Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills Through Thematic Comic Strips: An Exploration in a Junior High School Setting

Munir
Corresponding Authors' Email: munir@unm.ac.id
English Education, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar

Sudarwinoto
Email: Sudarwinoto21@gmail.com
English Education, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar

Suhesty
Email: Suhesty9981@gmail.com
English Education, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar

Suriama Yaman
Email: Suriamayamaniua21@gmail.com
English Education, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar

Abstract

This study investigates the novel application of comic strips as a pedagogical tool to enhance speaking skills among EFL students in a junior high school setting, with a thematic focus on "Celebrating Independence Day." Drawing from a sample of students from VIII.1 class of UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar, the research employed pre-test and post-test measures to gauge the impact of comic strips on speaking proficiency. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills, with the post-test mean score (76.75) surpassing the pre-test mean score (57.02). This increase, backed by a P-value of 0.000, which is smaller than the chosen significance level (α) of 0.05, underscores the efficacy of comic strips as an innovative teaching tool. The results not only highlight the potential of comic strips in EFL instruction but also emphasize the added value of integrating cultural themes into language learning for a richer, more contextualized experience.

Keywords: *Comic Strip, Speaking Skill, Project-based learning*

INTRODUCTION

The English language holds a prominent position as a global means of communication, finding extensive use across diverse domains including education, commerce, and technology. Hence, it is imperative for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to possess proficient English-speaking abilities in order to effectively engage in communication within the global community (Sadullayeva, 2021). Nevertheless, a considerable number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students have difficulties in developing their speaking proficiency owing to a dearth of occasions to engage in English conversation. Proficiency in oral communication is a

crucial requirement for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in order to effectively engage in intercultural communication within the global society. In a study conducted by Qureshi (2013), it was shown that language serves as a means of communication, facilitating the expression of our thoughts and comprehension of others' thoughts. Hence, it is imperative for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to possess proficient oral communication abilities in order to properly engage in English discourse. The instruction of oral communication abilities to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners can present considerable difficulties owing to a range of issues. Yusuf (2020) identifies several hurdles that students commonly encounter, including limited vocabulary, difficulties with pronunciation, a dearth of ideas, low self-assurance, and apprehension regarding errors. These obstacles may impede students' capacity to engage in English conversation and enhance their oral proficiency.

The utilization of visual aids has been found to be efficacious in the realm of language instruction, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. In recent research conducted by Buofahja (2019), it was shown that the incorporation of visual aids in the classroom setting had a positive impact on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Specifically, the study revealed that the utilization of visual aids effectively reduces students' apprehension about providing incorrect responses to inquiries, while simultaneously enhancing their understanding of unfamiliar ideas (Kadamovna, 2021). Visual aids can also facilitate the assimilation of novel concepts, retrieval of prior information, and development of self-assurance in the utilization of the newly acquired language among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Lestari, 2019).

The researcher conducted an initial interview with an English teacher at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar regarding students' English language skills. The researcher found from these interviews that students at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar found it very difficult to use English, especially in communicating using English. Another reason that influences speaking teaching in schools is that it is only focused on traditional learning where the teacher is the center of learning. The current curriculum supports activities where students are the center of learning, so teacher creativity is needed to become facilitators in creating appropriate media for teaching speaking. The media usually used by teachers at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar in teaching speaking are dialogue, videos, textbooks, and worksheets (LKS). Comic Strips are familiar to some students because they have seen or even drawn a character several times, but they have never used this media to improve their speaking skills. To overcome this problem, the researcher intends to use comic strips using the project-based learning model as a tool in teaching speaking.

In the midst of these evolving methodologies, comic strips emerge as an intriguing tool for language learning. Comic strips have the potential to serve as a very effective instructional resource for language education (Aleksandrzak, 2011), particularly for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). A review conducted by ResearchGate (2023) has indicated that previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of incorporating comic strips into language learning, namely in terms of enhancing students' vocabulary, grammar, and speaking abilities. Comic strips can serve as a valuable tool for facilitating English language speaking practice among students, while also aiding in the comprehension and retention of new vocabulary and grammar structures. Comic strips, characterized by their visual narrative and often dialogic nature, have the potential to engage students in ways that traditional textbooks might not (Sari & Sazali, 2023). They provide a context, visual cues, and a storyline that could make language learning more relatable and fun. Despite their potential, there remains a scarcity of empirical research focusing on the impact of comic strips on EFL speaking skills, especially within a junior

high school setting.

