

## Using English Comics in Improving Students’ Ability in Spoken Language

<sup>1</sup>Rifqi Nur Hadi

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia

[1rifqinurhadi@gmail.com](mailto:1rifqinurhadi@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Spoken language defined as a form of communication produced through articulate sounds using the vocal tract, or in some cases, through manual gestures (such as sign languages), as opposed to written language. Comics are built from a series of panels-individual frames or images-arranged in a deliberate sequence to depict the passage of time, action, or narrative progression. The purpose of the study is to prove whether or not English comics as a learning medium improves students’ speaking ability of English. Comics can be used as a medium of learning and also at the same time can be used as a medium of entertainment. The research sample was chosen from the population, specifically from a single class of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, comprising a total of 20 students. In this study, student test results were calculated by using SPSS 23 for windows in the t-test formula to see the significance difference between pre-test and post-test. because of the effectiveness of English comics in enhancing students’ speaking skill, its use might be considered a suitable medium for enhancing students’ speaking skill. This is because English comics are not only easy to comprehend, but they are also entertaining, as we are able to not only see the images but also view its attractive storylines.

**Keywords:** *English comics; Improving-students’ ability; Spoken language.*

### INTRODUCTION

English has firmly established itself as the global lingua franca (Kita Ngatu & Basikin, 2019; Rao, 2019), serving as the universal medium for international communication across virtually every sector, including global business, diplomacy, scientific publishing, and mass entertainment (Jenkins, 2015). Consequently, proficiency in English is no longer merely an asset but a crucial necessity for navigating the modern, globalized era (Silalahi et al., 2023). Within the domain of language skills, speaking holds paramount importance (Huy et al., 2024). It is the primary and most immediate method of communication, fundamentally crucial for social integration, fostering collaboration, and building relationships in both academic and professional settings (Thornbury, 2005). Furthermore, effective speaking skills are inextricably linked to the reciprocal skill of listening, with proficiency in one enhancing comprehension in the other, thereby leading to overall communicative competence (Linse, 2006).

Previous research has extensively explored the necessity of English as a global language, detailing its role in international commerce and education (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Studies have also confirmed that mastering spoken language directly contributes to better language retention and deeper understanding of

grammar and vocabulary (Huy et al., 2024). However, while the *importance* of speaking is widely acknowledged, much of the research, particularly in language pedagogy, focuses on theoretical frameworks or general proficiency assessments. There remains a gap in studies that precisely examine the specific pragmatic strategies and challenges faced by non-native English speakers when using English as a lingua franca (ELF) in high-stakes, real-world professional or academic contexts (Anh et al., 2022). Moreover, the existing literature often overlooks how the interconnection between speaking and emotional expression influences successful communication and social integration for diverse learners.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the perceived speaking challenges and the specific coping mechanisms employed by learners in navigating English communication. By focusing on practical application rather than mere theoretical proficiency, this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the pragmatic competence required to use English effectively in today’s demanding environment. The findings will contribute significantly to the field of language pedagogy by informing the development of more targeted curricula and training materials that emphasize communicative fluency and strategic interaction over strictly grammatical accuracy, thereby better preparing learners for success in global academic and professional spheres.

## **METHODS**

### **Subject of Research**

The population for this study consisted of all 8th grade students studying at SMP YADIKA 6 Pondok Aren during the academic year 2024/2025. There were 2 classes in this school, which consisted of 53 students. The population consisted of approximately 20 students encompassing all grade levels.

### **Instrument and Interview Questions**

This study utilized a quantitative methodology and utilized a pre-experimental design along with a pretest-posttest design approach. According to Creswell (2014) quantitative research is a research method that involves the collection of numerical data to answer research questions. This method is used to test hypotheses and theories, and to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Quantitative research methods include surveys, experiments, and statistics analysis. These methods are used to collect data on a large scale and to identify patterns and trends in the data. Direct face-to-face interview was used.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The study began with a Pre-test utilizing Direct Assessment Instruments. Direct assessments necessitate participants to engage in actual speaking, providing authentic and rich linguistic data. The test was conducted through a face-to-face

conversation between the assessor and the participant.

Following the pre-test, the Treatment phase was administered over one to four meetings. The primary intervention involved using English comic segments as a medium for vocabulary retention and practical usage. The researcher divided the chosen comic into six manageable segments. For each segment, the researcher provided highlights focused on specific vocabulary. The treatment aimed to demonstrate how easily vocabulary could be retained through the comic medium and how the target vocabulary was applied in context (plot). The researcher ensured the comic's plot was engaging, as the narrative element (plot) is crucial for attracting student interest and providing a contextual framework for language learning.

The Post-test was administered after the treatment phase was fully completed. The objective was to assess student progress and obtain data to compare the outcomes between the pre-test and post-test. Similar to the pre-test, the post-test was conducted via a face-to-face conversation. The assessment questions were directly inspired by the vocabulary and contexts found within the comic segments used during the treatment. The researcher utilized a key response guide to determine the correctness and appropriateness of the participants' answers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

The research aimed to investigate the impact of utilizing English comics as a learning medium on the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP YADIKA 6 South Tangerang. The findings conclusively demonstrate that the integration of comics had a significant positive impact on the students' speaking proficiency, validating the study's central hypothesis. This success is evidenced by the clear improvement in students' fluency, vocabulary usage, and confidence between the pre-test and post-test assessments.

