

## **The Effectiveness of Using Comic Strips Toward Students' Reading Comprehension**

**Pasha Syiami Ahmad**

*Corresponding Authors' Email: [pashasyami@gmail.com](mailto:pashasyami@gmail.com)*

Hasyim Asy'ari University, Indonesia

**Sayid Ma'rifatulloh**

*Email: [Sayid.unhasy@gmail.com](mailto:Sayid.unhasy@gmail.com)*

Hasyim Asy'ari University, Indonesia

### **Abstract**

*The objective of this study was to examine the potential impact of Comic Strips on the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students at Mulia Insani Junior High School in Loa, Bandung-West Java. This study employed a pre-experimental research design, specifically utilizing a pre-test and post-test design. The sample methodology employed in this study was purposive sampling. The research was conducted on the VIII B class at Mulia Insani Junior High School during the academic year 2022/2023. The data was collected by the administration of a reading exam in a multiple-choice format. Next, the obtained data was subjected to analysis using the paired sample t-test. There were a total of four meetings, with two meetings dedicated to therapy and the remaining two meetings allocated for pretest and posttest purposes. The findings of the study indicate a notable impact of using comic strips as a post-treatment intervention, as seen by the observed increase in post-test scores. According to the findings, the average score of the posttest was 87.41, whereas the average score of the pretest was 39.67. Additionally, according to the results of the paired sample t-test, the two-tailed significance value (sig) was found to be 0.000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05. The study of the paired sample t-test yielded statistically significant results. Hence, this study provides evidence that the utilization of comic strips has a notable impact on the reading comprehension of students, particularly in relation to narrative material. The research was conducted in the VIII B class at Mulia Insani Islamic Junior High School in Loa, Bandung-West Java.*

**Keywords:** *Reading Comprehension, Comic Strips, Narrative Text.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ability to read is a fundamental talent that is intricately linked to the domains of hearing, speaking, and writing. Reading serves as a valuable instrument for acquiring knowledge and enhancing the process of learning. According to Bano et al. (2018), the act of reading serves as a means for individuals to acquire the ability to extract concepts from written material and construct a comprehensive comprehension of those concepts. The aforementioned statement posits that reading functions as a mechanism through which individuals can obtain knowledge and information during the course of their educational journey. Moreover, in order

to acquire knowledge and information through the process of reading, readers must possess adequate reading comprehension skills. The ability to comprehend written text is a crucial cognitive skill that entails the complex process of deriving meaning from written material by effectively combining one's understanding of the subject matter. Moreover, the ability to read proficiently is a distinct talent that fosters ongoing involvement with literacy throughout one's life. This skill is widely regarded as a crucial asset in several professional domains worldwide, as it enables individuals to effectively identify, interpret, and assimilate written or printed content, hence facilitating their active engagement with the surrounding world.

In the context of implementation, the skill of reading comprehension holds significant importance as it allows humans to comprehend and derive significance from written texts, hence facilitating efficient communication and information assimilation. The act of critically analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information empowers readers, so improving their capacity to make informed decisions and develop comprehensive viewpoints. Moreover, the development of proficient reading comprehension abilities is crucial for achieving academic excellence, as they facilitate the acquisition of knowledge in several fields and areas of study. According to Şahin (2013), the process of reading comprehension may be understood as the production of meaning that occurs when the reader combines information, knowledge, and abilities while engaging with the text. The act of reading without enough comprehension might be likened to a superficial process of skimming over words without truly engaging with the content. The comprehension and understanding of the material are impeded by this factor. This experience might be likened to reading with one's eyes closed, as the content remains elusive and difficult to access. The ability to effectively comprehend written material encompasses more than just proficiency in decoding and vocabulary. It also involves the utilization of prior information and personal experiences to derive meaning from the text. Active engagement with the material, posing inquiries, drawing logical conclusions, and critically assessing the author's message are integral components of this process. The media is considered to be one of the contributing aspects that supports an individual's reading comprehension abilities.

