

GRAPHIC NOVELS AS A TOOL FOR BOOSTING READING COMPREHENSION IN EFL EDUCATION

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Abstract: This research examines the influence of graphic novels on the reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL), a government-run institution in India. This research aims to assess the influence of graphic novels on the enhancement of students' reading comprehension. Employing a pre-experimental approach, the investigation administered pre-tests and post-tests to a cohort of 34 high school pupils. The data indicates a considerable improvement in the reading comprehension scores of the children after the use of graphic novels. The results indicated a distinct association between reading graphic novels and enhanced understanding. In this study, the researchers discovered that the findings acquired from the pre-test and post-test were very significant, as the subjects had a substantial improvement in their score values both before and after undergoing the therapy. This research provides evidence to support the use of graphic novels as a very successful instrument for augmenting reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) schools.

Keywords: *graphic novels; comprehension; reading; values*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a crucial skill that plays a vital part in the education of pupils. Reading is an intricate cognitive activity that involves deciphering symbols to construct or extract meaning from written material. Reading, in this sense, functions as a means of learning language, enhancing communication, and sharing information and ideas (Kaganang, 2019). Reading comprehension is the process of selecting and reproducing the intended meaning of a written text as planned by the author. Reading comprehension is a word that specifically refers to the capacity to understand and comprehend what is being read, rather than focusing on pronunciation or the amount of text being read (Erya & Pustika, 2021). Reading comprehension is a multifaceted cognitive process that encompasses two primary skills: acquiring a deep understanding of word meanings and engaging in critical thinking about linguistic ideas (Sari et al., 2020). As previously said, reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that encompasses not only the skill of accurately reading words and phrases, but also the capacity to use vocabulary and general knowledge in order to derive meaning from a given sentence. A

sentence is a linguistic construct that may consist of more than one phrase. In the process of understanding a book, readers get meaning not just from individual phrases, but also from a sequence of sentences that are interconnected and coherent across the text. According to Yuliansyah and Ayu (2021), Supplying students with suitable texts will facilitate their comprehension of the content and help them to comprehend and adhere to all the teacher's instructions and tasks. Hence, a coherent understanding is essential to bolster the reader's comprehension when perusing the material. Reading necessitates readers to decipher and synchronize both structural components and visual representations in order to grasp the written language. (Tuzahra, 2021). The graphic novels format mostly consists of panels, gutters, pictures, and text that collaborate harmoniously to narrate a tale. Panels are structural frameworks capable of housing textual and visual representations of individuals, locations, objects, or concepts.

McCloud (1994) stated that readers' comprehension is enhanced by the presence of illustrations throughout these novels. Despite the limited research on using graphic novels in EFL teaching, this study explores their impact on

students' reading comprehension at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU, providing valuable insights for teachers on incorporating this innovative medium to enhance students' motivation and reading proficiency. There is no text provided. Indeed, senior high school students at MAL suffer obstacles that impede their advancement in English reading competence.

The graphic novels format consists mostly of panels, gutters, pictures, and text that collaborate to narrate a tale. Panels are rectangular frames that have the ability to display both textual content and visual representations of individuals, locations, objects, or concepts. One primary advantage of reading graphic novels is that they provide visual help. Illustrations may effectively depict several rare words and phrases. Additionally, they strengthen the content presented in the narrative. Graphic novels are very advantageous for readers since the visual elements assist them in comprehending intricate words. They have a reduced need to use a dictionary compared to a situation where there are no visuals to clarify certain ideas.