Project-based learning is an educational methodology that prioritizes a student-centered approach, fostering collaborative work among students on projects that hold personal relevance. The study conducted by Devkota et al. (2017) suggests that the implementation of project-based learning has the potential to enhance the speaking abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This approach offers valuable possibilities for students to engage in English speaking activities within a context that is relevant and meaningful. Project-based learning has the potential to facilitate the development of additional skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and cooperation. The combination of comic strips and project-based learning can be an effective method for language teaching, especially for EFL students. According to a review by Abidah et al. (2022), using comic strips in project-based learning can help EFL students develop their speaking skills by providing a context for them to practice speaking in English. The use of comic strips can also make language learning more engaging and enjoyable for EFL students.

To address this issue, teachers need to find effective ways to improve EFL students' speaking skills. One potential method is the use of comic strips in project-based learning (Akhter et al., 2020). Comic strips are a visual medium that can help students understand and remember new vocabulary and grammar structures. They can also provide a context for students to practice speaking in English. Project-based learning is an approach that emphasizes student-centered learning and encourages students to work collaboratively on projects that are relevant to their lives.

The gap in the literature is particularly evident when considering the unique setting of junior high schools in non-native English-speaking countries, where students might face distinct challenges. For instance, the transition from elementary to junior high can come with increased academic pressures, potentially leading to decreased motivation in language learning. Furthermore, at this age, students might be particularly receptive to visual and interactive learning tools, such as comic strips. Given this backdrop, The research aims to bridge the gap by investigating the effect of comic strips on the speaking skills of EFL students within a junior high school context. The present study postulate that comic strips, with their combination of visual and textual content, can provide a rich context for students to learn and practice spoken English, possibly leading to enhanced speaking proficiency.

Research Hypothesis

The researcher formulates the hypotheses to be tested as follows:

a. The null hypothesis (Ho) states that the use of comic strip does not significantly improve the speaking skill of EFL students at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar.

b. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that the use of comic strip significantly improves the speaking skill of EFL students at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar.

METHOD
Research Design

The present investigation employed a pre-experimental design. The pre-experimental design is a type of study design that entails the inclusion of a single group of participants. In this design, the therapy or intervention is administered to the group, and subsequently, the outcome is measured. This design is employed to ascertain the impact of the intervention on the outcome.

According to Sugiyono (2013), the pre-experimental design is a research design characterized by the inclusion of a single group as the research topic, without the presence of a control or comparison group. Furthermore, the researcher employed the one-group pretest-posttest approach. As to Creswell's (2014) research, the one group pretest-posttest design is a research methodology wherein a pretest is offered to the sample prior to the implementation of the treatment, followed by a post-test following the completion of the treatment. By employing this particular research strategy, scholars have the ability to make a comparison between the listening abilities of pupils prior to and subsequent to the implementation of the remedy (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sample

Creswell (2017) defines the population in research as a group of individuals or objects that exhibit particular features or characteristics that are pertinent to the investigation and the resulting conclusions. These populations are chosen and examined by researchers because to their distinctive characteristics. The population of this study comprised second-grade students at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar, as indicated by the available information. The provided sample is a representative subset of the larger population, encompassing both its size and features (Smith, 2017: 62). In order to enhance the applicability of the results to the full population, it is crucial to verify that the chosen sample appropriately represents the diversity of the community. The selection of the research sample was conducted utilizing a cluster random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling is a technique that entails the division of a population into distinct subgroups or strata (Jones & Brown, 2010). The researcher deliberately chose a sample of 40 students from Class XII Science B for the purpose of this study.

