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NELTAL Conference Proceedings The 9 th Na tional English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference 2017 Page 153 DEVELOPING LOCAL CULTURE BASED DIGITAL COMICS : A WAY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AUTONOMY Tri Mulyati and Dhalia Soetopo PGRI University, Banyuwangi mulyati29@gmail.com ; dhaliasoetopo@gmail.com A bstract: Digital environment offers teachers and students a plethora of information and resources for learning.

Nowadays, students who are mostly digital natives are accustomed to utilizing technology in thei r daily life. This condition requires teachers to be technology leaders. They are responsible for providing a good learning environment where students are involved in their own leaning and that best suits them in a particular context.

This study is aimed a t d eveloping local culture - based digital comics for narrative reading comprehension by integrating local wisdom of Banyuwangi in English language teaching. This study follows the Research and Development design adapting the pattern developed by Borg and Gall. Based on the need analysis administered to 35 students in Year 8 of SMPN 1 Kalipuro , Banyuwangi, the local culture - based digital comics were developed.

Two digital comics were developed: the legend of Banyuwangi and the dance competition. The product s were validated by experts. The results of the study showed that the local culture based digital comics were effective and relevant to be used in learning narrative reading comprehension. Keywords: Culture, Digital Comics, Learning Autonomy, R & D INTR ODUCTION The use of materials and media in English language teaching takes significant roles.

Instructional materials are the main component in English language teaching (Richard, 2001). They provide the basis for the content of the lesson, the balance of skills taught, and the kinds of language practice. Cahyono and Megawati (2013) explain that instructional materials deal with what the teachers teach while media is a tool the teachers use to teach.

Instructional m aterial s are like ingredients which are served for cooking whereas media is like the utensils used to transform the ingredients into ready served meals. Because of those reasons , the teachers need to use instructional materials as the primary teaching resource s and use media to deliver the instructional materials effectively. Besides, for the learners, instructional materials are the major source to achieve the objec tives of instructional process.

And, th e most important thing is that i nstructional materials are one of the factors used to foster the learners' learning autonomy. The learning autonomy refers to the learners' ability to be responsible for their own lear ning (Holec, 1981 cited in Ivanovska, 2015). Being autonomous means that the learners are able to cope with these things i.e.

"working independently, collaborative learning, problem solving, using resources, decision making, and setting and determining lea rning goals" (Nguyen et.al, 2011). In short, the learners independently selecting the materials to learn are called autonomous learners. However, this ability is strongly influenced by the learning environment where the learners learn. Nguyen et.al (2011) further explained that the learning environment will shape the learners' learning style.

The learning style they have will determine how productive the autonomous learning works. For example, the learning environment with the availability of good material s will lead the learners to independently use them for their own learning. Thus, the teachers are responsible to provide a good learning environment where the students are involved in their own l earning and that best suits them in a particular context. Th ere are three types of contexts, namely, linguistic context, situational context, and cultural context (Song, 2010).

When communicating, people have to consider these contexts. Linguistic context is relationship among words, phrase s, and sentences that cre ates meaning. It involves syntagmatic and morphological interpretation of the text elements. Situational context is a knowledge owned by language users about everything that is related with environment, place, time seen when the language is used.

Cultural context is the knowledge of culture, customs, and historical background of

society where the language is used. From this definition, it can be concluded that contexts are very important since they help language users to interpret meanings.NELTAL Conference Proceedings The 9 th Na tional English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference 2017 Page 154 The three contex ts above show that a culture cannot be separate d from those who learn or use language for communication.

As cited in Clandf ield (2008), Spradley defines culture into three groups: cultural artefacts, cultural knowledge, and cultural beh aviour. Cultural art efacts are thing s that are made and used by people. Cultural knowledge is everything that becomes people 's knowledge, and cultural behaviour is people 's behaviour and activities.