In addition, it is important to realize that consuming a substantial volume of text requires a significant amount of time. Therefore, opting for graphic novels, which use visuals to convey information instead of relying heavily on written words, may be advantageous when seeking to read quickly within a limited timeframe (Lalremruati, 2019). According to Wahyudin, Pustika, et al (2021), numerous students experience boredom while reading content in traditional media formats like tale books. Students also have a responsibility to identify appropriate material that might assist them in enhancing their reading proficiency. Given the substantial resemblance between comics, picture, visual and graphic novels, both are taken into account when assessing prior research. Multiple studies, including those done by This research illustrates the students' inclination to use graphic novels as a means to enhance their reading skills. Indeed, their embrace of this novel educational instrument serves as a testament to its success (Aldahash & Altalhab, 2020). This supports the results of Jaffe and Hurwich (2019), who stated that visual media is a key element for understanding any written material. Clearly, the illustrative nature of graphic novels is more appropriate for visual learners than for any other learning style. In a separate investigation by Setyawan (2018), the effectiveness of comics in improving reading comprehension among weak junior high school

learners was explored. Despite initial challenges, the use of comics demonstrated a significant improvement in comprehension, with participants expressing the utility and effectiveness of comics as a teaching tool.

Students consider Vocabulary Acquisition to be one of the most challenging aspects of language acquisition. Nevertheless, vocabulary is seen as a subsidiary aspect of language proficiency (Orfan, 2020). Learning vocabulary plays a vital role in reading comprehension. To understand the text as easily as possible, reading comprehension needs enough vocabulary awareness (HASHEMI, 2021). Vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension pertains to the ability to understand the meaning of individual words or characters in a text. This knowledge enables the necessary cognitive capacity for more advanced reading processes (Dong et al., 2020). Reading comics is proposed to enhance vocabulary acquisition, with Wood (2015) highlighting the graphic connections of words in comics as beneficial for expanding vocabulary. Ahmadi, Sadighi, and Gorjian (2017) found incidental vocabulary improvements when students listened to comic strip stories with rare words. Additionally, Başal, Aytan, and Demir's (2016) The research specifically examined colloquial terms and demonstrated that teaching idiomatic expressions using cartoons yields superior results compared to conventional approaches. To summarize, the acquisition of a more extensive lexicon via many approaches, such as the use of visual aids, enhances one's ability to understand written text.

It is crucial to highlight the influence that Graphic visual novels would have on students' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading practice (Páez, 2020). Kennedy (2020) conducted a study that examined the impact of using a graphic novel as a scaffolding reading experience on the reading skills and motivation of Thai students learning English as a foreign language. In his research, Kennedy discovered that the use of graphic novels in the Sustained Silent Reading (SRE) program resulted in a notable improvement in students' reading comprehension and fostered intrinsic motivation. These findings were statistically significant. When students read graphic novels, they are interacting with intricate and well-organized storytelling formats. Their emerging ability to understand and interpret visual information enhances their thinking abilities and fosters broader metacognitive skills, whether they are aware of it or not. It not only serves as a

source of motivation for children to read a wider range of materials, but also enhances their ability to immerse themselves in a more vivid and expansive fictional world when engaging with comics, text-based stories, and their own written compositions (Gultom et al., 2023). Graphic organizers are beneficial for catering to students' diverse learning styles. Visual learners benefit greatly from using these materials as they effectively teach readers to comprehend symbols and important terms. Additionally, they provide a diverse and captivating approach to learning (Hernández-chérrez & Hidalgo-, 2020). This study aims to elucidate the impact of utilizing graphic novels on enhancing students' reading comprehension. This objective facilitates the implementation of more inventive student learning approaches to effectively attain learning objectives, particularly in reading courses. The significance of this study is to emphasize that engaging strategies will enhance students' inclination to read. In relation to this issue, does the utilization of graphic novels have an impact on enhancing students' reading comprehension?