The utilization of a medium is vital in the educational context as it serves to enhance students' motivation during the teaching and learning process. Comic strips are an instructional media that has the potential to engage and excite students' cognitive processes during instructional sessions. The utilization of comic strips in educational settings facilitates the reading and re-reading of content, thereby promoting comprehensive cognitive engagement with both textual and visual elements. Additionally, the incorporation of comics in second language classrooms can serve as a valuable tool for guiding students in the process of formulating hypotheses regarding the language employed in the cartoons. This approach also enhances students' awareness of pragmatics and underscores the inherent regularity of language. Hence, the utilization of visual media facilitates students' comprehension during the learning process and enhances their engagement with reading activities. According to Susanto & Kardena (2021) media is required to make students comprehend reading easier. It means the reader can imagine the sequence of events in a story more easily. In addition, Sibarani et al. (2017) stated that comic strips can be defines as a description of story that describe in form of strips. It means in comics, readability measures ae determined not only by words but also by pictures. The use of comic strips as a media in teaching reading can help students the content and storyline easily because comic strips are illustrated stories.

The present study focused on investigating the efficacy of utilizing comic strips as an instructional tool for enhancing reading comprehension skills among students at Mulia Insani Islamic junior high school in Bandung. Furthermore, this research will focus only on narrative texts, with a particular emphasis on fables. Moreover, the present study aimed to address three research inquiries. The initial inquiry pertained to the reading comprehension of students in the pretest prior to receiving instruction in reading through the utilization of comic strips. The

second inquiry pertained to the extent of pupils' reading comprehension in the posttest subsequent to receiving instruction on reading through the utilization of comic strips. The third inquiry pertains to the potential efficacy of employing comic strips as an instructional tool for enhancing reading skills among students enrolled in the VIII B class at Mulia Insani Islamic Junior High School in Bandung during the academic year of 2022/2023. The anticipated outcomes of this research endeavor are poised to provide a valuable contribution to the dissemination and promotion of English language learning resources, with a particular emphasis on the utilization of comic strips to enhance reading comprehension abilities.

### Reading Comprehension in EFL Context

According to Chua & Sulaiman (2021) stated that reading comprehension is the ability to absorb ideas in a text and properly infer the text's meaning. It is also recognized and interpret important details, understand the author's message, and make connections between different pieces of information. Reading activities look simple when only sounding out the alphabet but to find out information or messages from the text, then reading comprehension is needed. The capacity to draw inferences is one of the characteristics and abilities that influence an individual's capability to comprehend text. In addition, according to Manggasang (2021) there are three levels on reading comprehension:

- a. Literal comprehension. It is the level where the reader understands and identify the plot, the setting, and the characters in the text.
- b. Interpretative comprehension. It is the level where the reader could understand facts not directly stated in the text.
- c. Evaluative or critical analysis. It is the level here the reader tells whether she/he likes or dislikes the thoughts presented in the story, also to evaluate the author.

Based on the explanation above, this research focuses on literal and interpretative comprehension levels because it is adjusted to the school level.

In addition, teaching reading comprehension can be conducted with various methods, but teachers must know the mapping framework of reading comprehension. Ghaith (2018) teaching reading comprehension for EFL could be use instructional framework as a follows:

**Table 1.** Instructional Framework

Dimension	Related Activities
Emergent Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playing with Alphabet blocks</li><li>• Reading aloud</li><li>• Big and predictable books</li><li>• Shared book experiences</li></ul>
Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shadow reading</li><li>• Letter recognition</li><li>• Word recognition</li><li>• Phrase recognition</li><li>• Repeated reading</li></ul>

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- Class paced reading
  - Self-paced reading
- 

Grammatical Complexities	Structural analysis of words
Background Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conversing freely with readers, reading together, telling stories, travelling, showing pictures, movies, and trips</li><li>• Brainstorming</li></ul>
Metacognitive awareness and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think aloud</li><li>• Asking question</li><li>• Accessing prior knowledge, predicting, confirming, making inferences</li></ul>

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In this research, the researcher used cooperative learning to teaching reading comprehension especially using discussion method. Paschal et al., (2020) stated cooperative learning is an approach that teachers can utilize in the classroom to help students reach higher levels of performance and to foster positive interaction among students, allowing all students to participate in the learning process. This is an effort to increase students' awareness and their activeness in how they learn to be responsible for themselves and learn to communicate with others. Besides, the researcher took two methods of discussion, there are formal method that a small group and panel method.

