

## The Effectiveness of Using Comics to Improve Reading Skills Among Primary School Pupils

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**ABSTRACT** - This research aims to identify the role of comics in improving reading skills among pupils in primary schools. The participants in this study consisted of five year two pupils in one of the primary schools in the Hulu Selangor district. The pupils involved were pupils who were weak in mastering reading skills well. This study uses a qualitative method. This research was conducted based on the model of Stephen Kemmis & Mc Taggart. This research was carried out with the aim of describing the appropriate use of comics as a teaching aid in the teaching and learning (T&L) in addition to seeing that the use of comics can help pupils' interest in reading and subsequently the effectiveness of comics in improving pupils' reading performance. This research used semi-structured interviews. Data was collected using observation forms, document analysis and performing pre- and post-tests. The findings of the study show an increase in pupils' reading skills, and are also seen as an excellent teaching tool for the year two class. By carrying out this study, the dignity of comic books can be raised to a higher level than other educational materials. The societal stigma that comics are just a waste of time needs to be addressed. In reality, comic books can be used as the main teaching tool for Malay subjects and other subjects that will facilitate the teaching and learning process.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental skills essential to human life, serving as the primary medium for acquiring knowledge and information. The importance of reading is reflected in various expressions such as "Reading is the bridge to knowledge" and "Reading sharpens the mind," both of which emphasize that reading plays a central role in intellectual and social development. In the context of Islam, the significance of reading is further underscored in the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 1–5, which calls upon humankind to read and seek knowledge. The verse translates as foll.

"Read in the name of your God who created. created man from a clot of congealed blood. Read, and your God is the Most Gracious, who teaches man by pen and writing, and teaches man that which he did not know." (Q.S Al-'Alaq: 1–5)

Reading is not merely a linguistic activity but also a cognitive process involving comprehension, reasoning, and the ability to connect new information with prior experiences. Abdul Rasid and Hasmah (2013) explain that reading is the ability to recognize visual forms, associate them with sounds and experiences, and interpret their meanings. This indicates that reading forms the foundation of all fields

of knowledge and serves as a critical prerequisite in formal education, especially in the Malay language subject. The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has also emphasized the importance of mastering the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic (the 3Rs) as the core pillars of the education system. Weak reading proficiency can negatively affect students' performance in other subjects and hinder their ability to progress to higher levels of learning (Wan Nurzuliana, 2019).

Although various initiatives have been implemented by MOE such as the Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) program and the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR)—reading difficulties remain prevalent among primary school pupils. Zainiah et al. (2018) highlight that early literacy plays a vital role in establishing a strong foundation for learning, as children with good language skills tend to master reading and writing more quickly.

In efforts to improve reading skills, teachers have introduced various approaches and teaching aids to capture pupils' interest. The use of materials appropriate to pupils' cognitive levels and interests helps them better understand reading content. According to Abdul Rasid and Hasmah (2013), incorporating elements of humor, graphics, and visual language such as cartoons can make the learning process more engaging and meaningful. Consequently, comic - based teaching materials have gained increasing attention as an effective alternative in reading instruction due to their appealing, visual, and easily comprehensible nature for young learners.

Previous studies have shown that comics, as a teaching aid, have the potential to enhance pupils' concentration, comprehension, and reading interest (Fajrina & Hayatina, 2018; Nurul Haniza et al., 2018). By combining visual elements, text, and compelling storylines, comics not only help pupils recognize words and language structures but also stimulate imagination and creative thinking. Therefore, the integration of comics in reading instruction at the primary level represents a meaningful and relevant approach aligned with 21st-century educational demands that emphasize learner engagement, creativity, and meaningful learning.

Although Malaysia has implemented various educational policies and curricula such as the New Primary School Curriculum (KBSR), New Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM), Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR), and Revised Primary School Standard Curriculum (2017), the issue of weak reading skills among primary school pupils has yet to be fully resolved. The existence of remedial classes and the increasing number of pupils requiring intervention indicate that reading difficulties remain a major challenge within the national education system. This suggests that having a comprehensive curriculum alone is insufficient without engaging and effective pedagogical strategies to address fundamental literacy problems.

