language and literature. According to Aghagolzadeh and Tajabadi (2012), literature could provide media to improve language skills through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This was also consistent with Febriani et al. (2022) where the importance of teaching literature covered language enrichment, authentic materials, personal participation, and cultural enrichment.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2023), fantasy story features characters, plots, settings, or themes serving as a combination of reality and imagination, including the whole or only part of the story. Types of fantasy stories include (1) total and Sliced Fantasy, and (2) contemporaneous and cross-time fantasy. Mahsun (2020) stated that fantasy story texts were a literary genre with the social purpose of telling events having pleasant resolutions. The structure includes introduction (orientation), problem (complication), and problem-solving (resolution). Wright (2004) reported that fantasy stories contained an alternative reality setting. In this context, creativity can be developed by writing fantasy story (Arnett, 2005). Students tend to show enhanced learning outcomes when engaging with fantasy narratives compared to real-life stories (Vidal, 2014). Fantasy stories are very important for developing creativity and can guide students to practice writing and conduct imaginative creations (Yusmaliana & Suyadi, 2019). Meanwhile, literature learning educates students to be able to write literary works. Students can write complete fantasy texts when accompanied by learning media to support learning process.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Research Design

This research is a mix method. According to Creswell (2009), mix method research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The design used qualitative data obtained from interviews, while quantitative data sources included pretest and posttest learning data, as well as questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The strategy was an explanatory sequential design, which included collecting and analyzing quantitative pretest and posttest data. Subsequently, qualitative data collection and analysis were conducted based on student interviews (Creswell, 2009).

#### B. Research Sample

This study was conducted at a Junior High School in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The subjects were 40 students for the pretest and posttest stages and 5 students for interviews. Questionnaire data was distributed to 40 students. A total of 20 male and 20 female students participated in the Indonesian language learning by creating fantasy text material.

#### C. Data Collection Method

The quantitative data collection method comprised the conduction of pretests and posttests on 40 students to assess the effectiveness of digital comic folktale learning media in teaching fantasy text writing. In this context, the pretest and posttest data were supported with questionnaire responses. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms and qualitative data collection techniques comprised the conduction of interviews with students. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted with 5 students coded as S1 (Student 1), S2 (Student 2), S3 (Student 3), S4 (Student 4), and S5 (Student 5).

#### D. Data Analysis Method

The collected pretest and posttest data were subjected to statistical analysis. The analysis started with prerequisite tests such as normality and homogeneity tests, and a t-test was conducted using SPSS 27. The questionnaire results were analyzed by converting quantitative data into five-scale qualitative data (Sukardjo, 2018). Each statement on the strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree aspects was scored 1,2,3,4, and 5, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage of digital comic media was calculated using the following formula,  $P\% = \frac{\sum q}{\sum r} \times 100\%$ .  $P\%$  = percentage of each aspect,  $\sum q$  = total score for each aspect,  $\sum r$  = maximum score for each aspect. The score was calculated using the following formula,  $N = A\% + B\% + C\% + D\% + E\% + F\% + G\% + H\% + I\% + J\%$ .  $N$  = Score obtained for each type,  $A-J$  = Percentages of scores for numbers 1–10. The range was determined by the maximum score of 10 and since the score of digital comic media was 100% (Sukardjo, 2018). Qualitative data analysis was based on the results of interviews with 5 students. Moreover, the results of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and recorded in data cards. Then the results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis are integrated through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### IV. RESULT

#### A. The Use of Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media Influence Students' Fantasy Text Writing Skills

##### (a). Comparison of Fantasy Text Writing Skills Between Pretest and Posttest

##### 1. Normality Test

The data was subjected to a normality test to ascertain the distribution before conducting the comparative analysis. Parametric methods were used for subsequent testing when normal distribution was reported. Conversely, non-parametric methods were adopted when there was a deviation from normality. The test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, as reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
RESULTS OF NORMALITY TEST DATA

Group	Statistic	n	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest	0,949	40	0,072	0,05	Normally Distributed
Posttest	0,957	40	0,137	0,05	Normally Distributed

Based on the normality test, the p-values for pretest and posttest data were 0.072 and 0.137, respectively. The data were normally distributed since the pretest and posttest groups had p-values more significant than  $\alpha = 5\%$  or 0.072 and 0.137 > 0.05.