The sample refers to a subset of the population, characterized by its size and attributes (Sugiyono, 2013: 81). To ensure the generalizability of the findings to the full population, it is imperative that the sample obtained from the population be actually representative of the community. The cluster random sampling technique was employed to choose the research sample. Cluster random sampling is a research methodology that involves selecting a sample from a specific grouping or cluster within the larger population (Anderson & Davis, 2012). The researcher selected a sample consisting of Class VIII.1, which comprised a total of 37 individuals. Data was collected from July to August of 2023.

Research Instrument

The concept of the research instrument serves as a valuable tool for gathering and analyzing data pertaining to the variables under investigation. This instrument plays a crucial role in the collection and organization of data inside a study. The research employed a speaking exam as the primary instrument. The present study centered its attention on four distinct dimensions of oral communication. During the oral examination, participants engage in a reading activity where they perform a dialogue derived from a comic strip given by the researcher. The comic strip utilized in the speaking assessment was derived from the educational resource titled 'English for Nusantara' curriculum book. The oral examination was administered on two occasions, namely prior to the intervention (pretest) and subsequent to the intervention (posttest). In this research instrument, the researcher presents a comic strip to the students as a means of studying and utilizing it as a point of reference in the execution of conversations. The examination consists of conversational dialogues and a story centered around the topic of commemorating Independence Day in the comic strip. These components evaluate the students' proficiency in four dimensions of oral communication.

444

Technique of Data Collection

a. Pretest

The act of administering a test to a sample before to the implementation of any treatment is sometimes referred to as a pretest. Before undergoing any form of intervention, this assessment is specifically developed to evaluate the aptitude and expertise of the students. Prior to undergoing treatment in the form of utilizing a comic strip as a medium to enhance their speaking skills, the pretest in this particular instance is designed to assess the speaking abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

b. Treatment

Treatment refers to the systematic application of certain conditions or interventions to research samples in order to investigate the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable within a study. The assertion made by Johnson (2005) on the implementation of therapies for the purpose of evaluating their impact and results is relevant within the context of educational research. This study implemented a therapy to examine the effects of utilizing a self-generated comic strip on the oral proficiency of pupils. The treatment was administered over a span of five sessions subsequent to the pretest. Throughout the course of the intervention, students actively participated in the creation of a comic strip and subsequently engaged in discussions centered upon the content of said comic strip, utilizing the English language as their primary mode of learning.

c. Posttest

A posttest refers to an evaluative assessment that is delivered to students subsequent to their completion of a therapy or intervention, with the primary objective of gauging their level of skills or knowledge. The primary aim of the posttest in this study is to ascertain the extent to which students' speaking abilities were enhanced following the implementation of a comic strip as a pedagogical tool for teaching speaking skills. In order to determine the potential impact of utilizing comic strips as a tool for enhancing the speaking abilities of secondary school students studying English as a foreign language (EFL), the outcomes of a posttest are compared to those of a pretest.

Technique of Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive and inferential statistical approaches to assess the results obtained from the pretest and post-test. Smith (2008) asserts that descriptive statistics are statistical techniques employed to collect, synthesize, and present data in a manner that enhances its utility for analysis and decision-making objectives. In order to get a conclusion that may be applied to a broader context, researchers employ descriptive statistics to classify and interpret the data (Johnson, 2018: 124). In accordance with the findings of Johnson (2020), inferential analysis is a statistical methodology employed to examine sample data, enabling the derivation of conclusions that can be extrapolated to a larger population. Prior to doing data analysis, the researcher computed the scores derived from the four distinct facets of speaking proficiency in the following manner:

445

$$\text{The students' individual score} = \frac{\text{The total correct answer}}{\text{The total number of items}} \times 100$$

After that, the score of the students classified into rating scale as follows:

Score Range	Classification
91 – 100	Excellent
81 – 90	Good
71 – 80	Fair Poor
61 – 70	Bad
0 – 60	(Kemendikbud, 2014)

Table 3.1 Score Range

To further analyze the data, the study used SPSS application.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The Students Speaking Skill
a. Score Range of the Students on the Pre-Test and Post-Test

