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The Effectiveness of Teaching Arabic Vocabulary Through the Using of Comics

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Abstract

Vocabulary is a key element in Arabic to enable pupils to comprehend the teaching and learning concept in the classroom effectively. Nevertheless, the achievement of Arabic vocabulary among students in Malaysia Primary School is still not satisfactory and at a moderate level. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the effects of using comics on the achievement of Arabic vocabulary. In addition, the study also aimed to look at the comparison of effects between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test through the using of comics on the achievement of pupils' Arabic vocabulary. This study is a quasi-experimental design through a quantitative approach by using pre-test and post-tests. The sample selected in this study consisted of 34 pupils of standard five of a school. The sample is divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group used comics modules in teaching and learning, while the control group used conventional methods. The findings found that there were significant differences in pupils' vocabulary achievement before and after the teaching and learning were carried out using comics modules. In addition, the teaching and learning methods of using comics have a significant difference than conventional methods in helping and improving the achievement of students' vocabulary. As a result, comics modules are one of the suitable materials for application in the field of education.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Achievement, Arabic Language Teaching, Second Language Teaching, Vocabulary Teaching, Comic Use.

Introduction

Vocabulary or words in Arabic is an indispensable element in the formation of a perfect sentence. Mezah and Mohammad (2016) defines vocabulary as a term that prevails in a word that is available in all languages. The vocabulary in *Al-Asasiyy* (1989) is called vocabulary (مُفْرَدَات) or words (كَلِمَات). Words according to modern language scholars are pronunciations which are important in the perfect arrangement of sentences. The function of words is to turn lexical units into something contextual. This happens when a word is combined, isolated, rearranged or dropped from something in context. Words will give the next understanding into a comprehensible sentence. According to Hassan (1985), the characteristic of a word is it should consist of at least three letters, or have an addition of more than three letters. For a

combination of letters or consonants that have no meaning, it is not defined as a word. Other than that, the combination of letters or consonants that do not give meaning is just a sound.

Vocabulary is complementary to a language (Badarudin et al., 2021). Neuman and Dywer (2009) insists that vocabulary is what needs to be achieved in effective communication. The achievement in question includes the words that the speaker wants to convey to the addresser by writing or speaking. Moreover, according to Al-Nauri (2018) vocabulary or lexical knowledge is important in a language study. Ghani et al (2019) said, Arabic in Malaysia has the status of a foreign language and not a language that is always used by everyday students in their lives. Nevertheless, Razak and Samah (2018) states that possessing and mastering large quantities of vocabulary is one of the important things in language learning especially in learning a foreign language or second language. Vocabulary needs to be mastered by teachers in order to teach their pupils. The achievement of wide vocabulary among students will reduce their weaknesses in communication or in writing (Razak et al., 2020). In the Arabic context, the achievement of vocabulary according to Tu'aimah (1989) is the ability of the pupil to use vocabulary by pronouncing it perfectly. This can be judged through the understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary that has been used in the correct sentence requirement. Moreover, the knowledge in the use of vocabulary can be seen through the ability of the pupils to form complete sentences as well as the understanding of fractional patterns and derivative words of a vocabulary used. Any sentence presented depends on the understanding of the vocabulary used. Azmee et al (2021) stated the problem of the achievement of Arabic vocabulary among students in Malaysia at a moderate level. The mastery of vocabulary needs to be improved among students in improving the skills of constructing sentences in Arabic, which requires a mastery of vocabulary to a great extent (Ghani et al., 2019).

The ability to use effective techniques, methods and strategies will have a significant impact on the acquisition of vocabulary. Effective teaching materials need to be applied by Arabic teachers in achieving strong vocabulary achievement among students. In addition, effective teaching methods will have a positive effect on pupils in understanding the vocabulary learned quickly and effectively. The use of digital technology themed elements is one of the good initiatives in promoting the process of vocabulary acquisition (Salleh et al., 2017). The choice of inappropriate and tedious teaching materials will affect the achievement of Arabic vocabulary. The lack of usage of interesting teaching materials by teachers will also affect children's interest in learning (Arshad & Ching, 2017). Yamirudeng and Osman (2019) mentioned that the effectiveness of teaching and learning depends on the teaching material used. In addition, Isa and Ma'arof (2018) said, the teaching material is something that is used to explain a concept, where pupils are supposed to be able to see for themselves what the teacher uses in the process of teaching and learning.

