

The Effect of Discovery Learning Supported by Interactive Educational Comics on Fifth-Grade Elementary School Students' ability to Read And Understand Explanatory Texts

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Abstract

Reading comprehension of explanatory texts remains a challenge for many elementary school students, highlighting the need for instructional approaches and learning media that foster active engagement in the reading process. This study aimed to examine the effect of the Discovery Learning model supported by interactive educational comics on students' reading comprehension of explanatory texts. A quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental Nonequivalent Control Group Design was employed. The participants consisted of 42 fifth-grade students at SDIT Islamia selected through purposive sampling, with 21 students assigned to the experimental group and 21 to the control group. Data were collected using a validated and reliable essay-based reading comprehension test. The data were analyzed through normality and homogeneity tests, followed by Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with pretest scores as a covariate. The findings demonstrated a significant difference in reading comprehension between the experimental and control groups after controlling for students' initial ability ($F = 2.295$, $p < .001$), with a large effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .342$). The adjusted mean score of the experimental group (85.222) was higher than that of the control group (72.397). These findings indicate that integrating the Discovery Learning model with interactive educational comics effectively improves elementary school students' reading comprehension of explanatory texts. Therefore, this approach can be considered an effective instructional alternative for strengthening literacy learning in elementary schools.

Keywords: Discovery Learning; Interactive Educational Comics; Reading Comprehension

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INTRODUCTION

At the elementary school level, Indonesian language instruction plays a crucial role in improving students' literacy skills. This learning process does not focus solely on mastering a single language skill but integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a holistic manner. Among the various competencies students need to develop, the ability to comprehend reading material is a crucial skill that must continue to improve, as it serves as the foundation for students to understand information across various subject areas. Indonesian language instruction does not

merely focus on linguistic aspects but also equips students to use the language appropriately through the mastery of language skills. (Mubin & Aryanto, 2023; Supriani et al., 2026). In this context, reading is not merely about recognizing written symbols but also involves the stages of comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of the content and meaning present in a text. Reading is a cognitive activity that occurs through the interaction between the reader and the text to interpret, understand, and discover the meaning of a passage (Habibah & Muftianti, 2020; Nur et al., 2023).

The ability to comprehend reading plays a crucial role in the intellectual progress of students at the elementary school level. By reading with comprehension, students can identify the main idea, cause-and-effect relationships, and draw conclusions from the text. The ability to comprehend reading has a significant impact on students' learning success because it helps students understand, process, and interpret the information obtained (Halimah et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2020). In addition, the ability to read comprehension is the ability to process and reconstruct information conveyed through a text in order to be able to understand the meaning conveyed in its entirety (Dewi et al., 2021; Hadiani, 2023). Therefore, in learning Indonesian, understanding explanatory texts is an important aspect because this text contains factual information that clearly and systematically explains the process of an event.

In examining reading comprehension skills, this study uses Barrett's Taxonomy as its theoretical foundation. This taxonomy outlines five aspects of reading comprehension, which include the ability to understand information literally, reorganize it, make inferences, evaluate it, and appreciate the text. According to Barrett, these five levels facilitate the measurement of students' ability to comprehend texts in a progressive manner (Sunarya et al., 2025). These stages reflect an increase in ability, ranging from understanding simple information to the ability to evaluate and appreciate a text. Integrating Barrett's Taxonomy into reading activities can serve as a strategy to support students' comprehension skills through a gradual and structured reading process (Rahman, 2020; Umamy et al., 2025).

However, the level of reading skills of students in Indonesia is still unequal. Research findings indicate that elementary school students' abilities in identifying main ideas and understanding the content of reading still need to be improved so that reading comprehension skills have not developed optimally (Dzambiyah et al., 2024; Latif et al., 2023). The level of reading interest among elementary school students is still in the low category, impacting the development of literacy skills and reading comprehension. This condition indicates the need for innovation in the learning process that can strengthen student activeness in reading activities (Amelia et al., 2025; Putri, 2024). Low student interest in reading is an aspect that affects their ability to understand information in reading. This condition causes students to still experience difficulties in identifying main ideas, gaining understanding of the content in the reading, and concluding the information conveyed. This condition is influenced by the learning process that tends to be teacher-focused, limited variations in the application of learning models, and limitations in utilizing interactive or interesting learning media. Limited student interest in reading can affect their participation in learning activities, thus hindering the process of students

understanding the information presented in the text (Hasriani et al., 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025).

