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Reimagining Arabic Instruction: Designing Webtoon Comics as Innovative *Qirā'ah* Learning Media

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ABSTRACT

Developing effective instructional media is essential to overcome the perception that Arabic *qirā'ah* (reading) is monotonous and difficult, a challenge that often diminishes students' motivation and comprehension. Despite the wide use of technology-enhanced learning, studies focusing on Webtoon-based comics for Arabic reading instruction remain limited. This study aims to bridge that gap by designing and validating a digital Arabic comic on the Webtoon platform to improve Grade X students' reading proficiency at MAN Tanjungbalai. Using a Research and Development (R&D) design with the Three Stages Research and Development (TSRD) model, the process involved needs analysis, storyboard creation, prototype development, expert validation, and classroom trials. The results demonstrate strong evidence of feasibility and effectiveness: material validation scored 75% (valid), media validation reached 86.6% (highly valid), teacher responses averaged 91.4% (highly valid), and student responses 86.5% (highly valid). Teachers emphasized the alignment of visuals and text as strengths, while students highlighted the engaging format and improved comprehension of Arabic texts. The findings confirm that Webtoon-based comics not only increase learners' motivation but also enhance comprehension, satisfaction, and classroom participation, transforming the perception of Arabic learning from difficult to enjoyable. This study contributes by offering empirical validation of digital comics as innovative instructional media and by demonstrating the integration of popular youth-oriented platforms into formal education. Broader implications suggest that Webtoon-based media can support multimodal literacy, promote learner engagement, and serve as a scalable model for technology-enhanced language instruction in diverse contexts.

1. Introduction

The mastery of reading skills is one of the most critical aspects of foreign language learning, as it provides the foundation for understanding, interpreting, and engaging with written texts. In Arabic language instruction, *qirā'ah* (reading) occupies a particularly significant position because of its close link with intellectual, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of knowledge. Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and an important language in religious, academic, and cultural contexts, requires learners to develop the ability not only to recognize words and sentences but also to comprehend and interpret meaning with accuracy and depth (Nasution, 2016; Mukmin & Huda, 2019). Yet, in many classroom settings, the teaching of *qirā'ah* continues to be framed in a conventional manner that emphasizes rote memorization and mechanical decoding of letters. This approach reduces the potential for learners to engage in higher-order processes such as analysis, interpretation, and contextual application. The consequence is that *qirā'ah* is often perceived as a monotonous and difficult skill to master, which diminishes students' motivation and engagement (Aini, 2024).

Ideally, *qirā'ah* instruction should cultivate expressive reading, accurate pronunciation, correct intonation, and deep comprehension of the author's intent. The pedagogical goal is not only to improve reading fluency but also to foster cognitive skills in constructing meaning through linguistic and semiotic cues (Fauziyah, 2023). However, these ideals often clash with the realities of classroom practice. Many Arabic learners struggle with limited vocabulary (mufradāt), face difficulties with narrative-heavy texts, and are rarely provided with visual or interactive aids to support comprehension. At the same time, teachers often rely on traditional lecture methods, which further reinforce the perception that Arabic is a rigid and difficult subject. Interviews with Arabic language

teachers at MAN Tanjungbalai confirmed that the lack of innovative media and the monotonous dominance of teacher-centered methods are among the major reasons for students' disengagement from reading lessons. Internal factors also exacerbate the problem, as learners frequently perceive Arabic as inherently difficult, with those from non-Arabic educational backgrounds struggling the most to adapt (Panjaitan & Rasyid, 2023). Consequently, the absence of creative instructional media not only reduces comprehension but also fosters boredom, frustration, and apathy in the classroom (Izzah & Ma'sum, 2021).

The urgency to innovate in Arabic language teaching has been highlighted in numerous studies. Hasan and Baroroh (2019, as cited in Panjaitan, 2023) observed that the insufficient use of teaching media significantly contributes to students' low interest in learning Arabic. These findings resonate with classroom experiences, where students often report that *qirā'ah* is the most unappealing skill due to limited engagement and minimal support beyond textbooks. The limited variety of instructional media also affects students' willingness to participate, as monotony makes the learning process feel burdensome. Moreover, in interviews with Grade X students at MAN Tanjungbalai, the majority admitted to having difficulty understanding reading materials, citing monotonous teaching and the absence of engaging media as the main reasons for their disinterest. These issues underline the importance of creativity and teacher innovation in reshaping students' perceptions of Arabic learning, particularly in *qirā'ah*. Without varied and interactive media, the effectiveness of instruction risks being undermined, leaving learners unmotivated and disengaged.