Reading and writing literacy skills form the foundation of language mastery and are prerequisites for pupils' academic achievement. Intan Nur Syuhada and Zamri (2021) stated that basic literacy skills serve as the basis for pupils' ability to speak, read, write, and comprehend communication effectively. However, data from Wave 1 of the *Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013–2025* revealed that among 2.86 million registered primary school pupils, 27,093 (0.94%) had yet to master reading skills. The MEB Annual Report (2016) further recorded that approximately 2% of primary school pupils were at risk of dropping out due to weaknesses in basic 3M skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic).

This situation became increasingly alarming when the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to nationwide school closures and significant disruptions to teaching and learning. Arwansyah Kirin et al. (2021) asserted that online learning during the pandemic could not be implemented optimally due to limitations in internet access, devices, and technological skills among pupils and parents. According to Hazhari Ismail (2021), the pandemic was among the main causes of the decline in 3M proficiency, as pupils lost more than 3,000 hours of instructional time between 2019 and 2020. Even before the pandemic, data indicated that 3,677 out of 8,256 Year One pupils in the Kuantan district were unable to recognize letters, illustrating that reading difficulties have long existed in the education system.

Teachers still tend to use conventional approaches such as explanation and repetitive reading, which often cause pupils to lose interest and motivation. Faizah (2017) emphasized that the use of creative and cognitively appropriate teaching aids is essential to attract pupils' interest and improve academic achievement. The rapid evolution of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century also demands innovation in teaching approaches. Therefore, teachers must seek alternative teaching aids that are more interactive,

engaging, and aligned with 21st-century learning styles.

According to Norfarizah and Mohd Zazril (2016), using suitable teaching materials can make learning more enjoyable, comprehensible, and effective. One promising medium in this context is educational comics, which combine visual elements, text, and narrative to capture pupils' attention and enhance their reading comprehension. Through comics, pupils can not only recognize words and sentence structures in an enjoyable way but also connect reading materials with real-life contexts. Hence, this study focuses on the use of comics as a teaching aid to improve the reading skills of lower primary school pupils

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the suitability of using comics as a teaching aid in the teaching and learning (T&L) process in primary schools.
2. To describe how the use of comics enhances pupils' interest in reading at the primary school level.
3. To determine the effectiveness of comics in improving reading performance among primary school pupils.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Reading Skills

Reading skills form the fundamental basis of language learning and serve as the key to students' academic achievement. Reading is not merely the act of pronouncing words, it involves understanding meaning and the ability to extract information from various written materials (Suppiah, 2018). The *Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document (DSKP)* (Revised 2017) emphasizes reading fluency, correct pronunciation, and proper intonation as essential components for text comprehension. The assessment of reading proficiency does not only evaluate mechanical ability but also students' capacity for reasoning and appreciation of both literary and non-literary texts.

According to Abdul Rasid (2013), reading skills refer to the ability to comprehend the meaning of words and recognize the visual symbols of letters and sounds. This process helps students develop creativity and cognitive thinking. Weaknesses in reading can significantly affect students' academic performance and attitudes. Intan Nur Syuhada and Zamri (2021) emphasize that students who lack reading proficiency struggle to understand lesson content, while Nur Shakirah and Saiful Haq (2017) found that poor reading ability can lead to negative attitudes such as low self-esteem, truancy, and disinterest in learning. Overall, reading is not merely a mechanical process but a complex cognitive, emotional, and social activity that must be nurtured continuously to produce literate learners who are capable of learning effectively and independently.

### 2.2 Teaching Aids

Teaching aids play a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (T&L). Jasmi et al. (2011) emphasize that instructional materials assist teachers in implementing student-centered learning. Learning media are defined as any tools or materials used to convey information so that students become more interested and can easily understand the lesson content (Dian Ratna Puspananda, 2022). Today, learning media have evolved from manual forms to digital formats, providing teachers with greater opportunities to be creative and innovative in their instructional delivery. Teachers must leverage technology to capture students' interest in learning. Jeffery Tikok's (2017) study found that the effective use of instructional materials can significantly improve the achievement of T&L objectives. Interactive teaching aids not only promote students' intellectual development but also nurture their social and emotional growth, as well as appreciation for others. Norhazira et al. (2021) further highlight that using teaching aids fosters a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience compared to conventional approaches.