### **Conceptualizing Comic Strips as a Method**

According to Purba and Rini (2021), comic strips can be characterized as a sequential arrangement of drawings that convey a narrative or comedy through interconnected panels. These panels are generally accompanied by text in the form of speech balloons and captions, and are frequently serialized. Comic strips are a form of sequential art that combines textual elements with a succession of pictures in order to convey a narrative. The balloons shall be inflated with textual excerpts from the narrative or dialogues between characters inside the plot. Darsalina et al. (2016) highlighted the defining feature of comic strips, namely their composition of sequential images. The visual narratives are comprised of a sequence of images that depict a coherent storyline in a sequential fashion. The systematic arrangement of information in a sequential manner facilitates students' comprehension and enables them to effectively track the narrative progression.

Comic strips are sequential art forms that convey narratives through a succession of pictures. The utilization of comic strips as a pedagogical tool for the instruction of reading comprehension is employed by educators. Comic strips are produced in a printed format and afterwards distributed to pupils for the purpose of reading. In the past, the students formed groups in order to engage in reading and discussing comic strips. Subsequently, a pair of

individuals, acting as representatives of the collective, step forward to present the results they have achieved. In the realm of pedagogy, Arsyad (2015) as referenced in Susanto and Kardena (2021) elucidates that within the context of teaching and learning, the concept of "media" conventionally pertains to electronic, photographic, or graphic instruments employed for the purpose of capturing, manipulating, and reorganizing verbal or visual information. In other words, the utilization of media is necessary in order to facilitate the process of teaching reading. One notable benefit of utilizing comic strips as a medium for instructing reading comprehension is their ability to facilitate readers' comprehension of both the narrative and the author's intended message. According to Carry (2014), as mentioned in Nafisah & Pratama (2020), it is important to note that in the context of comics, the assessment of readability include not just textual elements but also visual components. The evidence demonstrates that comic strips provide a visually stimulating and dynamic medium that effectively captures the attention of students, so enhancing the learning experience and fostering active engagement among reluctant readers. Furthermore, the amalgamation of visual representations and succinct written content within comic strips serves to augment understanding through the provision of contextual cues and facilitation of the cultivation of essential reading abilities, including inference and visual literacy. Hence, the utilization of comic strips as an instructional instrument enables educators to effectively cater to a wide range of learning styles and skills, thereby facilitating inclusivity within the classroom and cultivating a conducive learning atmosphere for every student.

Furthermore, the adapted texts are narrative text, especially fable. According to Latifah et al. (2019) defined narrative is text, which tells a story while entertaining or informing the reader or listener. It is a literature piece that tells a story in order to form, amuse, or entertain the reader or listener. It shows that a narrative text is a literary form that weaves a story, transporting readers into a world of imagination and emotion. It serves as a vehicle for storytelling, inviting us to embark on an adventure, or explore different perspectives. The essence of a narrative lies in its ability to capture our attention and stir our emotions, whether through vivid descriptions, interesting characters, or unexpected plot twists. Fable is a genre of narrative text. A fable is a short allegorical narrative that has animal as characters who speak like act human beings. For examples, The Lion and The Mouse, The Ants and Grasshopper, and The Monkey and The Turtle.

