Gulliver's Travel: Language-based approach in assisting rural Year 5 pupils to improve their reading assessment.

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Abstract - **Literature is one source for teaching reading. The revised curriculum in Malaysia has included literature in language arts to develop pupils' enjoyment and appreciation for reading. However, research has shown pupils especially in rural areas are not keen on reading as they lack guidance in reading English. Their assessment for reading was at an average level, which is Band 3. Therefore, this study aims to discover the pupils' experience in reading a graphic novel among Year 5 pupils by using a language-based approach. This is a qualitative study. The instruments include pre and post qualitative assessment and interviews. Purposive sampling was used and there were 28 pupils of Year 5 from a rural primary school in Malacca. 12 pupils were interviewed in a semi structured interview. The result showed that the participants increased their reading assessment. There were 5 themes formed from thematic analysis, which are the pupils needing graphics to read, the activities were fun and interesting, learned new things, love the storyline and rewards. In conclusion, a language-based approach can increase the reading performance level and make reading time more meaningful. This study is limited to a small number of pupils. In the future, hopefully there will be more study about using literature text among primary school pupils.**

Keywords: **reading, literature, language-based approach, graphic novels, assessment**

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has been used as a reading source in learning languages. Since elementary school, students in South Korea have been exposed to their culture and history through the study of Korean literature. For decades, King (2004) used Korean short stories to teach Korean. Regmi (2022) stated that in Nepal, the government has made literature a resource in teaching and learning. Fairytales and folklore have been exposed to children when they were children, such as Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella, and some short stories with moral values. The readers are thought how to imagine themselves in the characters' shoes as Aziz and Rafi (2020) had quoted Thirusanku and Yunus (2012a) that readers are thought how to live and allow readers to experience the activities and feel the joy and suffering. Apart from that, Aziz and Rafi (2020), literature has a role in assisting pupils to acquire the language besides having an aesthetic value.

English literature was emphasized in Malaysia in 2000, with instruction in four genres including poem, short story, theater, and novel. Suliman and Yunus (2014)

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quote Subramaniam (2007), who said that English literature in Malaysian secondary schools has gone from being a big part of the English language curriculum to almost being forgotten. The Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR) and Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) national exams also test students on this topic. Local and foreign literature were taught, and those works broadened students' knowledge and language skills. In fact, poems like The Road Not Taken and Sonnet 18 are still remembered because teachers took days to discuss the poems. However, in 2012, English literature was reintroduced in secondary schools by the Minister of Education Malaysia at the time, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin, through a new syllabus for the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM). English literature is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Malaysia, according to the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), to expose students to the English language. Suliman and Yunus (2014) discussed that English teachers need to be trained on their level of readiness in terms of pedagogical skills, proposal activities, and attitudes towards literature lessons in secondary school.

In primary schools, in 2013, language arts and the contemporary children's literature component were introduced. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2015) stated that the rationale for teaching language arts is to gain learning experience and exposure to the aesthetic use of the language. Pupils read poems, short stories, and graphic novels, among other types of writing.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Because of the pandemic and the movement control order 2020–2021, pupils, especially in rural areas, were not being exposed to reading materials as they had no guidance to read. Due to a few factors, pupils could not participate in the home-based learning. According to Schleicher (2020), after COVID-19, especially in endemic areas, the number of illiterate students will increase due to a lack of continuity in learning. They could not join the online class due to lack of devices and an internet connection. According to the state Officer in assessment data, the pupils' achievements were not good as many schools got average, the minimum level which is level 3 out of six levels.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to discover how language-based approaches for graphic novels can aid in reading assessment as well as to investigate Year 5 students' experiences reading a graphic novel in a rural primary school in Melaka. The research question is:

1. How does pupils' reading proficiency improve by reading the graphic novel Gulliver's Travel?

2. What are the pupils' perception of reading Gulliver's Travel and completing the activities regarding the novel?

There is a lot of research on literature at the secondary and tertiary levels. However, there is a lack of research on literature in primary education. Therefore, this research fills in the existing gap in literature in primary education for assessing reading skill by using the graphic novel as a reading resource.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language - based approach

There are three major approaches to teaching literature. According to Chart 1 from Ling & Chen (2016), language-based approaches fall under the Language Model. A language-based approach helps students pay attention to how language is used when they study literature. It is activity-based and student-centered for productive language use. It improves the students' language skills and teaches them how to read and write (Dhillon & Mogan, 2014). Lazar (2009), in his book, discussed the language-based approach as an approach where the pupils can integrate the language and literature syllabuses more closely. Pupils will be able to have a more meaningful interpretation or evaluation of a literary text if they can do a thorough analysis of the text by using the language. Lazar (2009) also said that students will improve both their general knowledge and their ability to understand English. In addition, a language-based approach sometimes does not focus on reading literature itself but rather on how to use the literature for language practice (Lazar, 2009). According to Lazar (2009), materials activities should be designed based on pre-, while-, and post-reading. Lazaar (2009) mentioned having activities ranging from easy to difficult. In this study, the focus was on while-reading and post-reading activities.