Khatib and Zainal (2018) stated that the problem of understanding the meaning of vocabulary comprehensively will result in failure in the achievement of vocabulary. Pupils who are unable to understand the meaning of the learned vocabulary will lead to poor communication or writing skills. In addition, the selection of inappropriate teaching methods is also one of the factors to the problem that arises in pupils to achieve strong Arabic vocabulary in primary school. The lack of attention of teachers when planning in using effective teaching methods will affect the quality of teaching and learning performed (Ambotang & Batjo, 2017). Teaching methods, strategies and techniques are one of the key elements in the successful acquisition of vocabulary (Abdelhamid, 2018). Lack of vocabulary will lead to the unproficiency of the Arabic language. The pupils also will be unable to achieve

strong and wide vocabulary if the teacher is using less effective teaching methods, strategies and techniques. Next, the problem that arises in the achievement of vocabulary at school is the problem of remembering a vocabulary that has been learned despite having studied it previously. It will be easier for students to remember and understand a lesson in the learning process when it is being applied to practical and in experience-based learning (Jasni et al., 2020).

Based on the problems that have been presented in this study, comics are one of the initiatives to resolve it. Comics have existed and evolved over a long period of time in our society. The term comic comes from the Greek language which is *comicos* while in French it is called *comique*. In English comics are called comics that mean humor or funny. Comics according to Ahmad and Kamarudin (2018) is a sheet that has a sketch in telling the story or thoughts of the artists. In addition, comics are expressed as sketches that have specific motives in disseminating knowledge and information. Comics also have storytelling that is intertwined with a picture image that is amusing and funny. Comics are usually in the form of simple cartoons and drawings and are easy to understand. The storytelling in the comics is light and relaxed and not too heavy in the presentation. Comics are suitable to be read by all walks of life from children and adults. According to Mc Cloud (1993), comics are aimed at providing thoughtful knowledge to the community through pictures and emblems that are built in a structured and sequential manner. According to Zawawi (2015), comics originated and began to develop from western countries which were spread through newspaper copies in the form of criticism and humor. Subsequently, the comics are said to have reached Asia and Japan after the second world war which is better known as *manga*. Comics can be considered synonymous with the lives of Malaysians. Its influence ranges from children to adults. In spite of its big influence, comics are seen to have disadvantages in matters pertaining to language development. This can be observed when there is less study of comics involving language learning. It includes our native language which is the Malay Language and other languages such as Arabic.

Comics or more popularly known with the term *manga* in Japanese society, is a reflection based on delusions, fantasies, myths of the local population, beliefs and values. Mamat et al (2019) state that comics are very synonymous with the history, culture, economy, family, politics, gender, religion and beliefs of Japanese people and are deeply affected around the world. The study is a literature review that makes the Tokyo International Manga Museum, Kyoto International Manga Museum, Saitama Municipal Cartoon Building Hall and the Malay Documentation Center of *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, Kuala Lumpur as the main reference center in conducting studies. The objective of the study is to look more at the development of comics and animation in addition to observing the differences between the two. Concurrently, the study was also made to identify the suitability of Malay comics and animation production to be developed throughout the world. The studies they carried out found that the Japanese caricatures such as comics and animations had been pioneered since the Japanese pre-colonial era, which was before the 1600s. Malay comics however started in the 1950s. The conclusions that can be made from the study state that Malay comics are still new to the existence and that today there is still lack of investigation carried out by local studies. Negoro (2022) also stated that comics are reading material that is light, funny, easy to understand by readers and has visuals that can attract children to read it. In addition, he added that comics are extremely effective reading materials in teaching and learning. Hafidzah et al (2021) added, the attractive sentences placed in bubbles have assisted in supporting the graphics that are built. This aims to attract interest in reading among children

and facilitate understanding in reading. Meliana et al (2021) describes comics as images expressed with phrases or verses that are easy to understand in an informal form. This will make it easier for readers to understand the message or information they want to convey quickly and uncomplicatedly.