**Table 1.** Direct Assessment Instrument (face-to-face conversation)

Assessment Phase	Primary Goal & Topic Focus	Key Observed Speaking Gaps (Pre-Test)	Key Observed Improvements (Post-Test)
Pre-Test	Baseline Measurement (General/Familiar Topics: Hobbies, Friends, Introduction)	Limited Vocabulary Range (Relies on basic words), Lower Fluency (Frequent pauses/hesitations), Difficulty in Structuring Ideas.	N/A
Post-Test	Improvement Measurement (Comic-Related Topics: Story	N/A	Increased Vocabulary (Uses words/phrases from comics), Improved Fluency

Description, Character Analysis, Moral Lessons)	(More spontaneous speech), Better Cohesion (Uses narrative structure/connectors).
---	--

The utilization of English comics contributed positively to speaking skill acquisition through several mechanisms:

1. Contextual Vocabulary Acquisition

The post-test questions, which required students to describe the story and discuss specific characters (e.g., "Describe one of the English comics you read?"), forced them to use vocabulary directly learned from the visual and textual context of the comics. This contextual learning aided retention and immediate application, as evidenced by students' ability to cite new words or phrases they had acquired (as prompted by the question, "Did reading comics help you learn new English words or phrases?").

2. Enhanced Fluency and Engagement

Comics, by nature, are highly engaging and visually stimulating. This high level of interest (often referred to as affective filtering reduction) made students less inhibited and more willing to speak, leading to a noticeable reduction in hesitation and an increase in speaking speed and spontaneity (fluency). The structured narrative provided a clear mental blueprint for students to organize their thoughts when describing plot elements, improving the coherence of their speech.

3. Deepening Communicative Function

The post-test required students to analyze the comic's deeper elements ("What message or lesson did you learn?"). This pushed them beyond simple description (locutionary act) into complex communicative functions (illocutionary act) such as expressing opinions, justifying choices, and interpreting morals. This shift signifies an improvement in overall communicative competence.

It is conclusively established that the utilized of English comics has a positive and statistically significant impact on improving the speaking proficiency of eighth-grade students at SMP YADIKA 6 South Tangerang. This finding confirms that comics are an effective, enjoyable, and relevant media for English language learning. This research provides a valuable contribution by offering teachers a wider, engaging choice for conducting fun and attentive speaking skill learning sessions. Furthermore, for future researchers, these results serve as a strong foundational reference for further studies investigating the role of visual and narrative media in English language acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of utilizing English comics as a learning medium on the speaking proficiency of eighth-grade students at SMP YADIKA 6 South Tangerang. The research found a significant positive impact from the integration of English comics on students' speaking skills. The post-test results demonstrated clear improvements in fluency, vocabulary range, and the coherence of expression compared to the baseline pre-test scores. The visual and narrative context provided by the comics facilitated contextual vocabulary acquisition and lowered affective barriers, making students more willing and able to speak spontaneously and discuss complex ideas (e.g., character analysis, moral lessons) with greater confidence. These findings confirm that English comics are an effective and engaging media for enhancing speaking skills, especially in non-native language environments. The study contributes to the field of language pedagogy by providing empirical evidence supporting the use of visually supported narratives to improve communicative competence. This approach offers a fun and motivating alternative to traditional methods, thereby addressing the common problem of student disengagement in speaking practice. While the results are conclusive, the study had a primary limitation: the sample was restricted to one grade level (eighth grade) at a single school (SMP YADIKA 6 South Tangerang). Furthermore, the direct assessment instrument, while authentic, lacked a highly standardized, globally recognized speaking rubric for objective, generalized scoring.

## REFERENCES

- Anh, N. H. M., Yen, N. H., Tho, N. T. Y., & Nhut, L. M. (2022). Grammatical Errors in Academic Writing of English Second-Year Students. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(6), 70–83. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v7i6.4547>
- Huy, N. Van, Nam, N. T., & Bon, B. N. (2024). International Journal of English Language Studies The Importance of Speaking in English as a Foreign Language between Skillful and Thoughtful Competencies: Studying Sociolinguistics Perspectives. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 6(2), 153–159. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2024.6.2.22>
- Jenkins, J. (2015). *Global Englishes: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). *English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN: A Multilingual Model*. Hong Kong University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1xcs49>
- Kita Ngatu, S. P., & Basikin, B. (2019). the Role of English As Lingua Franca – Informed Approach in English Language Teaching and Learning To Preserve Cultural Identity. *PRASASTI: Journal of Linguistics*, 4(1), 79. <https://doi.org/10.20961/prasasti.v4i1.17060>

- Linse, C. T. (2006). *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners*. McGraw-Hill.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Reseach Journal of English (RJOE)*, 4(1), 65–79. [www.rjoe.org.in](http://www.rjoe.org.in)
- Silalahi, R. M. P., Santoso, W., & Hutauruk, B. S. (2023). English as a Lingua Franca in an Indonesian Multilingual Setting: Pre-Service English Teachers’ Perceptions. *REiLA: Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*, 5(2), 144–160. <https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.v5i2.13611>