Moreover, the use of instructional materials has been proven to enhance conceptual understanding across various subjects. Nur Hana et al. (2022) demonstrated that teaching aids provide students with direct and hands-on learning experiences. In terms of motivation, Nurul Farhanah and Aliza (2021) found that teaching aids can capture students' interest and increase their focus during lessons. Similarly, Jayaganes Balanadam's (2021) study on the use of "Tackel Cards" in Mathematics showed

that instructional materials can improve mastery of multiplication tables while fostering teamwork through edutainment-based activities. Therefore, the use of teaching aids not only supports the delivery of lesson content but also serves as an essential strategy in creating an active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment.

### 2.3 Using Comics in Teaching and Learning

Comics are an effective visual medium for attracting readers' interest, particularly among primary school pupils. Comics can be categorized into various types such as slapstick and editorial, each with its own unique characteristics. They are concise, easy to understand, emotionally soothing, and capable of entertaining readers (Ratna, 2018). In the educational context, comics serve as a supportive medium that can complement or even substitute the teacher's role in delivering lessons in a more engaging and comprehensible manner. Putri Nurlaila et al. (2022) emphasize that comics can overcome students' lack of interest in reading due to their relaxed and student-friendly nature. McCloud (1993), as cited in Ratna (2018), explains that the strength of comics lies in their use of visuals and simple everyday language, combined with contrasting colors and a complementary layout of images and text to enhance comprehension.

According to Dian Ratna Puspananda (2022), comics are flexible and effective learning media that can be applied across multiple subjects. Their strength lies in four key aspects: (i) motivating learners through visual appeal; (ii) creating meaningful connections between images and text; (iii) allowing readers to control their reading pace; and (iv) facilitating understanding of abstract concepts through simplified language. Edi Kurniawan Farid et al. (2021) further assert that comics can significantly improve students' motivation and learning outcomes by integrating elements of color, narrative, and imagery in an enjoyable manner. Through reading, discussion, and storytelling, comics encourage students to learn actively, independently, and creatively. Overall, the use of comics in teaching not only enriches the learning experience but also enhances students' interest, comprehension, and reading skills in a holistic way.

### 2.4 Stephen Kemmis Model in Action Research

The Stephen Kemmis model is one of the most widely used frameworks in educational action research. Its primary purpose is to identify, address, and resolve teaching and learning issues systematically through ongoing reflection and action. The model helps teachers improve classroom practices by reflecting critically on their teaching approaches and developing more effective instructional strategies (Ratna et al., 2018). It emphasizes a collaborative approach within a small social setting where researchers and participants work together to improve educational practices. Nur Izyan et al. (2019) found that applying the Stephen Kemmis model successfully enhanced students' understanding of the phases of the moon, as demonstrated by improved post-test scores and reinforced learning activities. Questionnaire and interview findings also revealed positive effects on students' comprehension after six weeks of intervention. Similarly, Zaimatun (2021) reported significant improvements in students' ability to read ordinal numbers and classroom engagement, achieving 83.75% and 84.82%, respectively, exceeding the target of 75%. In summary, the Stephen Kemmis model serves as a systematic and reflective action research framework that not only refines teaching practices but also enhances students' performance, motivation, and engagement in the learning process.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study employed a qualitative action research design based on the Stephen Kemmis Model, which involves cyclical phases of reflection, planning, action, and re-evaluation. The researcher was directly involved in all stages of the study, including the administration of pre- and post-tests, to assess the effectiveness of using comics in improving the reading skills of Year Two pupils in a primary school in Hulu Selangor. The study began with a preliminary survey phase to identify pupils who demonstrated weaknesses in reading. Among the identified issues were mispronunciation of syllables, fragmented reading, and neglect of punctuation. In the planning phase, the researcher designed an intervention by selecting *Tatabahasa Comics for Years 1, 2, and 3* as teaching aids for five pupils with weak reading skills. The intervention was implemented over a period of one month. Finally, during the reflection phase, the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention and identified aspects that required improvement in teaching practices, including the use of comics as an effective learning medium.

The first phase was the preliminary reconnaissance, aimed at identifying problems in the teaching and learning process. During this phase, the researcher observed Malay language lessons to obtain an initial understanding of pupils' reading proficiency. Findings indicated that although all Year Two pupils were able to recognize letters, a number of them were still weak in reading skills. Whenever reading passages were assigned, the same group of pupils consistently volunteered to read aloud, while weaker pupils showed low confidence and tended to avoid participation.