## METHOD

The present study has been structured as a pre-experimental quantitative research design. In the process of conducting this study, a single class was subjected to a pretest and posttest. Creswell (2014) posits that quantitative research is concerned with examining the relationship between variables in order to evaluate theories in an objective manner. The factors under consideration can be quantitatively assessed using appropriate measuring tools, thereby generating numerical data that can subsequently be subjected to statistical analysis. The data sources consist of pretest and posttest scores obtained from students, which were then analyzed using the SPSS application. Meanwhile, the participants in this study consisted of eighth-grade students from Mulia Insani Islamic Junior High School in Bandung during the academic year 2022/2023. Moreover, the selection technique employed in this study utilizes purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on their expertise as English teachers and conducting interviews with them. According to Wani (2017), purposive sampling is a sampling approach that is selected based on a predetermined criterion, as it is believed to accurately represent the entire population. It is widely acknowledged that the method will yield groupings that are very compatible. The sample is chosen based on specific criteria that are deemed significant for the particular study.



The instrument of this study is the question of pretest and posttest which is validated and checked first for reliability. The validity of this instrument uses two stages, namely content validity and construct. First, the researcher validates the content to experts, namely lecturers and teachers. for the second stage, the test is tested on other than the sample, where the results analyzed using the SPSS application. The result of the validation test of Pretest and Posttest questions shown below:

**Table 2. The Result of the validation test of pretest and posttest question**

Questions Number	Pearson Correlation	Score of Sig	Category
1	0.589	0.002	Valid
2	0.514	0.009	Valid
3	0.614	0.001	Valid
4	0.589	0.002	Valid
5	0.551	0.004	Valid
6	0.462	0.020	Valid
7	0.727	0.000	Valid
8	0.710	0.000	Valid
9	0.782	0.000	Valid
10	0.694	0.000	Valid

According to Sürücü, (2020) argued that the stability and consistency of the measuring device utilized are referred to as reliability. In addition, reliability is the ability of equipment to produce comparable result when used at different times. The result of the reliability test of the instrument shown below:

**Table 2. The results of the reliability test**

Cronbach's Alpha		
Numbers	N of Items	Value
1	5a	0.703
2	5b	0.801

- a. Question1, question2, question3, question4, question5
- b. Question6, question7, question8, question9, question10

Based on the aforementioned data, the instrument possesses the capability to effectively gather the data that is subjected to testing on the research participants. The research methodology employed in this study involves the administration of two tests to the student participants, namely a pretest and a posttest.

Following this, the researcher proceeded to conduct a total of four meetings within the confines of the classroom. The initial meeting served as a pretest to assess the reading comprehension abilities of the students before to the implementation of any intervention or treatment. Subsequently, the subsequent two meetings encompassed the implementation of a pedagogical intervention including the utilization of comic strips as a didactic tool for enhancing reading comprehension skills, with a specific focus on fables within the realm of narrative discourse. During the last meeting, participants were instructed to conduct more testing in order to evaluate the efficacy of utilizing comic strips as a means of enhancing reading comprehension. Upon completion of data collection, the researcher proceeded to analyze the acquired data utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software tool.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

**Table 3. The Student's Score**

Students	The Pretest Score	The Posttest Score
1	40	80
2	40	100
3	30	70
4	70	100
5	40	80
6	50	90
7	20	80
8	30	100
9	60	80
10	40	100
11	50	80
12	40	100
13	50	90
14	30	80
15	50	100
16	30	80
17	50	90
18	40	80
19	20	70
20	50	100
21	30	80
22	50	100
23	30	90
24	40	70
25	30	80
26	30	90
27	20	80
28	40	100
29	30	80
30	70	100
31	30	90

The table above is the pretest score of students before being given the treatment and the posttest score of students after being given the treatment, namely using comic strips in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text, especially on fables. The table above would be strengthened by analyzing descriptive statistic can be seen as follows in **table 4** below:

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistic of The Scores**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
Pretest	31	20	70	1230	39,67
Posttest	31	70	100	2710	87,41

Based on the data in Table 4 above showed the descriptive statistic of the students' scores, which aims to determine students' reading skills before and after students were given treatment. From the data above N = 31, which means a total of the sample. The minimum pretest's score is 20 meanwhile in the posttest is 70, the maximum pretest's score is 70 and the posttest is 100, the pretest's sum is 1230 and the posttest's sum is 2710, the pretest's mean score is 39,67 and the posttest's mean score is 87,41. From the explanation of the results of the students' score data above, it showed that the posttest's mean above the Minimum Mastery Criterion – Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) seventy (70). It means the results of the posttest scores are relatively high.