In another study from Ab Hamid and Abdul Aziz (2020), they suggested that teachers use a variety of language teaching techniques, such as the sketch, jumbled words, essay writing, crosswords, and many more. Savvidou (2004) said that aside from giving learners a unique literary world that can help them learn more about their own and other cultures, it can also help them express themselves and improve their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar structure. This approach will also pique students' interest in reading the literature text, as Ab Hamid and Abdul Aziz (2020) emphasized that Language-based literature is a journey. Literature texts can be done during a Language Arts session after a writing skills lesson. The Language Arts Content Standard focuses on how well students can enjoy and understand different kinds of texts, express their own thoughts about them, and think of creative ways to respond to them (Kurikulum, 2020). Kurikulum (2020) also stated that pupils will gain a rich and invaluable experience in using the English language when they go through fun- filled and meaningful activities in Language Arts. Therefore, teachers can use the guidebook provided by the Curriculum Development Department to plan the activities.

Using literature in the classroom can help pupils acquire vocabulary, as mentioned by Mohammad and Nawi (2018) in their study. When using text from contemporary literature books, teachers can promote high order thinking skills such as problem solving and analysis of the characters. Pulimeno et al. (2020) showed that literature may develop imagination and creativity when students unconsciously solve problems, increase self-confidence and personal motivation. Moreover, Pulimeno et al. (2020) said literature can be another form of art such as drama, music, drawing, painting, and dance, and all these can be used to empower and motivate children towards the adoption of healthy behaviours to improve their quality of life. Another study by Ab Hamid and Abdul Aziz (2020) showed that integrating activities to literature is effective in enhancing pupils' interest in literature. In a classroom, pupils often show their interest and passion by getting involved in the classroom activities, and their study showed that pupils completed the task without complaint.

Classroom based assessment

Brown and Lee (2015) defined assessment as a never-ending process that encompasses a much wider domain. When a student answers a question, makes a comment, or attempts to speak and answer Wh - Questions, the teacher makes an assessment subconsciously. On the other hand, Harmer (2015) thought summative and formative assessments were an evaluation of a student, while Brown & Lee (2015) stated summative was more of a traditional test and formative was an alternative assessment. In addition, they defined classroom-based assessment as requiring more individualization and subjectivity, as well as interactions and feedback. It is more challenging as teachers need to have authentic assessment, performance-based assessments, informal assessment, and formative assessment. In Malaysia, starting from 2011, when the Ministry of Education decided to review the education syllabus and curriculum. According to Malaysia Blueprint 2013 -2025, the aim of the review is to prepare students holistically for global economic and social competition in the twenty-first century. It is really important that pupils are evaluated holistically without depending on the examination as mentioned from Narinasamy and Nordin (2018). They stated that classroom assessment is an important dimension to ensure the effectiveness of the new curriculum besides being an approach to gather information on the progress of every pupil. Currently in the revised Curriculum and Assessment Document Standard, the descriptors of the performance level have been updated. According to the 2020 curriculum, pupils in Year 5 will be graded on how well they can understand specific information and details, read and understand A2 fiction and nonfiction digital texts of interest, and respond to the task given.
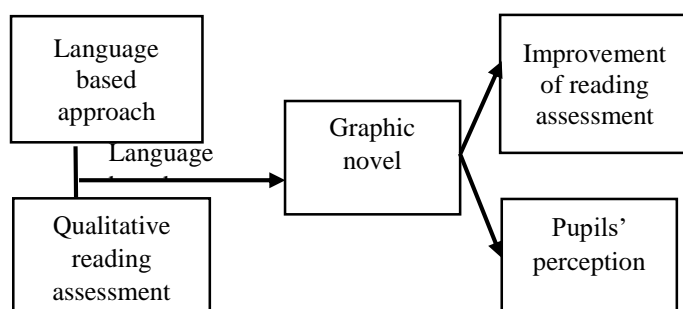
The Conceptual Framework

Chart 2: conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is based on Brown and Lee's (2015) theories of a language-based approach to teaching reading and Kurulum's (2020) assessment rubric. By employing a language-based approach to encourage readers to read The Gulliver's Travels. The language-based approach is a way to teach both literature and language skills, according to Dhillon and Mogan (2014). The researcher is using the graphic novel to teach and learn reading skills by using a language-based approach. Then, the activities might improve their reading assessment and how they think after doing the activities.