Classroom observations revealed several common weaknesses, including repetition of words and syllables, addition of letter sounds or affixes, reading only after spelling out syllables slowly, spelling one syllable at a time before achieving fluency, and reading in a fragmented manner. In addition, pupils often ignored punctuation marks, omitted letter sounds or words, and lacked confidence in pronouncing sentences correctly. These findings confirmed the presence of reading fluency and comprehension difficulties among the identified pupils.

Based on these findings, five pupils were selected using purposive sampling. The selection was guided by explicit criteria to ensure that participants genuinely represented the targeted issue of weak reading proficiency. The criteria included:

1. Scoring below 40% in the diagnostic pre-test administered prior to the intervention.
2. Consistently low performance in Malay language assessments based on the teacher's formal academic records.
3. Observable reading difficulties during classroom activities, including inaccurate pronunciation, slow syllabic decoding, omission of words, and inability to read fluently.
4. Low participation and avoidance behavior during voluntary reading activities.

The selection of five participants was considered appropriate for action research, as the focus was on in-depth intervention and close monitoring rather than generalization. A smaller group enabled the researcher to provide individualized attention, closely observe behavioral and cognitive changes, and conduct detailed qualitative data collection through interviews and observations.

The second phase involved planning, during which the researcher designed an appropriate intervention based on the identified problems. At this stage, data were collected through multiple methods, including interviews, classroom observations, pre- and post-tests, and document analysis. Documents reviewed included pupils' written work, attendance records, examination results, and background information. The collected data were analyzed to ensure that the identified problem was significant and required intervention.

The third phase was the implementation of action, which involved the use of Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 Grammar Comics as teaching aids to improve pupils' reading skills. Five pupils identified as weak readers were selected as research participants. The intervention was conducted over a period of one month during Malay language teaching and learning sessions. A pre-test was administered prior to the intervention to determine pupils' baseline reading level, while a post-test was conducted after the intervention period to measure improvement in reading skills.

The final phase was reflection, which involved evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented action. In this phase, the researcher critically assessed teaching practices, the suitability of comics as instructional materials, and pupils' reading improvement based on observation data, interview findings, and document analysis. Reflection enabled the researcher to identify strengths and weaknesses of the strategy used and to consider improvements for future teaching practice.

Through this single cycle of action research, the researcher was able to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of using comics in improving the reading skills of Year Two pupils and to strengthen pedagogical practices for more effective literacy instruction.

The sample consisted of five Year Two pupils from the lower primary level in a school located in Hulu Selangor district. In qualitative research, a small sample size is appropriate as the focus is on

obtaining in-depth information from each participant through observation and face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Three main instruments were used to collect data:

1. Observation Form, used to record pupils' behaviors and reading skills. Observations were also video-recorded to ensure data accuracy.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews, conducted with five Year Two pupils and one Malay language teacher to gather detailed insights regarding pupils' reading abilities.
3. Pre- and Post-Tests, consisting of eight fill-in-the-blank questions. The pre-test was administered before the intervention, and the post-test after one month, to evaluate the impact of comic use on pupils' reading proficiency.
4. Validity and Reliability of the Pre- and Post-Test. The pre- and post-test consisted of eight structured items developed in alignment with the Year Two Malay Language syllabus and the Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document (DSKP). Content validity was established through expert review by two specialists in Malay language education, who evaluated the alignment of the items with the research objectives, curriculum standards, and pupils' proficiency level. Minor revisions were made to improve clarity and appropriateness of language. Given the small sample size ( $n = 5$ ), advanced statistical reliability analysis was not conducted. However, reliability was ensured through consistent test structure, standardized scoring criteria, and pilot testing with two pupils outside the study sample to confirm clarity and stability of the items.

Prior to the implementation of the main study, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the clarity, suitability, and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot involved two Year Two pupils from a different class within the same school who were not part of the actual research participants. The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the clarity of instructions, the appropriateness of language level, the difficulty of test items, and the practicality of the observation checklist.

During the pilot phase, pupils were asked to complete the pre-test items and participate in a brief reading session using the selected comics. The researcher observed whether the instructions were clearly understood and whether the test items matched the pupils' cognitive and language levels. Minor revisions were made following the pilot study, including simplifying certain vocabulary items, improving sentence structure for clarity, and refining scoring criteria for consistency.