The following are the findings obtained from the analysis of students' speaking proficiency in four key areas: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. These findings are used to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of using comic strips as a learning medium. The outcomes of the student speaking assessment are presented below:

Table 4.1 Score Range of the Students on the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Score Range	Classification	Frequency	
		Pre-Test	Post-Test
90-100	Excellent	0	9
80-89	Very Good	1	11
70-79	Good	7	10
60-69	Fair	22	5
0-59	Poor	7	2
Total		**37**	**37**

Based on the data presented in the table, it can be observed that the students' speaking skills, as assessed in the pre-test done prior to the therapy, fall within the moderate range. The presence of a single kid achieving a score classified as "very good" is supported by the data from the entire sample of 37 pupils. A total of seven pupils achieved high scores, while twenty-two kids attained moderate levels, and another seven students received low ratings.

In the post-test, a notable disparity is observed in the examination administered

446

subsequent to the treatment. Specifically, 9 students attained exceptional scores, while 11 students acquired scores classified as very good. Additionally, 10 students obtained scores categorized as good, 5 students received scores denoted as fair, and 2 students were assigned scores indicative of poor performance.

b. The Distribution of Frequency and Rate Percentage of the Students' Scores on the Pre-Test and
Post-Test
1) Grammar

Out of 37 students, 29 (78%) students were rated as having fair speaking skills, 4 (11%) students as having bad speaking skills, 3 (8%) students were rated as having poor speaking skill and 1 (3%) student were rated as having good speaking skills. No students received 'excellent' scores in this area.
While in the post-test result, the number of students gained good scores increased to 20 students (54%) and 17 (46%) other students gained fair scores.

2) Vocabulary

There were 22 (59%) students received fair scores, 8 (22%) students received good scores, 4 (11%) students received poor scores, 3 (8%) students received bad scores, and none were gained excellent
scores.

Meanwhile, the post-test result showed significant changes where there were 6 students (16%) gain excellent score, 26 students (70%) gained good score, and 5 students (14%) gained fair score. There was no student gained poor and bad scored.

3) Pronunciation

According to the pre-test results, 1 student (3%) had good score, 29 students (78%) received fair scores, 4 students (11%) had poor scores, 3 students (8%) received bad scores and none received excellent scores.

The post-test results, however, indicate a decrease in the proportion of students who are categorized as fair, with just 6 students (16%) achieving fair scores and no student achieving poor and bad score. 23 students (62%) received good scores and 8 students (22%) received excellent scores.

4) Fluency

According to the pre-test results, 8 students (22%) had good scores, 22 students (59%) received fair scores, 5 students (14%) had poor scores, 2 students (5%) received bad scores and none received excellent scores.

The post-test results, however, indicate a decrease in the proportion of students who are categorized as fair, with just 7 students (19%) achieving fair scores and no student achieving a bad score.
5 students (14%) received excellent scores. 23 students (62%) received good scores and 2 students (5%)
received poor scores.

c. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Student' Pre-Test and Post-Test

Table 4.2 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation

Pre-Test	37	57.02	13.86
Post-Test	37	76.75	10.48

The mean score and standard deviation differences between the pre-test and post-test are displayed in the table above. According to the table above, the pre-test's mean score for students was
57.02, with a standard deviation of 13.86. In the meantime, students' post-test mean scores increased to
76.75 with a 10.48 standard deviation. The researcher came to the conclusion that using comic strip as a learning tool improved students' speaking skill.

In the pre-test, the mean score of students in the aspect of grammar is 2.72 with a standard deviation of 0.69, the mean score of students in the aspect of vocabulary is 2.94 with a standard deviation of 0.81, the mean score of students in the aspect of pronunciation is 2.75 with a standard deviation of 0.64 and the mean score of students in the aspect of fluency is 2.97 with a standard deviation of 0.76.