On the other hand, Sharifian as cited in Xu (2013) defines culture as event s chemas, role schemas, image schemas, proposition schemas and emotion schemas. Event schemas are related with an experience of a certain event. For example, a learner who is involved in Tumpeng Sewu event in Banyuwangi will have event schema about Tumpeng S ewu celebration.

Role schemas are knowledge about rule and norms in a society which is implemented in the form of knowledge about how to behave based on where he is from. Image schemas are symbols which are visualized and become a representative of social experience and physical condition. Proposition schemas are abstractions which play a role as a model of thought and behaviour while emotion schemas are a complex combination between feeling and experience about certain events and situations. In short , the cultural knowledge plays significant role in the success of learning the language.

In the end of learning process , learners who have master ed a certain language will not use a language as a mean s of communication, but they will use it to expand new cultural knowledge. Considering the interrelated relation between language and culture and the need of providing a good learning environment for building the learning autonomy, it is necessary to use English instructional materials with local culture contents.

According to Genc and Bada (2005) in the era of tolerance on the difference of ideology, religion, and culture, language learners have to know not only the foreign culture but also their own culture. By having a good understanding on their own cu lture, the language learners will be able to decide whether a new culture can be adopted, adapted, or rejected.

From a different point of view, Royani (2012) explained that the use of authentic materials in English language teaching causes difficulties and confusi on among learners because of different environment and context between materials and the language learners. That is why in the development of English language teaching, it is needed to insert the value of Indonesia n local culture.

This is important in order to preserve nation cultural identity and to motivate language learners in learning English. However, the need of providing a good learning environment in English language teaching was not supported by the availability of English materials contai ning Indonesia n local culture. Also, the use of media as a tool to deliver the materials to the learners still becomes an issue.

Indonesia n local culture found in English textbooks was limited on local folklore such as Malin Kundang from West Sumatra, Leg end of Danau Toba from North Sumatra, and Tangkuban Perahu from West Java (Prasetyo, 2016). However, it seems ironic since Indonesia has a lot of local folklore in every region. For example, in Banyuwangi region, English materials should have contained th e local folklore of Banyuwangi such as Legend of Banyuwangi , Tumpeng Sewu , Barong , Kebo – Keboan , etc. Another issue in the teaching of English is that the activity designed to deliver local culture is limited on story telling.

The teachers and learners us ually tell about the story of Cinderella and Snow White. The use of high - tech media like digital comics has not been found yet. The teachers and learners usually use ready - used comics of which the content may not suit to the learners' culture identity. In this digital era, the learners have involved in the global access. They are used to using computers, smartphones, and various internet features for daily need.

This condition expects teachers to be a step ahead in using technology. The teaching and learnin g activity should not use monotone and limited activities in the classroom, but it should integrate computer and internet as a source and media for learning. In short, the materials and media used must facilitate the learning activity to happen wherever an d whenever.

Based on this condition and needs, the researchers aimed at developing instructional material and media in the form of local culture based digital comics for the Eighth - year students of SMP Negeri 1 Kalipuro , Banyuwangi. Digital comics are com bination between narrative texts and digital contents. Abdel - Hack and Helwa (2014) explain that digital comics have some benefits such as a clear and colorful visualization, sound effects, and transition effect that enable readers comprehend the story.

Fur ther, Ravelo (2013) explained that pictures in comics are designed to be interrelated and to support each other so that readers can read the texts through the pictures. The use of texts in comics is part of narrative stories. The texts are written in the c onversation balloon. Sometimes, the writer substitutes the texts with simple pictures to simplify the message (Steimberg, 1977 cited in Ravelo, 2013).

For example, the writer uses a bulb picture to represent a brilliant idea. The combination between pictur es and texts makes reading comics interesting and stimulate s readers not to stop reading.NELTAL Conference Proceedings The 9 th Na tional English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference 2017 Page 155 Therefore, this study aims to develop local culture based digital comics for the E ight h - year students of SMP Negeri 1 Kalipuro , Banyuwangi .