Various studies have shown that integrating the Discovery Learning model with the use of comic books contributes to improved learning outcomes and reading literacy skills among elementary school students. However, these studies still have limitations. Previous research on integrating Discovery Learning with comic books has primarily focused on general reading literacy skills. Furthermore, the use of comic media is still largely applied within the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model or emphasizes the development of digital comic media without integrating it into a specific learning model. However, these studies have not yet produced sufficient empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of comic media in implementing the Discovery Learning model. Based on these findings, there remains a research gap regarding the application of the Discovery Learning model aided by interactive educational comics in teaching elementary school students to read and understand explanatory texts (Ramadhan et al., 2026; Sukoco et al., 2025; Zulfa, 2026).

In addition, previous research has not explored reading comprehension skills according to the five indicators of Barrett's Taxonomy, which include literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation. This study also implements interactive educational comic media developed and designed independently by the researcher by adjusting the characteristics of the explanatory text material, learning objectives, and the characteristics of elementary school students so that the media used is more contextual to learning needs. The innovation of this study focuses on integrating the Discovery Learning model through interactive educational comic media developed independently to measure the ability to understand explanatory texts based on the five indicators of Barrett's Taxonomy. This approach is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of learning and enrich the development of Indonesian language learning innovations at the elementary school level.

This study aims to examine the effect of integrating the Discovery Learning model with interactive educational comics on fifth-grade elementary school students' reading comprehension skills regarding explanatory texts. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to strengthening the empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of integrating the Discovery Learning model with self-developed interactive educational comics, as well as to serve as a reference for improving Indonesian language instruction that is more creative, contextual, and evidence-based at the elementary school level.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a quantitative method through the application of a quasi-experimental design. This method is characterized by the use of a control group, but not all external variables that could potentially influence the experimental process can be fully controlled (Hastjarjo, 2019; Nurdini, 2025). This study applied a Nonequivalent Control Group Design by establishing two groups: an experimental group that received treatment and a control group as a comparison. Both groups did not involve a random sampling procedure (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022). This research took place at SDIT Islamia

in the even semester of the 2026 academic year. The study population consisted of 42 students, divided into two classes. The study sample used a purposive sampling technique, considering that both classes had relatively equivalent reading comprehension skills based on previous learning outcomes and class teacher recommendations. The sample determination resulted in class V-A consisting of 21 students as the experimental group who received Discovery Learning model learning with the help of interactive educational comics, while V-B, which included 21 students, was the control group that followed conventional learning as a comparison.

Table 1. Research Design

Class	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Kelas V A	O ₁	X	O ₂
Kelas V B	O ₃	-	O ₄

Description:

- O₁ = Experimental group pretest (estimate of reading comprehension of explanatory texts before the treatment)
- O₂ = Experimental group posttest (estimate of reading comprehension of explanatory texts after the treatment)
- O₃ = Control group pretest (estimate of reading comprehension of explanatory texts before conventional instruction)
- O₄ = Control group posttest (measurement of reading comprehension ability regarding explanatory texts following conventional instruction)
- X = Treatment consisting of Discovery Learning supported by interactive educational comics
- (-) = No special treatment; conventional instruction was used

The research treatment phase was implemented in three learning sessions for both groups. The experimental group received instruction through the Discovery Learning model, assisted by interactive educational comics adapted to the five indicators of reading comprehension in Barrett's Taxonomy. The first session discussed indicators of literal comprehension and reorganization, the second session discussed indicators of inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation, and the third session focused on strengthening and reviewing the five indicators of reading comprehension as a whole. Meanwhile, students in the control group received instruction over three sessions through a conventional approach used in daily learning activities, with material coverage equivalent to that of the experimental group.