Comics have been widely adopted in teaching and learning around the world as well as in Malaysia. Abdullah et al (2018) in their study on the development of STEM Comics in Science and Mathematics subjects for standard one pupil stated that comics are seen to encourage pupils to learn Science and Mathematics subjects as well as improving their achievement. The Model of Technology Knowledge, Pedagogical and Content (TPACK) has been used in the development of this STEM Comic. The outcome of this study shows STEM Comics are well suited in applications by teachers as an aid in teaching Science and Mathematics. In addition, the study of Badaruddin et al. (2018) examined the effectiveness of the use of *Kaifa Haluka* comics as a medium in learning Arabic. The findings from the survey found that *Kaifa Haluka* comics are very significant to students in learning Arabic. This involves basic terminologies and phrases in speech.

Senoprabowo et al (2021) have studied the *Warak Ngendong* comic. The study showed that comics are relevant to be applied in teaching and learning because moral values and customs can be included in comics that will give an impression directly or indirectly to pupils. The study of Faradiba and Budiningsih (2021) who aims to produce comic modules sourced from education, also found that there is a significant difference in the use of comics sourced from education in teaching and learning method for the pupils of standard five of *Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu (SDIT) Ulul Albab 2 Purworejo*. In the study, the reviewer used the *ADDIE* model as a reference model in carrying out the study. Descriptive analysis and t-tests have been used in analyzing study data. Yamaguchi (2019) in his statement explained that *Doraemon*, *Anpanman* and also *Chibi Maruko-chan* are comic characters who are influencing the children in Japan. These characters are often embedded in the textbook of moral education subjects in primary schools. He emphasized that writers and comics artists or widely known as *manga* artists such as Fujiko Fujio, Osamu Tezuka, Tetsuya Chiba, Rocky Joe, Takashi Yanase and others have made a tremendous contribution in producing comics to the learning of children in Japan. This shows comics are widely used in teaching and learning in schools. However, in Arabic language education it is still lacking and requires more involvement from all parties, especially in vocabulary learning.

Mamat et al (2018) in the study states that comics and animations have existed for a long period of time in Malaysia. Animation has been shown on television since a long time ago and watched by the whole community regardless of race. The aim of the study was to identify the use of *manga* and anime among students at two Public Universities (UA), namely Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Malaya (UM) as well as to study the influence of *manga* and anime in their daily lives. The sample consisted of 86 students who attended Japanese language courses at UPM and UM. Another criterion is respondents who are fond of comics as well as animation. Instruments such as questionnaires were used in obtaining data. The findings showed that *manga* and anime are very significant in the lives of students who learn Japanese. Hamid and Ghazali (2021) has studied the e-comics of *Hikayat Patani: Putera Pewaris Kerajaan* that has been published by *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP)*. Three analyses were carried out covering textual, importance and challenges. Textual analysis applies five comic principles set out in Hall's Five Essential Principles of Comics and Cartooning, while for the analysis of importance and challenges were done using literature review. The findings showed that e-comics conformed to Hall's comic principles and were

shown to produce a very high impact. Overall, the study suggested that more e-comics with historical sources and traditional texts shall be published as a way to promote the Malay race.

Saleh and Dolah (2016) conducted a study about the role of visual language function on engagement factors based on moral values and violence in comics. Analysis of the influence of the media in assessing the elements of visual language on youth involvement in relation to moral issues and violence in local comics was used in this study. The findings showed that comics can influence public or individual point of views. In addition, based on the factors of involvement in the visual language of the comics, it shows that it can assess the beliefs as well as the impact on the mind of an individual. Nafi'ah et al (2021) studies the application of crossword puzzles as a formative assessment tool for students. This study is an experimental quantitative study. The results of the study found that crossword puzzles are effectively used as a formative assessment instrument in assessing students' vocabulary capabilities.