IV. METHOD

The research methodology is qualitative. The research design is a case study. Djamba and Neuman (2002) said that qualitative research often plans a study by making a problem-specific program and using a theoretical-philosophical paradigm. Therefore, the focus of this study was on the improvement and perceptions of students when utilising their own language.

The instruments are pre- and post-qualitative reading assessments, activities from Gulliver's Travel Teacher's Guidebook, and the interviews. The assessment will use the descriptor of qualitative reading assessment, which was taken from Kurikulum (2020). Table I shows the reading qualitative assessment from Band 1 to Band 6. The Ministry of Education came up with the Gulliver's Travel Teacher's Guidebook as an idea for an activity. The interview is to explore participants' experiences and explore how pupils behave in that way (Busetto et al., 2020). Creswell (2008) said that the interview works best when the people being interviewed talk to each other. This gives the researcher the best information.

There are 27 pupils of Year 5 from a rural primary school in Malacca who are taking part. They were chosen as part of a purposeful sampling. The 12 pupils will be interviewed. They will answer Wh-Questions and give their opinion in a group discussion in English and Malay and the researcher will translate the script with another English teacher who got C1 in CEFR Readiness. The interview sessions are following the principle of saturation of data. The graphic novel Gulliver's Travels was chosen for this study because it has visuals similar to a comic strip. Thematic analysis will be used in group interviews and evaluations both before and after the activities.

TABLE I: QUALITATIVE READING ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTOR

Performance Level (Band)	Descriptor
1	● Can display minimal understanding of the main idea, specific information, and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more with a lot of support. ● Can guess meaning of very few unfamiliar words from clues provided by title, topic and other known words as well as use a limited range of dictionary skills with a lot of support. ● Can read A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest haltingly with a lot of support.
2	● Can display some understanding of the main idea, specific information and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more with a lot of support. ● Can guess meaning of some unfamiliar words from clues provided by title, topic and other known words as well as use limited range of dictionary skills with a lot of support. ● Can read A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest at a slower pace with a lot of support.
3	● Can understand the main idea, specific information and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more by responding adequately to given tasks. ● Can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the clues provided by title, topic and other known words as well as use dictionary skills adequately. ● Can read and understand a range of A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest by responding adequately to given tasks.
4	● Can understand the main idea, specific information, and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more by responding clearly to given tasks most of the time. ● Can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the clues provided by title, topic and other known words as well as use dictionary skills according to given tasks. ● Can read and understand a range of A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest by responding clearly to given tasks most of the time.
5	● Can understand the main idea, specific information, and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more by responding clearly to given tasks with ease. ● Can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the clues provided by title, topic and other known words as well as use dictionary skills according to given tasks with ease.

	● Can read and understand a range of A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest by responding clearly to given tasks with ease.
6	● Can understand the main idea, specific information, and details of simple texts of two paragraphs or more by responding creatively to given tasks. ● Can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the clues provided by title, topic, and other known words as well as use dictionary skills effectively. ● Can read fluently and understand a range of A2 fiction or non-fiction print and digital texts of interest. ● Can guide others in a given task.

Research procedures

The study will be done in two weeks through the CCL Workshop, which is a part of the English Panel's program. First, pupils are being assessed using rubrics from Kurikulum (2020). Table I is the plan of lesson activities in two weeks. Then, the activities are planned according to the bottom-up reading model, which is from easy to complex. Table I is the lessons and activities that have been carried out. All these activities have been done during the English period, and a rubric for their assessment was adopted through the Year 5 Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document (DSKP). Teachers do assessment as they are doing the task for every lesson. The group discussion will be done a week after the final lesson.