Table 2. Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension Indicators

No	Indicator	Description
1	Literal Comprehension	Students can identify the main idea in each paragraph of the text
2	Reorganization	Students can rewrite the content of the text they have read in their own words based on their understanding
3	Inferential Comprehension	Students are able to use reasoning to discover implied (unwritten) information based on clues from images and text
4	Evaluation	Students are able to provide an assessment or opinion regarding the

5	Appreciation	information in the text, accompanied by reasons based on their understanding of the reading. Students are able to provide a personal response to the content of the reading based on their experiences and understanding gained after reading the text.
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Table 3. Test Item Specifications for the Reading Comprehension Test on Explanatory Texts

No	Indicator	Description	Item Number	Question Type
1	Literal Comprehension	Students can identify the main idea in each paragraph of the text	1	Essay
2	Reorganization	Students can rewrite the content of the text they have read in their own words based on their understanding	3	Essay
3	Inferential Comprehension	Students are able to use reasoning to discover implied (unwritten) information based on clues from images and text	5	Essay
4	Evaluation	Students are able to provide an assessment or opinion regarding the information in the text, accompanied by reasons based on their understanding of the reading.	7	Essay
5	Appreciation	Students are able to provide a personal response to the content of the reading based on their experiences and understanding gained after reading the text.	10	Essay

Table 4. Scoring Rubric for the Reading Comprehension Test

Score	Answer Criteria
4	The answer is very accurate, complete, and aligns with the indicators
3	The answer is accurate but incomplete
2	The answer is fairly accurate but still unclear
1	The answer is not very accurate
0	No answer or incorrect answer

Research data were collected through reading comprehension tests on explanatory texts administered as pretests and posttests. The test items were designed based on the five reading comprehension indicators of Barrett's Taxonomy, which include literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation, and appreciation. The initial instrument consisted of 10 test items, with each indicator represented by two items. This instrument was pilot-tested on 26

students who were not part of the research sample. The results of the analysis using ANATES indicated that the instrument had a good level of reliability, as evidenced by a reliability coefficient of 0.73, which falls into the high category. On the other hand, the validity analysis results showed that six items met the validity criteria with validity coefficients of 0.819; 0.626; 0.695; 0.590; 0.734; and 0.594, specifically for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10. Subsequently, five items—namely, items 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10—were selected as the research instrument. This selection was based on the representativeness of each indicator of Barrett's Taxonomy, such that each indicator is represented by one test item with the highest quality based on the results of the ANATES analysis. Each student's answer is evaluated using a scoring rubric on a scale of 0–4. Answers that are correct, complete, and meet the indicators receive a score of 4, while answers that are correct but incomplete receive a score of 3. Answers that meet only some of the expected criteria receive a score of 2; answers that are somewhat inaccurate receive a score of 1; and a score of 0 is given if the student does not answer or provides an inappropriate response.

After the data were collected, data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Before hypothesis testing was performed, the data were first tested for prerequisites, including normality and homogeneity. Next, the impact of implementing the Discovery Learning model aided by interactive educational comics on reading comprehension was examined using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), with posttest scores as the dependent variable, learning group as the independent variable, and pretest scores as the covariate. The purpose of using ANCOVA was to account for variations in students' initial abilities, thereby allowing for a more accurate analysis of the treatment's impact on reading comprehension.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the effect of the application of the Discovery Learning model with the help of interactive educational comics on the reading comprehension skills of explanatory texts in fifth-grade elementary school students. The research activities were carried out in the even semester period at SDIT Islamia. The implementation of the study began with creating a test instrument that included five indicators of reading comprehension based on Barrett's Taxonomy. Next, the test was tested to determine its validity and reliability using ANATES in a trial class. The feasibility of the instrument was analyzed through the validity and reliability test stages, which showed that six questions met the validity criteria with validity coefficients of 0.819; 0.626; 0.695; 0.590; 0.734; 0.594, respectively, namely for question numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10. Next, five question items were selected, namely numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10, as the research instrument. After the instrument testing stage, the questions were then distributed to both the experimental and control groups in the form of a pretest as the initial measurement and a posttest as the final measurement. The research implementation of both groups, namely the experimental group and the control group, was given a pretest to assess students' initial skills before the intervention was carried out. Next, the experimental class received learning using Discovery Learning assisted by interactive educational comics, while the control class

followed conventional learning without special treatment. As a final evaluation stage, both groups took a posttest to obtain data on students' reading comprehension abilities after being involved in the learning.