##### 2. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was used to determine the equality of the data variances, as reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
RESULTS OF DATA HOMOGENEITY TEST

Group	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest	0,217	0,05	Homogenous
Posttest			

Based on the homogeneity test results, the p-value obtained was 0.217. Since the p-value was more significant than  $\alpha = 5\%$  or 0.05 ( $0.217 > 0.05$ ), the pretest and posttest data had the same variance (homogeneous). The subsequent test used a parametric method of the paired t-test because the data were normally distributed and homogeneous.

3. Paired T-Test

Based on the paired t-test calculation, the comparison of fantasy text writing skills between the pretest and posttest groups is reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
PAIRED T-TEST RESULTS

Group	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest and Posttest	0,000	0,05	There is a significant difference

Based on Table 3, the obtained p-value is 0.000. The p-value  $< \alpha$ , or  $0.000 < 0.05$  when compared to  $\alpha = 5\%$  or 0.05, rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and reporting a significant difference between the fantasy text writing skills in the pretest and posttest groups. The descriptive statistics Table shows the difference in fantasy text writing skills between the groups.

TABLE 4  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fantasy Text Writing Skills (Pretest)	40	70.00	90.00	78.5750	4.18108
Fantasy Text Writing Skills (Posttest)	40	72.00	95.00	83.8750	5.17483

Based on Table 4, the fantasy text writing skills in the pretest group have maximum and minimum values of 90 and 70, as well as an average value of 78.57, with a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the posttest group has maximum and minimum values of 95 and 72, as well as an average value of 83.87, with a standard deviation of 5.17. Since the average learning outcomes in the pretest ( $78.57 < 83.87$ ), there is a difference between the groups. This is significant based on the paired t-test results where the p-value  $< \alpha$  or  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Due to the difference in the average pretest and posttest scores, there is an influence of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy text writing skills for junior high school students.

B. The Students' Perceptions of Using Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media to Improve Fantasy Text Writing Skills

(a). Results of The Students Questionnaire

No	Perception Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I am interested in learning fantasy texts and writing fantasy texts using digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	10.5%	72.5%	17%
2.	I feel that digital comic folktale learning media makes it easier to learn fantasy text material.	0%	0%	8.2%	46.3%	45.5%
3.	I like the pictures and colors in digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	5%	80%	15%
4.	I find it easy to observe and read the written text in digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	3.4%	80.2%	16.4%
5.	I feel that the written text and images in comics are closely intertwined to support the story.	0%	0%	6%	80%	14%
6.	I feel that the language used in digital comic folktale learning media is easy to understand.	0%	0%	2%	82.4%	15.6%
7.	I find it easy to access digital comic folktale learning media with a smartphone or laptop.	0%	0%	4.5%	77.5%	18%
8.	I can identify that the story in digital comic folktale learning media contains the beginning, middle, and end stages of the story.	0%	0%	6.3%	78.7%	15%
9.	I benefit from learning and writing fantasy texts using digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	6.5%	78.5%	15%
10.	I feel that digital comic folktale learning media helps me when writing fantasy texts during class assignments.	0%	0%	2.2%	77.8%	20%

(b). Interview Results From Students

Digital comic was offered as an alternative technology-based learning media for fantasy text writing material. The following were students' opinions after observing the digital comic folktale learning media and carrying out learning to write fantasy texts.

- (1) I am very interested in your digital comic folktale learning media. Very interesting. We like it because there are pictures. Moreover, the pictures are colorful. It's easier for me to imagine composing stories (S1).
- (2) Wow, I agree if fantasy text learning media is in the form of digital comic folktale. Fantasy text contains stories and pictures. Makes it easier for us to understand learning material. We can access it practically through our respective devices (S2).
- (3) Digital comic folktale learning media have attractive pictures and colors, showing different expressions of sadness or happiness. The sequence is easily arranged because the story is easy to understand (S3).
- (4) The text in digital comic folktale learning media is harmoniously composed with the pictures, and the language is easy to understand. Therefore, the plot of the story is easily arranged (S4).
- (5) The balloons, pictures, story, colors, and font sizes are harmonious. With this learning media, the plot of the fantasy story is easily arranged (S5).