In addition to the pilot testing, the research instruments—including the observation checklist, semi-structured interview protocol, and pre- and post-test items—were reviewed by two experts in Malay language education and action research methodology from a public university. The expert review focused on several aspects:

1. Content validity and alignment with the research objectives.
2. Appropriateness of grammar components assessed in the test items.
3. Clarity and neutrality of interview questions.
4. Relevance of observation indicators in measuring reading fluency and engagement.

Feedback from the experts led to further refinement of item wording, improvement of construct alignment, and enhancement of the observation indicators to better capture reading performance. The incorporation of expert feedback strengthened the content validity and methodological rigor of the study.

Through the combination of pilot testing and expert validation, the researcher ensured that the instruments were appropriate, clear, and capable of generating credible and trustworthy data for the action research process.

This study adopted a triangulation approach, combining three data collection methods: observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted throughout the teaching and learning sessions to identify reading errors and behavioral patterns. Interviews were carried out after observations to strengthen the data obtained. Document analysis involved reviewing pupils' written work and performance records. The integration of these three methods enhanced the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Data analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, read repeatedly, and categorized into emerging themes. Data

obtained from observations and document analysis were used to support and validate the key themes identified through interviews.

To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of this action research, the study adhered to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility was ensured through methodological triangulation, as data were collected using multiple sources including classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, pre- and post-tests, and document analysis. The convergence of findings from these different sources strengthened the accuracy and believability of the results. Prolonged engagement in the classroom during the one-month intervention period also enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of pupils' learning behaviors and reading development.

Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, intervention procedures, and instructional materials. Such thick description allows other educators or researchers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings.

Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a clear audit trail throughout the research process. All procedures, including data collection methods, intervention steps, scoring criteria, and reflection notes, were systematically documented. This documentation enables transparency and allows future researchers to replicate or examine the process of the study.

Confirmability was achieved by ensuring that findings were grounded in actual data rather than researcher bias. Interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim, observation records were documented systematically, and test results were analyzed objectively using percentage comparisons. The use of expert validation and pilot testing further minimized potential subjectivity in instrument design. By incorporating these measures, the study ensured methodological rigor and strengthened the credibility of its findings within the framework of qualitative action research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

#### The Suitability of Using Comics as a Teaching Aid

Interview data from pupils (R1, R2, and R4) revealed that comics were perceived as a practical and easily accessible teaching aid. All three respondents mentioned that comics are lightweight, portable, and can be read anywhere, unlike textbooks which are heavier and more formal. The following excerpts illustrate these perspectives:

*"I can bring the comic anywhere. I can even read it in the car, right, teacher? The textbook is big and heavy. I want to save money to buy a comic like that"* (R1)

*"Can I? Where is it, teacher? Are you giving it for free? I can read the comic at home or in the car. If not, can I borrow it for a day, teacher? I'll return it after I finish reading."* (R2)

*"Of course, comics are fun! The storyline is interesting, there's dialogue, and the pictures are attractive. The cartoons make it different from textbooks. Comics are thin and easy to keep."* (R4)

The findings indicate that the physical aspects of comics such as their compact size, light weight, and engaging visual elements make them more pupil-friendly compared to traditional textbooks. In conclusion, comics are suitable as a teaching aid because they are easy to handle, non-burdensome, and increase pupils' readiness to learn in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. This finding aligns with Ratna et al. (2018), who emphasized that the selection of appropriate teaching materials can enhance classroom teaching practices and promote greater pupil engagement during learning activities.

## Comics Increase Pupils' Interest in Reading

All five respondents (R1–R5) stated that comics increased their interest in reading because they contained elements of humor, colorful illustrations, and simple storylines. This was supported by the following interview excerpts:

*"Hehe. Of course, comics, teacher! Comics have all kinds of stories. The stories are short I can finish reading one quickly and move on to another. When I read books, I get tired because they're long, and sometimes the words are hard to spell. There are no cartoons in them" (R1)*

*"I like it, teacher. Comics are fun and funny. I don't like reading textbooks." (R2)*

*"Definitely comics because they're interesting. When there's a fighting scene, it looks like the pictures are popping out! Textbooks have long sentences and are hard to understand. Comics are easy to carry and read in the car. They're lightweight and fun to read." (R3)*

*"So much fun! Comic stories are easy to understand. Even by looking at the pictures, I can get the meaning. The pictures are colorful. Textbooks are hard to understand" (R4)*

*"Comics, of course, teacher. I can see the facial expressions and follow the story easily. Textbooks are too focused on lessons. Comics are not stressful they're funny and enjoyable" (R5)*

The pupils expressed that they felt entertained and less pressured when reading comics, which in turn enhanced their reading motivation. They also found comics easier to understand due to the use of simple sentences supported by visual imagery. According to Melvina (2018), as cited in Norlela and Shamsudin (2020), the edutainment concept combines educational and entertainment elements to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful. This aligns with the current findings, as pupils were more attracted to reading materials that incorporated humor and interactive visuals. In conclusion, comics serve not only as a reading material but also as a motivational tool, encouraging pupils to read voluntarily beyond formal classroom hours.