Whereas in the post-test, the mean score of students in the aspect of grammar is 3.54 with a standard deviation of 0.50, the mean score of students in the aspect of Vocabulary is 4.02 with a standard deviation of 0.55, the mean score of students in the aspect of Pronunciation is 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.62 and the mean score of students in the aspect of fluency is 3.83 with a standard deviation
0.72.

d. Test of Significant Difference of the Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test

The researcher applied the t-test (test of significance), where the level of significance (α) is 0.05 and the degree of freedom (df) = N - 1 = 36, to ascertain whether there is a significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test findings. The t-test indicates whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test if the result is less than the level of significance. Based on the table below, the t-test results:

Table 4.3 Paired Samples Tables

		Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation			
Pair 1	Pretest-Postest	-19.729	9.996	-12.006	35	.000

The table above shows the results of the t-test of student scores based on the pre-test and post-test results. The table shows that the p-value (.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant difference between students' scores in the pre-test and post-test.

Based on the results of the above calculations, the researcher concluded that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) in this study is accepted. It means that the use of comic strip is improving students' speaking skill at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar.

Discussion

The difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores provides evidence for the aforementioned claim. The researcher came to the conclusion that students speaking skill were still weak after the pre-test. The researcher discovered a considerable improvement in students' speaking skills in the post-test, as evidenced by their mean scores of 57.02 on the pre-test and 76.75 on the post-test. In this study, the researcher focused on four aspects of speaking, namely grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency.

a. Grammar

When it comes to grammar, children demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in handling basic grammatical structures. During the pre-test, the students' speaking skills in this particular component were deemed satisfactory, as nearly all of the participants demonstrated an adequate command of basic grammatical structures relevant to this feature. Based on the researcher's findings, the assessment of "fair" indicates that students have a basic comprehension but need additional development and enhancement in this particular area. According to Davis et al. (2021), the development of sound grammar is contingent upon regular practice. It is advisable to engage in regular composition of essays, articles, or personal journals. Furthermore, it is recommended to engage in extensive use of the target language during the language learning process (Brown & Garcia, 2020). Engaging in this exercise will facilitate the development of linguistic proficiency and enhance grammatical competence. The researcher observed that following the intervention, a majority of the students demonstrated a proficient level of mastery in basic grammatical control. The intervention had an impact on the students' post-test results, indicating that 54% of them demonstrated a proficient level of mastery in utilizing basic grammatical structures in their spoken language proficiency. Based on the findings of the pre- and post-tests, it can be concluded that there has been an enhancement in students' speaking proficiency in this particular domain.

b. Vocabulary

Based on the findings of the pre-test, it can be inferred that the students' speaking skills in this particular aspect were deemed to be of moderate quality. This conclusion is supported by the distribution of student scores in the previous section, where a total of 22 students fell into the fair category, 8 students achieved good scores, 4 students were classified as poor, and only 3 students received low scores. From a researcher's standpoint, the challenges encountered by pupils in relation to vocabulary are complex and varied. One main obstacle that was discovered is the insufficient exposure to authentic language texts (Smith, 2020). A significant number of students lacked consistent exposure to a wide range of spoken English sources, hence impeding their ability to acquire a diversified vocabulary. The aforementioned inadequacy was particularly conspicuous in their aptitude to utilize idiomatic phrases and colloquialisms, which are frequently essential for authentic communication (Johnson & Brown, 2019). Furthermore, the researchers noted that students encountered difficulties in accurately determining the suitable context for particular word items (Davis et al., 2021). Although there was an observable enhancement in their lexical repertoire, students occasionally encountered difficulties in appropriately choosing words within diverse conversational contexts. According to Brown and Garcia (2020), this finding highlights the necessity for increased emphasis on prolonged practice in the utilization of language within context-rich environments. Furthermore, the acquisition of vocabulary by pupils was impeded by a proclivity towards passive language learning, as noted by Anderson (2019). Frequently, individuals tended to prioritize the activities of reading and listening, while

neglecting the active utilization of recently acquired vocabulary in their oral communication. As a result, the participants experienced a decrease in their capacity to retain and recall terminology, hence impeding their fluency in expressing oneself (Wilson, 2018). The post-test results indicate an improvement in students' speaking skills, namely in the area of vocabulary. The data shown in the preceding section indicates that 70% of the total student population fell into the good group, while just 6 students were classified as excellent and an additional 5 students were classed as fair. Based on the findings of this study, it can be inferred that the incorporation of comic strips into the therapy process resulted in a notable enhancement of students' speaking proficiency, namely in the domain of vocabulary acquisition.