The result of the study is t o contribute useful English instructional materials and media for learning English, especially for reading narrative texts. Also, by developing the local culture based digital comics, learners can improve their reading achieve ment, develop their electronic literacy, love their culture, and finally become autonomous learners.

METHOD This research aims to develop local culture based digital comics as learning materials for the Eighth - year students of Junior high school in Indone sia n context. The researcher adapted Research and Development design proposed by Borg and Gall (1983) in which the stages include: conducting need analysis, developing preliminary form of products, employing preliminary field testing, doing product revisio n, having main field testing, conducting main product revision, and producing the final product. The data were taken using document analysis, interview, and questionnaire.

The result gained from the need analysis was used as the underpinning idea of devel oping local culture based digital comics. Then, t he draft of digital comics was consulted to the material and media expert from Malang State University and the English teacher of SMPN 1 Kalipuro for validation. It was done in order to measure the quality o f digital comics as the instructional m edia. The evaluation covers five aspects, i.e.

instruction, the appropriateness of content, language, graphic, and presentation. Try out was also conducted to measure the quality of the draft from the students' point of view. Here, the students were asked to read comics and were engaged in the discussion.

After that, they were asked to complete questionnaires to measure five aspects of digital comics i.e. function, appropriateness of content, language use, attractiveness, and the difficulty level of material. After the expert validation and try out were done, the data

were analy z ed by using descriptive statistical analysis and the revision of the product wa s done ba sed on the feedbacks. At last, the final product was ready to be disseminated and used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION The findings and interpretation were mainly concerned with the development of local culture based digital comics. The following was s ome items to be discussed. Based on the result of need analysis, the researcher identified a gap between t he real condition of English language teaching in class VIII C of SMP Negeri 1 Kalipuro and the basic competences to be achieved.

T he implementation of narrative texts in the teaching and learning activity did not fit the standard competence and basic competences of reading skill. The narrative reading materials with the sense of a local culture were not found . In addition , t he readin g m aterials were not related to the s tudents' close environment whereas it is clearly stated from the school - based curriculum to the revised edition of 2013 curriculum (K - 13) that the teaching of English in Indonesia should be related with the students' cl osest environment so that they can use English in a meaningful communication.

Further, the lack of interesting media for reading narrative texts makes students have difficult ies in comprehending narrative texts. In short, the results of need analysis revea l that narrative texts need to be taught by incorporating local culture content and a suitable interesting media in the form of digital comics.

Developing digital comics with local culture insertion into narrative reading materials were due to the need of providing students the materials which suit to their prior knowledge. This is important since the students' exposure on a certain topic will result in their understanding on related reading materials (Mishan, 2005). T he products developed were in the for m of local culture based digital comics by focusing on narrative texts entitled; The Dance Competition and The Legend of Banyuwangi. The digital comics were developed by using Comic Creator software and were in the form of PDF files.

The comics can be read in laptops, computers or smartphones. The local culture contents of Banyuwangi were inserted in every title of digital comics. The first story told about the need of preserving Gandrung dance as the traditional dance of Banyuwangi while the second story t old about the story of Sritanjung and Sidapeksa.

From the result of the product validation, the first experts' judgement indicate that the average score of the judgement given by the material and media expert was 3.91 for the story entitled The Dance Competition and 3.88 for the story entitled The Legend of

Banyuwang i. It meant that the quality of <mark>local culture based digital comics were</mark> enough in five aspects measured, namely, instruction, appropriateness of content, language, graphic, and presentation . The aspects of instruction and presentation were eligible. It meant that these two aspects were suitable with the target.

On the other hand, the appropriateness of content, language and graphic were fairly eligible. It meant that these three aspects were good but there were several items need to be revise d . Besides answering the questionnaire, the expert gave someNELTAL Conference Proceedings The 9 th Na tional English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference 2017 Page 156 comments and suggestion s . He suggested that some pictures used in the comic entitled "The Dance Competition" were not appropriate culturally .