## The Effectiveness of Comics in Improving Reading Performance

The study found an improvement in pupils' reading performance. Pupils demonstrated greater proficiency in mastering grammar concepts and were able to answer questions posed by the teacher. Comics were used during grammar lessons for a period of one and a half months. The use of comics in the teaching and learning (T&L) sessions was illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

*"I feel happy, teacher. In the comic, I learned about nouns, verbs, and adjectives that the teacher often gives in exercises. Before this, I often didn't do the exercises because I didn't know what to write. Now, I enjoy reading". (R1)*

*"I can learn happily. Like in the grammar comic, I learned about proper nouns and verbs. After that, I became a bit more diligent in reading books. Hehe. I can answer the questions the teacher gives. No blanks anymore." (R2).*

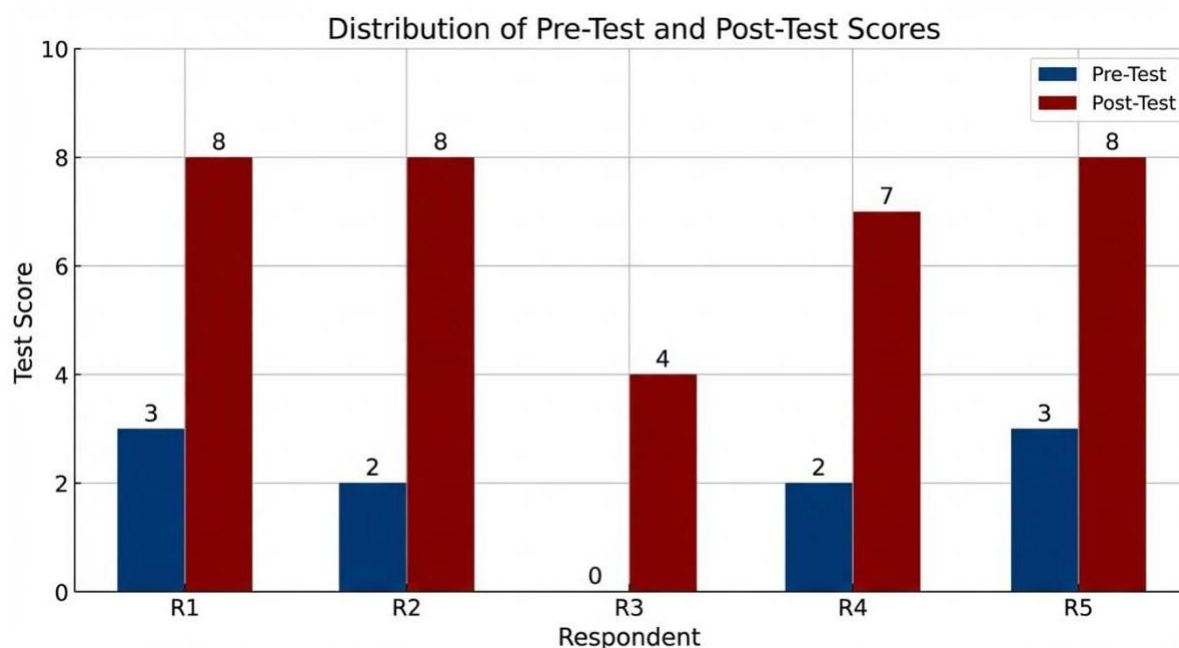
*"I learned a lot. I remember nouns, verbs, and the words that change names. It feels easier to remember." (R3)*

*"Now, I can complete the exercises given by the teacher correctly. Before, I didn't know what to write. The comic is good. It's easy. I also enjoy reading now."(R4)*

*“This comic is good. I remember verbs and conjunctions. It’s easy to memorize” (R5).*

Several respondents stated that they now better understand grammar concepts and are more motivated to read and complete exercises. The humorous elements in the comics help pupils retain difficult information, such as grammatical structures. The findings indicate that pupils recall information more quickly when content is presented repeatedly in the form of visuals and short texts. This aligns with Nur Izyan et al. (2019), who suggested that visually-based interventions can enhance both concept comprehension and pupil motivation.