Based on the above studies, it can be concluded that comics are already widely studied by local and foreign researchers. Comics have also been loaded and included in subjects other than language learning such as History subjects and others. Comics are also seen to be frequently studied at secondary and university levels. Other instruments are also widely used in the teaching and learning of vocabulary. However, studies on comics in the comprehension of nahu or Arabic vocabulary are still under-studied. Therefore, this study is aimed at looking at the effects of using comics as teaching material in addition to making comics as one of the new initiatives to be incorporated into existing teaching methods. In addition, the study also reviewed the effectiveness of using comics in making it easier and faster for students to remember and understand the Arabic vocabulary they learned in school.

In particular, this study will lead to two detailed purposes. The first is to identify the effect of using comics on the achievement of Arabic vocabulary. Secondly, the study was aimed at looking at the comparison of effects between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test through the using of comics on the achievement of the pupil's Arabic vocabulary. The study also included two study questions, namely whether there was an effect on the experimental group and the control group in the pre and post-tests through the using of comics in the achievement of Arabic vocabulary? The second question is whether there is a difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test through the using of comics versus the conventional method of the achievement of the pupil's Arabic vocabulary?

Research Methodology

The sample in this study consisted of 34 pupils of standard five of a primary school. Respondents were divided into two groups, 17 of which represented the experimental group while the other 17 were the control group. The experimental group used comic-assisted teaching methods while the control group was taught using a conventional approach. Samples were selected from students with the same level of intelligence to avoid the threat of internal validity. The mechanism to be used in determining the homogeneity of variances (test of homogeneity of variances) is through the Levene's test. This study is a quantitative method study in the form of a quasi-experimental design. Creswell (2013) stated that quasi-experimental are used when random distribution cannot be carried out when the research respondent selection process is carried out. This is in line with this study which will look at the comparison of two teaching methods which are teaching using Arabic comics and conventional teaching.

This study will use two instruments, namely the set of test questions to include the pre and the post-tests while the second instrument is the comic module. This study used a set of pre and the post-tests in obtaining data from study samples as well as in determining achievement scores. The tests fostered in this study are related to the achievement of Arabic vocabulary. Pre and the post-tests will be conducted in written tests to assess the level of achievement of the pupils' Arabic vocabulary and to find out the effectiveness of the using of comics in teaching and learning vocabulary. In that regard, the comic modules have been constructed as a learning material in carrying out this study. This is aimed at identifying the effectiveness of the using of comics on the achievement of pupils' Arabic vocabulary. These comic modules are comics with a graphic and text. The comic modules were constructed based on the lessons in the Arabic textbooks of standard five pupils. In addition, the selection of vocabulary to be published in these comic modules are the consequences upon conversation with the teacher who will teach using these comic modules later.

To meet the objectives or detailed objectives of the study, the data obtained need to be analyzed. All data in this study are quantitative. This study used descriptive statistical analysis and inference statistical analysis in answering all problems in the study. The data obtained will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 27. Data analysis is necessary to determine the achievement of Arabic vocabulary for experimental groups and control groups. Percentage, mean and standard deviation will be used in descriptive statistical analysis. For statistical analysis of inference, dependent t tests will be used to identify the effect of pre and post-tests on the control group as well as the experimental group. Finally, the independent samples t-test will be used in looking at the comparison of the effect between the experimental group and the control group.

Research Findings

The study obtained will answer both study problems as follows:

Study Question 1: Is there any effect on the experimental group and control group in the pre and post-test through the using of comics in the achievement of Arabic vocabulary?

Experimental Group

For the experimental group, the results from the findings of studies conducted through pre-test and post-test found that the percentage of achievement of the Arabic vocabulary of pupils before and after the teachers utilizing comics in their teaching and learning method showed a very significant improvement. This is evidenced by Figure 1 below:

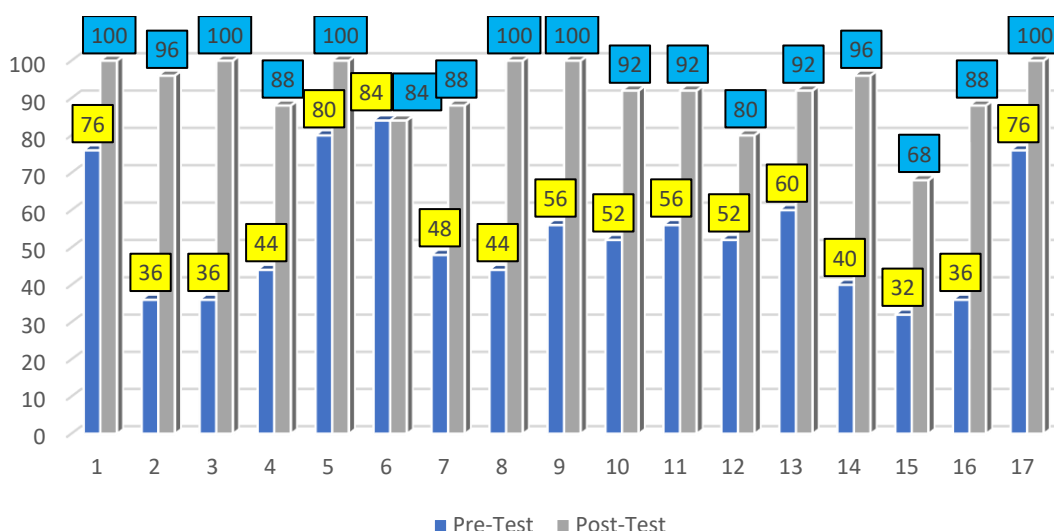


Figure 1

The percentage of achievement of the Arabic vocabulary of pupils in the pre and post-test experimental groups.

The above figure shows that all respondents in the post-test scored higher than the scores obtained in the pre-test. The highest score achieved by a pupil in the post-test was 100% while for the pre-test it was only 84%. The lowest score for the post-test was 68% compared to just 32% for the pre-test. This suggests that there are significant differences in terms of the percentage of achievement before and after the lesson conducted by utilizing the comic modules. This implication shows that comics are suitable to be applied to pupils in learning Arabic vocabulary in school. Based on the findings of the study, the mean and standard deviation of the differences in pre-test and post-test vocabulary achievement of pupils in the experimental group showed improvements beyond achievement in the pre-test. The following table 1 is the mean and standard deviation of the differences of pre-test and post-test of the vocabulary achievement of pupils in the experimental group.

Table 1

The mean and standard deviation of the difference of pre-test and post-test vocabulary achievement of pupils in the experimental group.

Vocabulary Achievement	N	M	SD
Pre	17	53.41	16.73
Post	17	92.00	8.83

Based on the table, it can be concluded that the achievement of post-test of the pupil's vocabulary after the experiment ($M = 92.00$) is higher than before the experiment was carried out ($M = 53.41$). The dependent t test used to identify those differences significantly. The results are as per Table 2 below.

Table 2

The dependent t test on the difference in pre-tests and post-test of the vocabulary achievement of pupils in the experimental group.

Variables	N	M	SD	T value	Df	Sig.P
Post – Pre	34	-38.59	16.55	-9.61	16	.001*

The dependent t test showed there was a significant difference in the performance of the pupil's vocabulary before and after the experiment was carried out with the value $t(16) = -9.61$, $p < .05$. The mean indicates the achievement of the vocabulary of the pupils after the experiment was carried out ($M = 92.00$) is higher than before the experiment was carried out ($M = 53.41$). This suggests the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Control Group

In the control group, the findings of the studies conducted through pre and post-test also showed an increase in the percentage of achievement of the pupils' Arabic vocabulary before and after the teaching and learning being conducted in a conventional method. Nevertheless, the difference in the percentage of achievement is not significant compared to the difference of teaching and learning using comic approach. Figure 2 below is the percentage of achievement of the pupil's Arabic vocabulary in the pre-test and post-test of the control group.