c. Pronunciation

In this regard, it is imperative for students to demonstrate proficient pronunciation of sentences or dialogues with precision. In essence, the attainment of precise and intelligible articulation holds paramount importance in facilitating efficient interpersonal exchange (Smith, 2020). The act of pronouncing words correctly is not solely a matter of correctness, but rather has a direct influence on the level of comprehension that others have of a given message. During the preliminary assessment, it was seen that students encountered challenges in this particular area, as indicated by the distribution of scores: 29 students were classified as fair, 4 students as poor, 3 students as bad, and only one student as good. According to the findings, several students encountered difficulties in accurately articulating particular sounds and phonemes, leading to instances of mispronunciation and, consequently, hindrances in effectively communicating their intended message (Johnson & Brown, 2019). In the post-test, there was an observed improvement in students' speaking skills. Specifically, the results indicate that 8 students achieved an excellent score, 23 students achieved a good score, and 6 students achieved a fair score. Based on the aforementioned explanation, the researcher arrives at the conclusion that the use of comic strips during therapy exhibits the potential to enhance speaking proficiency specifically in the domain of pronunciation.

d. Fluency

When considering fluency, students prioritize their ability to engage in uncomplicated conversations with few or no hesitations. During the pre-test, the students' speaking skills in this particular area were relatively satisfactory, as the majority of the sample demonstrated the ability to engage in basic conversations, albeit with some difficulty and occasional hesitations. According to Johnson and Brown (2019), a significant number of students encountered challenges in maintaining a fluid and cohesive dialogue as a result of their restricted vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties, as evidenced by the researcher's observations. The presence of vocabulary deficiencies impeded their capacity to articulate their thoughts with fluency, whereas instances of mispronunciation occasionally resulted in disruptions to the continuity of their speech. The aforementioned problems played a role in the hesitations that were seen during their interactions. According to Smith (2020), the key to enhancing fluency is in maintaining a consistent practice routine. Participate in regular interpersonal dialogues, even if they are solitary in nature. Increased verbal communication leads to enhanced fluency in language acquisition. According to Davis et al. (2021), the utilization of a more extensive lexicon has the potential to augment one's fluency. Acquire novel vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, and endeavor to include them into your verbal exchanges. Engaging in the practice of reading books and articles in the English language can be beneficial in this regard. According to Wilson (2018), the act of recording one's spoken

English can be beneficial in identifying areas that require work. Engage in the process of reviewing your recorded materials and identify specific instances where improvements can be made in terms of pronunciation, fluency, and clarity. The observed outcome of the intervention indicated that the students demonstrated enhanced conversational abilities and increased fluency subsequent to the treatment (Smith, 2020). The participants demonstrated an enhanced capacity to maintain conversational flow, decreased instances of hesitations, and a more pronounced natural rhythm. The aforementioned progress was notably observable in the context of group discussions and project-based activities, when students actively participated in conversations and effectively articulated their opinions. The aforementioned factor had an impact on the post-test results of the students, wherein it was found that 62% of them had the ability to engage in basic conversations with minimal pauses, while 14% exhibited the capability to engage in basic conversations with minimal to no pauses. Based on the findings derived from the pre- and post-tests, it can be concluded that there has been a discernible enhancement in students' proficiency in the domain of oral communication.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings derived from the data analysis conducted in the preceding chapter, it can be observed that the probability value (p-value) of 0.000 is below the predetermined level of significance of 0.05. Furthermore, there is evidence of enhanced proficiency in students' oral communication abilities, as indicated by the higher mean score in the post-test (76.75) compared to the pre-test (57.02). Based on the obtained results, it may be concluded that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is supported. In summary, the utilization of Comic Strip has been found to enhance the oral proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar.