To support the interview and observation findings, the researcher conducted pre- and post-tests with the five respondents (R1–R5). The results showed a significant increase in scores following the implementation of the comic-based intervention.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Source: Researcher

According to document analysis, post-test scores increased compared to pre-test scores. Respondent R1 showed an increase of 62% in the post-test compared to 37.5% in the pre-test. Respondent R2 improved to 75% in the post-test from 25% in the pre-test. Respondent R3 demonstrated a 50% increase compared to the pre-test. Respondent R4 showed a significant jump from 25% in the pre-test to 87.5% in the post-test. Lastly, respondent R5 improved to 62.5% in the post-test compared to 37.5% in the pre-test. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning of April, and the comic-based intervention was implemented throughout May. The post-test was conducted at the beginning of May to evaluate the improvement in the reading skills of the year two pupils. In conclusion, the use of comics was effective in enhancing reading performance, particularly in grammar comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

## 4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the use of comics as a teaching aid is effective in enhancing the reading skills of year two primary school pupils. The post-test results showed a significant improvement compared to the pre-test, indicating that the integration of comics into teaching successfully facilitated pupils' comprehension and mastery of reading skills. This effectiveness is attributed to the characteristics of comics, which incorporate humor, concise sentences, and colorful illustrations that engage pupils' interest. The combination of text and visuals makes learning materials easier to understand, thereby supporting pupils in retaining the language concepts taught.

In addition to improving academic performance, comics play an important role in fostering

pupils' motivation and self-confidence, particularly among those who face difficulties in reading. The humorous elements and relaxed learning environment help pupils overcome fear and embarrassment when reading, thereby increasing their participation in learning activities. These findings are supported by the study of Abdul Rasid and Hasmah (2013), which highlights the importance of humor in creating an enjoyable and effective teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, the use of comics is considered practical and flexible for classroom instruction, as it does not rely on electricity and is easy to carry. Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the evidence that comics are an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing reading skills and pupils' motivation. The use of comics not only allows teachers to make the teaching and learning process more engaging but also supports meaningful learning in line with the needs of 21st-century pupils (Ratna, 2018).

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the use of comics as a teaching aid is highly effective in enhancing the reading skills year two primary school pupils. Through the implementation of comic-based instruction over the course of nearly one-month, significant improvements were observed in post-test scores compared to pre-test results, indicating that comics not only help pupils better understand the lesson content but also increase their motivation and interest in reading activities.

Comics have proven to be an engaging learning medium by combining elements of humor, colorful visuals, and language that is easily comprehensible for pupils. These features make the learning process more enjoyable, thereby reducing boredom and stress among pupils with varying levels of reading proficiency. Additionally, comics help to boost the self-confidence of pupils who previously felt shy or anxious about reading in front of their peers.

This study emphasizes the need for teachers to be more creative and innovative in designing reading instruction strategies by integrating appropriate teaching aids such as comics. The use of comics not only strengthens pupils' understanding of grammar and language structures but also fosters a positive, active, and pupils-centered learning environment. Therefore, comics hold great potential as an alternative approach to improving reading literacy among primary school pupils.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Nada Rahmatika contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing, original draft preparation. Mazarul Hasan Bin Mohamad Hanapi contributed to

supervision, validation, methodology review, and writing, reviewing and editing. Noor Falahan binti

Zainal Abiddin contributed to data curation, visualization, investigation support, and writing, reviewing and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Due to ethical considerations and the involvement of primary school pupils, the data are not publicly available in order to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

## DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) solely to improve the language clarity and readability of the text. The generative AI tool was not used for data analysis, interpretation of results, or generation of original research content. All content was critically reviewed, revised, and approved by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final version of the manuscript.

## ETHIC STATEMENTS

This study involved human participants, specifically Year Two primary school pupils. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration prior to data collection. Parental consent was secured for all participating pupils. The study adhered to institutional research ethics guidelines, and participants' confidentiality and anonymity were strictly protected. Participation was voluntary, and no harm was inflicted on the participants.

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