METHOD

Using an experimental research strategy, this work adheres to quantitative research techniques with pre-experimental research design. Researchers perform experiments to assess the influence of altering a variable on other variables while taking into account external factors. Scientists used a single class for experimentation. The study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium high school of UIN North Sumatra, including a total of 38 students. This study employs a pre-test and post-test research design, with the pre-test administered by Google Form and the post-test conducted using a Graphic Novel design. The study was conducted between February 8, 2024, and March 20, 2024.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean score of pre-test and post-test

Graphic novel significantly affects the reading comprehension of senior high school. Table 1 below shows the average of the pre- and post-test results' values:

Table 1. Paired samples statistics

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	X	32.47	38	7.924	1.286
	Y	55.74	38	13.711	2.224

The mean assessment of students' reading comprehension of reading in the pre-test (X) was

32.47. However, after analyzing the material presented in the table, it rose to 55.74 in the post-test (Y). This demonstrates a substantial rise in the average score after the use of graphic novels as an additional tool in the learning process. The researcher used a paired samples t-test to evaluate the statistically significant nature of the discrepancy among the pre-test and post-test assessments of students' reading comprehension subsequent to using graphic novels for reading.

Paired samples t-test

Table 2. Paired samples t-test

		Paired Samples Test							Significance	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	X - Y	-23.263	6.259	1.015	-25.320	-21.206	-22.912	37	<.001	<.001

The t-test results listed in Table 2 are paired sample t-tests, which in the study showed a significance value of 0.000. The result exceeds the significance threshold of 0.001. It can be confirmed that the significant value of the t-test results (greater than 0.001) confirms the positive distribution of this study, demonstrating its positive impact on the student's learning process. The study has a positive influence, as evidenced by an increase in the average post-test value compared to the pre-test. The reading ability of the students affected becomes better when the researcher implements graphic novels in the student reading class, the students' reading ability improves.

Validity and reliability

The study utilizes a pre-test and post-test tool that includes multiple choice questions to assess reading comprehension while reading graphic novels. The instrument's validity test assesses the validity of its content, and the resulting output is considered valid. Subsequently, the reliability of the test was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Below are the results of the reliability evaluation completed on the instruments used in the study:

Table 3. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.625	10

Depending on the computation performed using SPSS 29, the test's reliability is determined to be 0.625. A Cronbach's Alpha (α) value greater than 0.60 implies that the test is trustworthy. In order to gather data, the researchers conducted many steps. Initially, the researcher administered a pre-test at the initial meeting with the assessing that was purposed for the students' reading

comprehension skills. The first evaluation was carried out using a Google Form survey, comprising of queries focused on assessing reading comprehension. Subsequently, we conducted the second meeting, whereby students were assigned the duty of discerning the principal and subordinate ideas via the examination of graphic novels. At the third meeting, the researcher conducted a post-test to evaluate the students' reading comprehension after they had been exposed to graphic novels as part of the intervention.

Normality test

Researchers use the paired sample t test to assess the collected data. Instead of doing the study, researchers first assess the data for normalcy. The Shapiro-Wilk technique is used in this study because to the small sample size, which is fewer than 50. The normality findings indicate that the significance value of variable X is 0.439, while the significance value of variable Y is 0.446. The normality test findings of this study reveal that the data is normally distributed, with a significant value higher than >0.05. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a method for verifying the normality of data. It involves utilizing a Q-Q plot graph and using the Q-Q plot rule, which states that if the sample is drawn from a population with a normal distribution, the data points would approximately fall along a straight line.

Table 4. *Test of normality*

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
X	.135	38	.079	.972	38	.439
Y	.109	38	.200 [*]	.972	38	.446

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

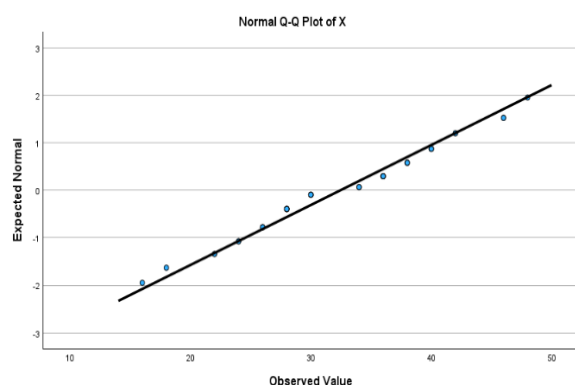


Figure 1. *Normal Q-Q plot of X*

Then, a parametric t-test with a paired sample may be conducted to ascertain the acceptance of

the alternative hypothesis if the significance (two-tailed) value is equal to or lower than 0.05. The observed disparity in the average scores before and after the therapy demonstrates a notable distinction, suggesting the effectiveness of the intervention.