Table 5. Statistical Description of Experimental and Control Pretest and Posttest Results

Group	Data	Score		Mean	Std. Deviation
		Min	Max		
Experimental	Pretest	45	80	58.81	8.646
	Posttest	65	100	85.95	10.562
Control	Pretest	45	75	56.67	7.638
	Posttest	55	95	71.67	10.646

The descriptive analysis in Table 5 shows that the initial skills in reading comprehension of explanatory texts among students in the experimental and control groups were relatively comparable. A comparison of pretest and posttest scores indicates that students' reading comprehension skills for explanatory texts improved in both groups. Students in the experimental group, who received an instructional intervention using discovery learning supported by interactive educational comics, achieved an average score of 85.95. The analytical findings reveal a difference in the mean reading comprehension scores for explanatory texts between the two groups. The experimental group showed a higher average posttest score than the control group, indicating that implementing discovery learning supported by interactive educational comics resulted in better outcomes.

Table 6. Results of the Normality Test for Pretest and Posttest Data

Data	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	Experimental	0.933	21	0,158
	Control	0.913	21	0,063
posttest	Experimental	0.938	21	0,199
	Control	0.923	21	0,102

The results of the normality test presented in Table 6 show that all pretest and posttest data for both the experimental and control groups had p-values greater than 0.05. The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that the normality assumption was met; therefore, the data were deemed suitable for analysis using parametric statistics in subsequent tests.

Table 7. Homogeneity Test Results

Data	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest experimental and Control	0.208	1	40	0.651
Posttest experimental dan Control	0.073	1	40	0.788

Based on the homogeneity test using Levene's test presented in Table 6, it was found that the distribution of data in both research groups met the criteria for equal variances. This is indicated by significance values of 0.651 for the pretest and 0.788 for the posttest, both of which exceed the significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, the data can be classified as homogeneous, thereby satisfying the assumption of homogeneity for further analysis using ANCOVA.

Table 8. ANCOVA Analysis Results

Sources of variation	JK Type III	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squarred
Pretest	1238.194	1	1238.194	14.815	<0.001	0.275
Group	1696.120	1	1696.120	20.295	<0.001	0.342
Error	3259.425	39	83.575	-	-	

The ANCOVA analysis showed that students' initial ability, represented by pretest scores as a covariate, had a significant effect on posttest scores ($F = 14.815$; $p < 0.001$). After controlling for initial ability, the learning group factor also had a significant effect on reading comprehension ability ($F = 20.295$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the partial eta-squared value of 0.342 demonstrates how the Discovery Learning model, supported by interactive educational comics, has a strong effect on students' reading comprehension skills. The findings of the statistical analysis indicate that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

Table 9. Adjusted Mean Scores

Group	Adjusted Mean	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval
Experimental	85.222	2.004	81.68-89.275
Control	72.397	2.004	68.344-76.451

Table 9 shows that, after controlling for pretest scores, the experimental group achieved an adjusted mean of 85.222, while the control group achieved 72.397. These findings indicate that the reading comprehension skills of students in the experimental group were higher than those in the control group. These results support the findings of the ANCOVA analysis, which showed a significant effect of the application of the Discovery Learning model with the aid of interactive educational comics on students' reading comprehension skills.

Table 10. Result of The N-Gain Test Analysis

Group	Category	Mean N-Gain (%)	Standard Deviation	Classification Effectiveness
Experimental	High	0.9104	9.70	Effective
Control	Moderate	0.3513	29.31	Ineffective

Based on Table 10, the experimental group obtained an average N-Gain of up to 0.9104 which is classified as effective. On the other hand, the control group obtained an average N-Gain of up to 0.3513 which is classified as moderate with an ineffective level of effectiveness. These results indicate that the experimental group improved reading comprehension skills in explanatory texts more than the control group, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of the treatment using the Discovery Learning model assisted by interactive educational comics.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings demonstrate how the Discovery Learning model, supported by interactive educational comics, effectively improves elementary school students' reading comprehension skills in explanatory texts. Based on the ANCOVA analysis, after controlling for students' initial abilities through pretest scores, the experimental group achieved better reading comprehension than the control group. These findings indicate that improved reading comprehension results from students' initial abilities and the implementation of a discovery-oriented learning model. From this stage, students do not simply acquire information; they actively engage in improving their own comprehension skills. This active involvement makes the reading process more meaningful, thus

encouraging students' understanding of explanatory texts. The Discovery Learning model can improve reading comprehension through student-centered learning activities (Izabella et al., 2021; Sugiyatmi et al., 2026).