TABLE II: LESSON PLAN

Week 1	
25 April 2022	Lesson 1: - Read chapter by chapter with guidance, - introduce how to read the graphic novel
26 April 2022	Lesson 2 - Teacher's guidebook, page 26 - Label the front cover with illustrator, title, original author, retold by, publisher, - Individual label – may discuss with a friend
27 April 2022	Lesson 3 - Finding hidden items - Teacher's guidebook page 32 - Group work – group of 3 / 4
28 April 2022	Lesson 4 - Wordsearch page 56 & 57 – Teacher's guidebook - Pair work
Week 2	
23 May 2022	Lesson 5 - Crosswords puzzles - Wordsearch

	- From workbook - Group work – group of 3 / 4
24 May 2022	Lesson 6 - Rearrange sentence strips – Teacher's guidebook page 34 - Cut and paste in group of ¾ - I-think – flow chart - Rewrite the correct flow chart in an A3 papers - Gallery Walk – peer checking
25 May 2022 26 May 2022	Lesson 7 - Secret message – Teacher guidebook page 87 -88 – Deciphering messages - In group of 3/4, pupils decipher the secret message and write in an A3 paper in neat and legible print - Gallery Walk and do peer checking, - Rewrite the secret notes in their exercise books
27 May 2022	Lesson 8 - Wrapped up activity - Pupils answer Questions on their own with less guidance - Worksheet from Teacher's guidebook page 36 & 79

The questions are for the semi structured interviews, which are a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions as they can give their opinion. The suggested questions are:

1. Have you read Gulliver's Travels?
2. Who asked you to read?
3. Will you read if there is no picture in the novel?
4. Have you done the activities during The Gulliver's Travel week?
5. What do you think about the activities?
6. Which activities do you like the most? Give a reason.

V. FINDINGS

The first objective is to explore pupils' proficiency by reading the graphic novel Gulliver's Travels. The results for pre- and post qualitative assessment is presented in Chart 2. The graph in Chart 2 shows that the number of pupils receiving a level 2 in performance has dropped to zero. In the post test, there are four pupils who got level 6, which is the highest level of performance. Furthermore, the number of students who received a level 3 on the pre-qualitative reading assessment has decreased from 20 to 4. These findings answer the research question 1, reading the graphic novel really increases their reading assessment level performance.
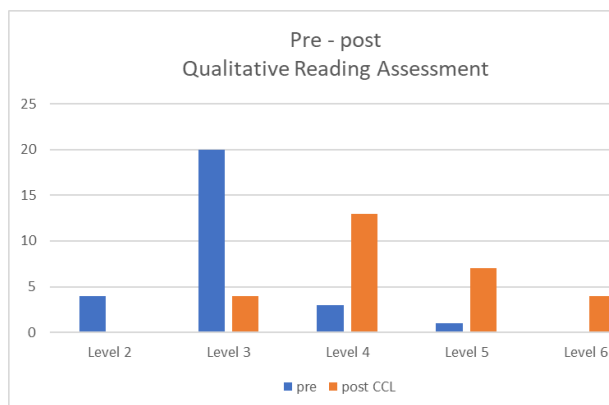
Chart 2: Result of pre and post assessment

The second objective is to find out how the students felt about reading Gulliver's Travels and doing the activities related to the book. Interviews had been done, and a thematic analysis had been used. Participants' names are pseudonyms. There are 12 participants, and they are Arif, Haris, Iman, Haziq, Qila, Jamal, Rayan, Nadmi, Shaha, Amy, Fiza, and Wani. Table II below shows the themes from the interviews.

TABLE III: THEMES FROM THEMATIC ANALYSIS

THEMES	PUPILS	EXCERPTS
Need graphic (8)	Arif	*I need pictures. I don't understand without pictures.*
	Haris	*I cannot read English. I need pictures.*
	Haziq	*I have watched the movie. So, I understand when I read*
	Qila	*I will be bored when I read without pictures*
	Jamal	*I won't read because it will be boring.*
	Rayan	*I need pictures, I am not good in reading English.*
	Nadmi	*I understand a little bit when I read but more with graphics.*
	Amy	*I can read but the best thing is with pictures.*
Fun and interesting (9)	Nadmi	*I had fun. My favourite is wordsearch and find hidden object*
	Qila	*I love the deciphering messages. Challenging but fun.*
	Shaha	*Me too. I want to do again the deciphering message.*
	Rayan	*I learn reading. Thanks to Iman. Noisy but he helped me.*
	Wani	*Reading only is boring. Please do group work again.*
	Fiza	*I had fun doing group work. Better than reading alone.*
	Iman	*Love it, Ms but please group me with another pupil.*
	Arif	*Me too. I want to change members.*
	Amy	*I love deciphering message too. Please do it again.*
Learn a new thing (4)	Qila	*I learn new vocabulary. I remember when doing crossword puzzles*
	Shaha	
	Rayan	*I learn to imagine.*
	Jamal	*I learn to read words when I did the wordsearch.* *I learn something new such as the ships terms.*
Storyline (4)	Jamal	*I love the story. It was interesting when knowing Gulliver can meet tiny and giant people.*
	Iman	*I love the experience at two different islands. Interesting story*
	Shaha	*I can read without graphic but depend on the story. This one i exciting when he wen to tiny and giant islands.*
	Wani	*I love the storyline*
Rewards (3)	Shaha	*I got my price, money twice.*
	Jamal	*I also got. I love rewards. It makes me happy.*
	Fiza	*I want to do again. I did not win.*