Furthermore, to determine the significance of the effect of using comic strips on students' reading skills, the pretest, and the posttest were analyzed using paired sample t-test. However, before analyzing students' scores, the data must be normally distributed. The normality result of the pretest and the posttest can be seen below:

**One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Unstandardized Residual
N		31
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.000000
	Std. Deviation	.79227798
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.163
	Positive	.156
	Negative	-.163
Test Statistic		.163
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.035 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

**Figure 1. Test of Normality**

In the normality test based on Kolmogorov Smirnov, data were stated as distributed normally when sig. scores higher than 0.05. The table above showed that the data had a normal distribution. The significant score is 0.035. It means the significant value of the data > 0.05 it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. Furthermore, the data would be analyzed with Paired sample t-test. the result of the t-test can be seen below:

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence ...
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-5.06452	1.06256	.19084	-5.45427

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired ...	95% Confidence Interval of the ...			
		Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-4.67477	-26.538	30	.000	

**Figure 2. Paired Sample T Test**



Based on the data in Table 4.6 shows a significant value (2-tailed) of 0.000 ( $<0.05$ ) so it can be said that the underlying “Hypothesis is accepted”. In addition, it can be that there is a difference in the value of students’ reading skills before and after being taught reading using comic strips. Because there is a significant difference, it can be said that there is an effect of using comic strips on students’ reading skills.

### Discussion

Based on the preceding information, it can be inferred that following the administration of the treatment, the researcher saw a discernible enhancement in the participants' reading scores as a result of utilizing comic strips. The approval was granted by Rengur and Sugirin (2019). According to their research, the utilization of comic strips has been found to be an effective medium due to its incorporation of visual elements and narrative structure, which serve to engage pupils in the act of reading. The utilization of visual imagery in comic strips allows for a reduction in textual content while still facilitating comprehension of the narrative. According to Darsalina et al. (2016), Comic Strips can be defined as a form of media that comprises a succession of photographs. Comic strips are comprised of a sequence of images that narrate a story in a sequential fashion. The systematic arrangement of information facilitates students' comprehension and enables them to effectively track the narrative's progression. Comic strips serve as a medium that can effectively engage pupils and foster their enthusiasm for reading. The researcher's conclusion posits that the utilization of comic strips can be advantageous for pupils in enhancing their reading comprehension skills.

Based on previous studies, the utilization of comic strips as a teaching tool has proven to be effective in facilitating the teaching and learning of narrative text reading skills. Prior to the utilization of comic strips, the participants exhibited a lack of engagement and disinterest when the researchers broached the topic of reading. However, subsequent to the utilization of comic strips as an instructional tool for reading, the participants exhibited heightened engagement and an enhanced ability to comprehend narrative content. According to Sibarani et al. (2017), the authors assert that information is conveyed through a sequence of visual representations. By engaging with and interpreting these visual representations, readers can acquire the information and gain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative. This implies that the narrative's events acquire a heightened level of intrigue due to their explicit depiction or portrayal using both written language and visual elements. Furthermore, it is important to note that a student's reading comprehension is not solely shaped by internal elements, but can also be impacted by external factors. According to Yuliani (2019), there are multiple factors that impact students' reading comprehension, which can be categorized into two groups: individual characteristics of the students themselves and external factors present in their immediate environment. The variables pertaining to the students encompass vocabulary, interest, and reading method, and the remaining factors are concerned with the teaching approach, subject, and media. Comic strips are utilized as a resource or medium to enhance comprehension.