## V. DISCUSSION

The students in the experimental group improved in the posttest after using digital comic folktale learning media. Fantasy text writing skills in the pretest group had maximum and minimum values of 90 and 70, as well as an average of 78.57, with a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the fantasy text writing skills in the posttest group had maximum and minimum values of 95 and 72, as well as an average value of 83.87, with a standard deviation of 5.17. Based on the paired t-test results, the  $p\text{-value} < \alpha$  or  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Due to the difference in the average scores, there was an influence of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve the learning outcomes of writing fantasy texts for junior high school students. This study was consistent with Maharani and Rahayu (2019), where the Toondoo comic was used as physics learning media, resulting in high ratings from material experts. Furthermore, Yonanda et al. (2019) explored printed comic learning media in elementary schools to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

Based on the questionnaire data, 89.5% of students strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media was attractive for learning and writing fantasy texts. This result was consistent with Hietajärvi and Tuominen (2015); Lawrence and Tar (2018); Reis et al. (2021); Rubio (2024); Lawrence and Tar (2018), where learning with comics increased learning interests and literacy. Students became enthusiastic about reading comic content and following the storylines through high motivation to participate in activities. From the questionnaire results, 91.8% strongly agreed that digital comic learning media increased the easiness of learning fantasy text material. This was consistent with Reis et al. (2021), where visual aspects captured students' interest in reading comics. The use of visuals allowed students to generate sequential ideas when writing stories (Darsalina et al., 2016). According to Berlian et al. (2021), comics as visual-based media facilitated understanding, strengthened memory, and enhanced student interest.

Approximately 95% of students strongly agreed that digital comic folktale media had good images and colors. This was consistent with the opinion that the choice of color, font size, image layout, clarity of title, image material, design attractiveness, and illustrative images was very influential (Artha, 2020). Furthermore, 96.6% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media contained written text in balloons or story introductions. This corresponded to the findings of Pattemore and Munoz (2020), where the right type of text size influenced the readability. The size and type of letters used influenced the readability of the text. The smaller the letters in digital comic media, the more the font became blurry, resulting in poor readability. Moreover, 94% expressed strong agreement that written text and images in comics were closely connected to support the story. This was consistent with the findings of Farinella (2018), where comics combined words and images to transmit information in language learning. The visual aspect could attract students' interest in reading comics and persist in reading the content (Reis et al., 2021). Furthermore, 98% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media used language easily understandable by students (Keskin et al., 2020). A total of 95.5% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale media was easily accessible with smartphones and laptops. Karademir and Alper (2021) reported that integrating technology and digitizing learning has made the process more effective, practical, and diverse. Moreover, 93.7% of students agreed or disagreed that the story's beginning, middle, and end stages could be identified in digital comic folktale learning media. This was consistent with McCloud (1994), where the comic storyline was easy to understand with interesting pictures.

Nurdiyantoro (2023) stated that a good plot should have plausibility, suspense, surprise, and unity at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Additionally, 93.5% of students strongly agreed that there were benefits to learning and writing fantasy texts with digital comic folktale media. This was consistent with Cimermanová's (2015) opinion that learning with comics shaped personalities because good character values caused students to behave well. Moreover, 97.8% strongly agreed that digital comic media rendered assistance during fantasy text writing learning tasks in class. This corresponded to Wilson's (2015) finding that comic media assisted students in learning writing skills. Based on the interview results, there was an increased level of enthusiasm due to digital comic folktale learning media. This media had attractive pictures and colors, as well as easy-to-understand language and stories in writing fantasy storylines. The use of digital comic folktale learning media could improve the writing skills of junior high school students.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study was carried out to describe the influence of digital comic folktale learning media on writing fantasy texts using quantitative and qualitative mixed methods. The quantitative method showed a significant difference in the average scores between the pretest and posttest groups. This difference was significant between the fantasy text writing skills in the groups based on the paired t-test results where the p-value  $< \alpha$  or  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, digital comic folktale learning media could improve the learning outcomes of fantasy text writing skills for junior high school students. According to the questionnaire, students found digital comic folktale learning media appealing for learning and writing fantasy texts due to the presentation of attractive, colorful pictures, easily comprehensible storylines, and the assistance provided by the narratives in composing fantasy texts. Meanwhile, the t-test, questionnaire, and student interviews showed student enthusiasm when digital comic folktale media was used in the learning process. Students have fantasy text writing skills and critical & creative thinking competencies.

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**Nugraheni Eko Wardani** is an associate professor of Indonesian Language and Literature Education at Universitas Sebelas Maret Indonesia. She focuses on the field of learning Indonesian language and literature, literary studies, cultural studies, folktales studies, postcolonial studies. She has been a speaker in national and international seminars. She is a reviewer of several reputable journals in Indonesia. She has published books and e-books, including *The Meaning of Totality in Literary Works*, *Literary Theory*, *Folklore of Surakarta and Yogyakarta*, *Folktales of Central Java and East Java: Content and Analysis of Structuralism*, *Implementation of Learning Indonesian During the Covid-19 Pandemic*, *Princess Tawangalun and The King*. She actively publishes scientific articles in various national and international journals.