From these interviews, the answers to the second research question are that pupils love the activities planned for them. Nine participants had fun during activities, but the other three did not comment on this. 8 people require graphics to be read in order to understand the storyline. The majority of them received levels 3 to 4 on the pre-assessments. Four participants learn a new thing, such as vocabulary, and learn to read better, while another four love the story line. Those four participants who loved the storyline were the ones who received level 6, the highest assessment, as they could enjoy reading and

they could assist their members to complete the tasks. Three participants thought that the rewards helped them complete the task. During the interviews, Rayan rarely talked about his feelings, but he talked about how the activities make him read better. Rayan is one of the participants who got level 2 during the pre-assessment. He thought that he improved more on reading. Word search and Deciphering Messages received the most votes among the 12 of them.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

Based on what has been found, a language-based approach can help students do better on reading tests. It is similar to the study by Ab Hamid and Abdul Aziz (2020), which said that a language-based approach is the best way to get kids to learn and read literature. Dhillon and Mogan (2014) also said that the language-based approach focuses on student-centered learning, activity-based learning, and the section on language use. Shaha and Amy were requesting to do the activities again in the future, while Wani and Fiza were saying they preferred to do activities rather than read alone. Eight of them stated that they enjoy reading with pictures. Haris, Nadmi, Rayan, and Jamal cannot understand the story without graphics.

Besides that, a language-based approach can improve pupils' learning of new vocabulary. Qila and Jamal said that they learned new terms when they did the activities. These excerpts were in line with a study from Mohammad and Nawi (2018), who found that the tertiary level students improved their vocabulary growth when reading short stories. Despite the fact that the participants were primary school students, they were learning new things such as vocabulary, how to imagine, and how to read more effectively.

Pupils can read literature with enjoyment if they can cope with reading lengthy novels. Even though this study used a graphic novel, some of the sentences in the speech bubbles are long. So, if pupils do a few activities, they will be able to better understand what the text is about. According to the reading assessment descriptor, pupils need to get at least Band 3. Rayyan required a lot of assistance during the pre-assessment because he could read the words and phrases with a lot of help. Due to that, Rayan's performance level in the pre-assessment in reading is level 2. However, he could feel that he had improved and could read adequately when his groupmate helped him. This result is aligned with a study by Fikray and Habil (2022). Fikray and Habil (2022) stated that activities in the language-based approach help students deal with texts autonomously in order to promote autonomy in learning and improve their enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading literature.

English teachers should use a language-based approach to reading. The approach really helped pupils understand the story. This approach can be the finest way to introduce literature. Amala and Oboko (2019) talked about using literature in the language classroom. This is a new way of thinking about how to help people learn languages. By integrating a language-based approach with the literature, pupils in primary schools will have fun reading, and they will anticipate reading more. Lazar

(2009) says that students can gradually learn about the characters and plot by doing activities while they read. This helps them deal with the length of novels.

VII. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the findings showed that the participants increased their reading performance level. There were five perceptions about the language-based approach to reading literature. They have fun, and the lesson is more interesting compared to traditional reading exercises. They love the graphics or pictures, they love the rewards they have gotten, and they love the storyline of the chosen graphic novel. When teachers plan activities that are appropriate for primary school pupils in literature text, not only Gulliver's Travel, the pupils will have significant positive impact. Pupils are having fun and have interest in reading graphic novels. The graphic novel is the reading resource and teachers plan the activities based on the reading resource. Hopefully, in the future, there will be more study about using literature as a reading material among pupils in primary school.

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