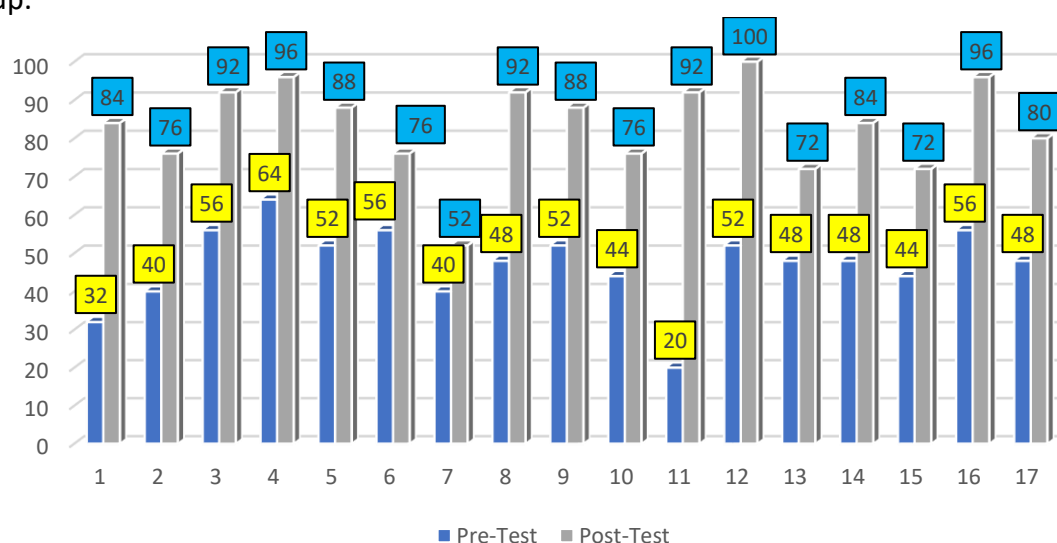


Figure 2

Percentage of the achievement of Arabic vocabulary of pupils in pre-tests and post-test of the control group.

Based on the above diagram, most of the respondents in the post-test scored higher than the scores obtained in the pre-test. The highest score achieved by a pupil in the post-test was 100% while only 64% for the pre-test. The lowest score for the post-test was 52% compared to only 20% for the pre-test. This shows that there is a difference in the percentage of achievement before and after teaching using a conventional approach. Based on the findings of the study, the mean and standard deviation of the difference in pre-test and post-test of the vocabulary achievement of pupils in the control group showed improvements beyond the achievement in pre-test. The following 3 tables are the mean and standard deviation of the difference in pre-test and post-test of the pupil's vocabulary achievement in the control group.

Table 3

The mean and standard deviation of the difference in pre-test and post-test vocabulary achievement of pupils in the control group.

Vocabulary Achievement	N	M	SD
Pre	17	47.06	10.25
Post	17	83.29	11.94

The table above shows the post-test of the pupil's vocabulary achievement after the experiment ($M = 83.29$) is higher than before the lesson was conducted ($M = 47.06$). Dependent t-tests are used to identify those differences significantly. The results are like Table 4 below.

Table 4

The dependent t test of the difference in pre-test and post-test of the pupil's vocabulary achievement in the control group.

Variables	N	M	SD	T value	df	Sig.P
Post - Pre	34	-36.24	13.38	-11.17	16	.001*

The dependent t test showed there was a significant difference in the performance of the pupil's vocabulary before and after the lesson is conducted in a conventional method with the value $t(16) = -11.17$, $p < .05$. The mean indicates the achievement of the vocabulary of the pupil after the lesson was conducted ($M = 83.29$) is higher than before the lesson was conducted ($M = 47.06$). This suggests the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Study Question 2: Is there a difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test through the use of comics versus the conventional method on the achievement of the pupil's Arabic vocabulary?

Prior to the teaching session using comics and conventional methods, the respondents were divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group will use comic modules while the control group will use conventional methods. Table 5 below is the results of the analysis of the independent t test pertaining to the differences of the post-test between the experimental group and the control group.

Table 5

The independent t test of the post-test pertaining to the differences between the experimental group and the control group.