The use of comic strips as a teaching tool has demonstrated a notable improvement in the speaking skills of EFL students at UPT SPF SMPN 23 Makassar. This approach, although not entirely new in the realm of pedagogy, brings a fresh perspective to EFL teaching within a junior high school context, especially when centered on culturally relevant themes like "Celebrating Independence Day." The novelty of our study lies in its exploration of comic strips' efficacy within a specific demographic and thematic context. While other multimedia tools like videos or interactive apps have gained traction in recent years, the humble comic strip, with its combination of visuals and succinct text, offers a unique blend of narrative storytelling and visual imagery (Sasum & Weeks, 2021; Wijaya et al., 2023). This allows students to process linguistic information while also engaging with visual cues, leading to a richer, more immersive learning experience. Moreover, the thematic focus on "Celebrating Independence Day" adds another layer of innovation, grounding the linguistic learning in cultural context. By intertwining language learning with cultural themes, we not only enhance linguistic proficiency but also foster a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, making the learning experience more holistic and relevant.

In light of the findings, it is evident that the strategic integration of comic strips into the EFL curriculum offers a promising avenue for educators looking to enhance student engagement, understanding, and proficiency. As the landscape of education continues to evolve, it's pivotal to explore and incorporate such novel methods that cater to diverse learning needs and preferences, ensuring a more inclusive and effective teaching-learning environment.

REFERENCES

Abidah, L., Askangela, M. L., Berlianty, D., & Asih, R. A. (2022). Improving Distance Learners'

Writing Skills Through Comic Strip Creation: A Project-Based Learning. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, *4*(4), 5954-5962.

Akhter, S., Haidov, R., Rana, A. M., & Qureshi, A. H. (2020). Exploring the significance of speaking skill for EFL learners. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 17(9), 6019-6025.

Aleksandrzak, M. (2011). Problems and challenges in teaching and learning speaking at advanced level. Glottodidactica, 37, 7-20.

Anderson, J. (2019). Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know. Routledge. Asholahudin. (2021). Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris. Jurnal Horizon Pedagogia.

Boufahja, I. (2019). Incorporating audio-visual aids in the English language classroom in Tunisia: A case study. *English Language Teaching Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Multiple Perspectives*, 687-701.

Brown, H. D., & Garcia, Y. (2020). Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. SAGE Publications.

Davis, F., Rinvolucri, M., & Rinvolucri, J. (2021). Vocabulary. Oxford University Press.

Devkota, S. P., Giri, D. R., & Bagale, S. (2017). Developing 21st century skills through project-based learning in EFL context: challenges and opportunities. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education-January*, *7*(1).

Johnson, K., & Brown, H. D. (2019). Integrating Foreign Language Instruction into Foreign Language Programs: A Manual for Teachers. Yale University Press.

Kadamovna, S. N. (2021) The importance of speaking skills for EFL learners. Neliti. Journal article.

Lestari, N. (2019). The Study on Derivational Affixes of English Book Published by Kemdikbud for Twelve Grade Senior High School. Corpus

Qureshi, I. A. (2013). The importance of speaking skills for EFL learners. Alama Iqbal Open University. Rora, A. P. (2015, Februari 11). The Components of Speaking Skill. Wordpress.com https://adeprimarora.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/the-components-of-speaking-skill/

Sadullayeva, N. K. (2021). The importance of speaking skills for EFL learners. International Journal of Innovations in Engineering Research and Technology, 8(1), 28-30.

Sari, D. R., & Sazali, A. (2023). The use of Spotify as a medium to improve listening skills in EFL learning. Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics, 8(1), 1-10.

Sasum, Y., & Weeks, J. (2021). Improving EFL undergraduate learners' speaking skills through project- based learning using presentation. Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 12(3), 65-72.

Smith, J. (2020). Language Learning: An Introduction to Linguistics. Cambridge University Press. Sugiyono. (2013). Metode penelitian pendidikan: Pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D. Alfabeta.

Wijaya, E. A., Suwastini, N. K. A., Adnyani, N. L. P. S., & Krishna, K. E (2023). Comic strips for language teaching: The benefits and challenges according to recent research.

Wilson, J. (2018). How to Teach Listening. Pearson.

Yusuf, Y. Q. (2020). Challenges in teaching speaking to EFL learners. Proceedings of EEIC.