Based on the data gathered from the researcher's pre-test and post-test assessments, it can be inferred that the utilization of Comic Strips as a teaching tool for Narrative text content is an effective approach for enhancing reading skills. The utilization of Comic Strips has been found to have a substantial positive impact on pupils' reading comprehension abilities. During the pre-test, a considerable number of students exhibited a lack of comprehension about the substance and structure of the text. However, following the implementation of the therapy, there was a noticeable improvement in the overall scores obtained during the post-test assessment. The utilization of Comic Strips has been found to be effective in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension, as evidenced by successful implementation.

This research underscores the importance of incorporating diverse teaching strategies and materials into the curriculum to enhance students' learning experiences (Nuraini, et. al., 2020). It suggests that educators should consider integrating multimedia elements like comic strips to accommodate various learning styles and abilities, potentially leading to more inclusive educational practices (Krischler, et al., 2019; Jungjohann & Gebhardt, 2023). Furthermore, it highlights the need for ongoing teacher training and professional development to effectively utilize comic strips in the classroom, emphasizing the importance of selecting, integrating, and assessing the impact of such materials (Oddone, et al., 2019). The findings also point towards the necessity of aligning educational institutions' curriculum and teaching materials with innovative approaches like comic strips to ensure consistency in teaching methods and assessment practices (Casumpang & Enteria, 2019). Future research should explore the mechanisms through which comic strips enhance reading comprehension and consider cultural and contextual factors that may influence their effectiveness in different settings (Novitasari, 2020). Involving parents and the community in discussions and initiatives related to innovative teaching methods may garner greater support and acceptance of such approaches (Priatinet et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, three key points can be highlighted, namely: 1) The reading comprehension levels of students prior to instruction via comic strips typically exhibit little proficiency. The pre-test scores of the 31 pupils in the class provide evidence of their performance. The average score is 39.67. The minimum score observed is 20, while the maximum score recorded is 70. 2) The implementation of comic strips as an instructional tool has been found to generally enhance students' reading comprehension abilities. The pre-test scores of a class comprising 31 pupils provide evidence of a certain observation. The average score is 87.41. The minimum score observed is 70, while the maximum score recorded is 100. The average difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test was 47.74. The researcher obtained the reading scores for both the pre-test and post-test, and then compared the scores to determine the results. Upon completion of the data calculation, the researcher proceeded to analyze the data with a paired sample T test. The provided data indicates a significance value of 0.000 ( $<0.005$ ), suggesting that the underlying hypothesis can be deemed as accepted. Hence, it can be inferred that there exists a disparity in the level of reading comprehension among students prior to and subsequent to the intervention, as a consequence of the utilization of Comic Strips on students' reading comprehension. Ultimately, comic strips proved to be a successful instructional tool for imparting narrative text comprehension to the eighth-grade students of Mulia Insani Islamic Junior High School during the academic year 2022/2023.

The research findings on the effectiveness of using comic strips in students' reading comprehension have significant implications for education. Firstly, the study underscores the educational benefits of incorporating comic strips as a teaching tool, suggesting that they can positively impact students' comprehension of narrative texts. This implies that educators and curriculum designers should consider integrating visual aids like comic strips into their instructional methods. Secondly, the research highlights the need for diverse pedagogical approaches, as it shows that students' reading comprehension scores improved after using comic strips. This encourages teachers to explore innovative methods such as visual storytelling to engage and enhance students' understanding. Additionally, the finding that students had low comprehension scores before the intervention emphasizes the importance of assessing and addressing weaknesses in reading comprehension before implementing new teaching methods. The strong statistical significance of the results further supports the reliability of the findings and encourages further research into the nuances of this teaching

approach. Overall, these implications have practical applications for curriculum development, teacher training, and ongoing educational practices, ultimately benefiting students' learning experiences.

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