This study indicates that using graphic novels to improve students' reading skills has an impact, as proven by the results of the t-test with a significant value smaller than 0.001. The results also demonstrate a rise in the average scores of students before and after receiving treatment, with an average pre-test score of 32.47 being lower than the post-test score of 55.74. This value increased when researchers treated students with graphic novels as a learning medium to improve their reading skills, especially in one class. The pre-experimental research design involved a total of 34 student participants in this study. The use of visuals with text enhanced reading comprehension. The results align with other studies. Kurniaman and Zufriady (2019) examined the efficacy of utilizing graphic novels teaching resources for reading in fourth-grade primary school students. They found that when used appropriately, teaching materials incorporating graphic novels can be highly effective. In a study conducted by Albufalasa (2019), the effectiveness of graphic novels in enhancing the reading comprehension and motivation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students was investigated. The study employed a mixed-method approach, which involved the collection of quantitative data through reading tests and questionnaires, as well as qualitative data through class observation. Their findings indicated that the performance of EFL students significantly improved when they employed graphic novels to comprehend the story. The test results from the group participating in the experiment provided clear evidence that the inclusion of visual elements considerably improved comprehension.

Students indicated improved text comprehension and decreased anxiety after the finding. Graphic novels enhance students' involvement by augmenting their concentration and meticulousness, beyond the effects of text-only publications. In addition, the group class that used graphic novels finished reading in a duration of 10 minutes. The students in the group class demonstrated the ability to deduce the meanings of words based on visuals that were relevant to the situation. This skill also proved advantageous for acquiring new vocabulary. The findings support by Sathongey and Prasansaph (2019)

investigated the proficiency of 36 Thai undergraduate students in English critical reading. The researchers assessed the students' skills both before and after they were exposed to the graphic novels approach. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' English critical reading skills after the use of graphic organizers. A study by (Qi & Jiang, 2021) the use of Graphic novels in English reading is helpful for the sustained improvement of EFL learners' reading comprehension in English. Statistical evaluation has shown that Graphic novels are an effective and favorable method for enhancing students' sustained improvement in English reading comprehension.

According to Öz and Efecioglu (2015), graphic novels were proven to be beneficial in enriching vocabulary in foreign language instruction. Students get pleasure from graphic novels, seeing them as a more favorable approach to enhancing reading proficiency and want educators to include them into instructional sessions. According to Monnin (2010), graphic novels have been shown to be an effective alternate form of teaching. Students have said that graphic novels enhance their passion for reading English books, both inside and outside of school. Multiple studies, including Edward (2009), have verified that comics enhance pupils' desire to engage in reading. The findings of this research demonstrate the students' inclination to use graphic novels as a means to enhance their reading skills, therefore affirming the effectiveness of this educational resource and the students' enthusiasm to enhance their reading proficiency using graphic novels.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to examine the influence of graphic novels on the reading comprehension of individuals learning English as a foreign language. The t-test findings suggest that the students who underwent treatment achieved greater scores relative to their beginning scores. This is corroborated by the observed increase in the mean score from 32.47 to 55.74, which aligns with the conclusions and examination offered in the previous chapter. Moreover, the outcomes of both the first assessment and final assessment revealed improvements in all aspects of reading comprehension. The paired sample t-test revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after the administration of treatment, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. The results of this study provide concrete evidence to support the idea that including graphic novels into

reading may significantly enhance pupils' reading comprehension abilities. Therefore, it is recommended for the researchers indicated above to explore the use of graphic novels for reading in relation to many other skills.

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