The use of interactive educational comics contributes to effective learning by presenting information through a combination of text and visuals, thus supporting students in constructing a clearer understanding of explanatory texts. Unlike previous research, the comic media used in this study was independently developed and designed by adapting to the characteristics of the explanatory text material, learning objectives, and the characteristics of elementary school students. The presentation of cause-and-effect relationships, process sequences, and important information in the form of illustrations and text helps students connect reading information more easily. Using interactive visual media can support improving students' reading comprehension skills (Ramadanu et al., 2024; Suhada & Nuratikah, 2024). Presenting material through a combination of text and visual elements makes students more motivated to participate in reading activities, including relatively long explanatory texts. Visual support in the form of images and interactive material presentation helps students understand the meaning of vocabulary, reading content, and important information contained in the explanatory text more optimally. The findings of this study show that integrating comic media into the learning process can provide a more engaging reading experience and play a role in developing reading comprehension skills (Daulay & Nurmnalina, 2021; Dwipayanti et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study support constructivism theory, which positions students as the primary actors in the stages of knowledge construction. In the application of Discovery Learning, students are guided to identify problems, seek and collect information, analyze the data obtained, and then formulate conclusions more independently, thus enhancing their understanding of the text. This process contributes to improving the ability to read and comprehend explanatory texts, as demonstrated by student learning outcomes. Through this experience, students are better able to grasp the meaning of the reading and maintain their understanding of the text's content (Erviana & Nurhaeni, 2024; Yolanda et al., 2025). The improvement in reading comprehension in this study is reflected in the five indicators of Barrett's Taxonomy: literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation. All of these indicators describe the stages of reading comprehension, from finding explicit information to providing assessments and responses to the content (Fitriani & Nurjamin, 2026)

Throughout the learning process, students are trained to identify main ideas, reorganize information, infer implied meanings, evaluate the content of the text, and respond based on their understanding. These activities help students build understanding gradually, thereby developing their reading comprehension skills more comprehensively. This improvement aligns with Barrett's Taxonomy, which positions reading comprehension as a multi-level process, ranging from literal understanding, reorganization, and inference to evaluation and appreciation (Baharuddin et al., 2021; Fitriani & Nurjamin, 2026). Thus, the improvement in reading comprehension skills among the experimental group demonstrates that integrating the Discovery Learning model with interactive educational comics has

the potential to facilitate the gradual development of reading comprehension skills in accordance with the stages outlined in Barrett's Taxonomy. This contributes to optimizing students' ability to understand the meaning and information in the text (Rahmawati et al., 2024; Yolanda et al., 2025).

The findings of this study imply how Discovery Learning supported by interactive educational comics can play a role in recommending a learning model that supports the improvement of reading comprehension skills for explanatory texts among elementary school students. The contribution of this study focuses on the integration of the Discovery Learning model with interactive educational comics designed based on the five reading comprehension indicators of Barrett's Taxonomy. This integration provides a more contextual learning experience while supporting the presentation of material through media suited to the characteristics of the students. The findings of this study contribute to two aspects: strengthening empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of applying Discovery Learning supported by interactive educational comics in fostering reading comprehension skills, and expanding innovations in Indonesian language instruction at the elementary school level. Although this study showed significant results, the generalizability of the findings remains limited because it involved only two classes in a single school with an intervention duration of three sessions. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a broader sample scope, be conducted in several schools with diverse characteristics, and increase the duration of the intervention so that the optimization of the learning model can be analyzed more comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis results, the use of Discovery Learning supported by interactive educational comics significantly contributes to the development of students' comprehension of explanatory texts in Indonesian language instruction at the elementary school level. After controlling for students' initial abilities through ANCOVA analysis, the experimental group demonstrated better reading comprehension achievement than the control group. The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that the application of the Discovery Learning model supported by interactive educational comics has the potential to serve as an alternative teaching method to support the development of students' reading comprehension skills regarding explanatory texts. The combination of visual elements, text, and a learning process that encourages students to actively discover information creates a more engaging and dynamic learning experience, while also making it easier for students to process information and gain a deep understanding of the text's meaning. Furthermore, a learning approach that gives students a central role in the process of knowledge construction can encourage their optimal engagement in reading and text comprehension activities. Consequently, their ability to understand the main ideas, cause-and-effect relationships, and key information in explanatory texts improves. On the other hand, the findings of this study are still limited to two classes at a single school and an intervention duration of three sessions; therefore, future research is needed that includes a more diverse sample and a longer intervention period so that the results obtained will be more representative.

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