T he pictures of buildings, fence, and students' faces were not suitable with the local culture of Banyuwangi. Also, the colour and model of uniform worn by the students need revising . Further, the expert suggested adding one more character wearing Islamic u niform in the story.

It was to represent the students in Banyuwangi who mostly wear a hair - dress. In the draft of comic entitled "The Legend of Banyuwangi", the expert suggested to revise the picture of fence and animals. The picture selection of animals s hould consider the geographical condition of Banyuwangi.

On the other hand, from the English teacher judgement, the result of questionnaire showed that the average score of the judgement was eligible. The score of the comic entitled "The Dance Competition was 4.37 and the comic entitled "The Legend of Banyuwangi was 4.09. The language aspect was very eligible followed by the aspect of content with eligible criteria.

The aspects of instruction, graphic, and presentation were fairly elig ible. It meant these c riteria were good, but there were some items to revise. Further, the English teacher suggested revising the font size in both comics and some grammatical errors. The first try out was administered to five selected students of class VIII C. In the try out, the researcher taught the digital comics to the students.

During the process of reading, the researcher asked questions related to the content of comics to the students. The discussion was done to measure whether the students understood the content of comi cs or not . <mark>At the end of</mark> try out, <mark>the researcher distributed the questionnaire</mark> to the students.

Based on the analysis, it was found that the average score of students' questionnaires was 0.78. The score was in the interval between 0.60 to less than 0.80. I t meant that the digital comics were eligible. The first revision of the product was done on the basis of the data obtained from the expert validation and try out.

From the experts, the revision comprised of grammatical, mechanic, and graphics. Besides, the instruction on how to read comics was added at the first part of comics. After revising the draft of digital comics, the researcher submitted the draft to the experts for the second validation. Based on the results of questionnaires given to the material and media expert, it was found that the average score of the comic entitled "The Dance Competition" and "The Legend of Banyuwangi" was 5.

It meant that the quality of local culture based digital comics were very eligible in five aspe cts measured, namely, instruction, appropriateness of content, language, graphic, and presentation. Similarly, the result of questionnaire given to the English t eacher showed that the local culture based digital comics were very eligible to be used as lea rning materials in narrative text reading comprehension activities. The average score of the comic entitled "The Dance Competition" was 4.

97 and of the comic entitled "The Legend of Banyuwangi" was 5. The second try out was conducted to all students of c lass VIII C. There were 28 students participating in the try out. Here, the researcher asked the students to read comics and discussed the content of comics. All students were enthusiastic to read the comics and able to answer the questions in the discussi on.

At the end of try out, the students gave their response to the questionnaire given. The results showed that the average score was 0.7. It meant that the aspects of function, appropriateness of content, language use, attractiveness, and the difficulty level of material were eligible. The research findings were in line with the results of previous research o n developing digital comics for instruction in Indonesian language conducted by Izza (2013) and Kustianingsari and Dewi (2016).

The results showed t hat developing digital comics on instruction s Indonesian language was elligible to be used as instructtional media. The use of digital comics can improve the students' achievement. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS The final product of this research and development is the local culture based digital comics comprising of two titles, namely, "The Dance Competition" and "The Legend of Banyuwangi".

The results of data analysis gained form the experts' validation indicated th at the local culture based digital comics were very eligible. The results gained from the students' try

out also showed that these digital comics were eligible. Hence, it can be concluded ==that the local culture based digital comics== are applicable for the s tudents in terms of instructional function, appropriateness of content, language use, attractiveness, and the difficulty level of material.

In relation with the conclusion s above mentioned, the English teacher and the E ighth - year students of Junior high sc hool are suggested to use ==local culture based digital comics== ==in the teaching and learning narrative text== reading comprehension. Since the product was developed in limited number ofNELTAL Conference Proceedings The 9 th Na tional English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference 2017 Page 157 titles, that is, there were only two titles of comics with Banyuwangi local culture content, it is suggested to develop digital comics by inserting other local culture of Banyuwangi. REFERENCES Abdel - Hack, & Helwa. (2014).

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