Variables	N	M	SD	T value	df	Sig.P
Control	17	92.00	8.83	2.417	32	.022*
Experiment	17	83.29	11.94			

Levene's test results showed that the significance of $>.05$ showed that the distribution of variance data was homogeneous. The independent t test showed that there was a significant difference in pupils' Arabic vocabulary achievement between the experimental group and the control group with a value of $t(32) = 2.417$, $p < .05$. The mean shows that the achievement of the Arabic vocabulary of the experimental group pupil ($M = 92.00$) is higher than the achievement of the Arabic vocabulary of the control group pupil ($M = 83.29$). This suggests the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Discussion

This study is to identify the effectiveness of comics in the achievement of Arabic vocabulary among primary school pupils. This study focuses on vocabulary achievement because vocabulary is an important component in students' Arabic achievement. Although numerous studies on Arabic vocabulary have been carried out, studies on comics and its relation with vocabulary are still inadequate. Comics as it is known are very synonymous with primary school pupils. This is supported by Setyaningsih (2019) which states that comics are a material or medium that can attract pupils. Therefore, the using of comics in teaching and learning methods needs to be taken into consideration

Comics are one of the most relevant teaching materials to be applied in teaching and learning methods. This was agreed by Izzah and Ma'sum (2021) who said comics are an interesting type of graphic medium and it is relevant for teachers to use as a new alternative in their teaching method. Thus, this is the reason why this study uses comic modules as a teaching material in learning Arabic vocabulary to perfection and practicality. This coincides with the concept of coloured image of comics and subsequently will attract greater interest to pupils to experience the joy of learning. The text used in comics is also short and does not burden the pupils in reading it. This will make them more comfortable reading while learning new vocabulary without feeling stressed or forced. Comic pages are also found to be lesser and not as thick as textbooks and reference books. This makes it easier for pupils to access comics compared to reading material in a form of book that often has more pages and is thicker. This statement is supported by Fayruza and Yodhi (2018) which states comics are one of the learning media that gives comfort and motivation to pupils in reading them.

Comics can also be included as one of the effective teaching methods. The teaching method of using comics focuses specifically on the objective of learning without combining it with other teaching methods. For example, in this study the comic modules used focus only on vocabulary based on the relevant topic that has been selected. This is important as teachers can focus more on pupils during the teaching and learning sessions. Comics tend to be an inductive lesson compared to the typical learning session where the teacher provides resources before describing the lesson to pupils. In the inductive method, pupils are encouraged to be independent by drawing conclusions or opinions in advance before the teacher explains in detail. In addition, comics can also be combined with other teaching methods such as simulation methods, elective methods, imitate and memorize methods, and other teaching methods so as to give more variety to the teacher's teaching method besides providing opportunities for pupils to develop a creative and critical thinking skills (Abdullah et al., 2018).

Memory is one of the important things in pupils' learning process. The objectives of a lesson are achieved if it is possible to give the pupils a memory in one lesson. The role of teachers is important in giving memory of the lessons to the pupils. Based on the findings of this study, comics can create more vocabulary achievement effects than conventional methods. Vocabulary taught using comics is supported with pictures or graphics. This will accelerate the memory of the pupils thus giving them a longer term of memory. This coincides with an Anesia et al (2018) study that says comics have organized storytelling and interesting pictures that can make pupils remember a lesson skillfully. The phrases used in the comics are also usually lighter and more relaxed, infused with the elements of funny and thus make the pupil laugh or smile. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to use comics as a new medium in their teaching.

Implications and Conclusions

This study was carried out to examine the impression of the use of Arabic comics in the achievement of Arabic vocabulary of the standard five pupils of a primary school. Based on the study, the using of comic modules is more effective compared to teaching using conventional or traditional methods. This coincides with the results of loose studies on comics. The implications of this study have shown that comics are relevant teaching materials for pupils learning as well as for teachers teaching. In addition, teaching using comic modules can be used as a new medium to improve vocabulary achievement among pupils. It can also make the teaching and learning atmosphere more interesting and memorable. Although there have been many studies on comics conducted earlier, studies on Arabic comics and vocabulary are still not carried out. Further studies on Arabic comics need to be expanded to further develop Arabic in Malaysia. Among other initiatives is to run a qualitative study to further explore Arabic comics. Cooperation with certain parties from the comics industries either domestically or internationally is necessary in benefiting the education in the future.

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