The potential of digital technology and multimodal media to address these challenges has been supported by a growing body of scholarship. Nabila Luqiana and Al-Rasyid (2021) reported that technology-based media enhances comprehension and supports learner motivation by introducing interactive and visual elements into instruction. Batubara (2021) further emphasized that comics, as a form of visual storytelling, can increase vocabulary, build reading interest, and foster learner enthusiasm through their concise narratives and colorful illustrations. Kodrle and Savchenko (2021) demonstrated that multimedia storytelling, podcasts, and interactive presentations improve not only language proficiency but also general learning skills. Similarly, Gholami and Salahshour (2025) confirmed that digital media reduces learner anxiety, boosts motivation, and expands access to interactive resources, thereby improving overall literacy. Fradana et al. (2025) showed that interactive Webtoon-based texts strengthen students' critical comprehension and motivation, while Miao and Li (2024) highlighted that digital storytelling promotes creativity, autonomy, and active engagement in language learning. These studies align with the theoretical framework of multimodal literacy, which argues that the integration of visual, linguistic, audio, gestural, and spatial modes creates a richer and more engaging learning experience (Yunus et al., 2013; Carcamo & Pino, 2025). Despite this promising evidence, there remains a gap in research on applying these innovations specifically to Arabic *qirā'ah* instruction, particularly through platforms already widely embraced by students, such as Webtoon.

At the same time, empirical work in Arabic language education has demonstrated the potential of digital comics as instructional media. Izzah and Ma'sum (2021) reported that digital comics improved vocabulary acquisition and contextual understanding with a feasibility rate of 83.9%. Aini (2024) found that comics supported translation tasks and increased learner motivation, while Panjaitan and Rasyid (2023) validated Canva-based Arabic comics as highly feasible, gaining over 90% approval from experts and users. Hamzah (2024) similarly confirmed the high validity of Webtoon-based instructional media with ratings of 92% for content, 88% for media, and 87.2% for user responses. These findings highlight the effectiveness of comics in Arabic instruction. However, the majority of these studies focused on vocabulary enrichment, translation, or general Arabic learning rather than *qirā'ah* skills. Moreover, while comics have been applied in other foreign language contexts, their integration into Arabic *qirā'ah* instruction, especially through popular youth-oriented platforms such as Webtoon remains underexplored. This gap calls for targeted research that aligns curriculum-based content with digital comics in order to directly improve Arabic reading comprehension.

This study seeks to address that gap by developing Webtoon-based digital comics as instructional media for *qirā'ah* learning among Grade X students at MAN Tanjungbalai. The novelty of this study lies in combining the narrative-visual features of Webtoon with Arabic *qirā'ah* content from the national curriculum, thereby situating formal learning materials within a popular and engaging platform. Unlike traditional textbooks, Webtoon offers a multimodal design that blends illustrations, dialogues, and storytelling, making it an accessible medium for students who are already familiar with digital comics in their daily lives.

By transforming Arabic reading lessons into an enjoyable narrative format, this study not only increases learner engagement but also reshapes the perception of Arabic as a difficult subject. The contribution of this study is twofold: it demonstrates how Webtoon-based comics can be empirically validated as feasible and effective instructional media, and it highlights the pedagogical potential of leveraging widely used digital platforms in foreign language education.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to transform Arabic language teaching into a more engaging, interactive, and student-centered process. By integrating Webtoon-based comics, the study aims to improve motivation, comprehension, and participation in *qirā'ah* lessons. Specifically, the research investigates the feasibility, validity, and effectiveness of the developed media through expert validation, teacher evaluations, and student responses. The central aim is to determine whether digital comics on Webtoon can provide a valid and practical medium for enhancing Arabic reading proficiency. Beyond addressing an immediate classroom need, the study contributes to the broader discourse on innovative pedagogical practices in Arabic language teaching by demonstrating how multimodal literacy can be operationalized in real instructional contexts.

In conclusion, this study underscores that innovative instructional media are not optional enhancements but essential components of modern Arabic pedagogy. By empirically validating Webtoon-based comics as feasible, valid, and effective for *qirā'ah* instruction, the research demonstrates how digital media can transform Arabic learning into a motivating and enjoyable process. The broader implication is that Arabic teachers should actively adopt multimodal and technology-enhanced media to better align instruction with students' digital realities and preferences. Such innovations not only enrich the teaching of Arabic reading but also contribute to more sustainable, learner-centered practices that prepare students for broader academic and cultural engagement with the Arabic language.

2. Method

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach, which is suitable for creating, validating, and disseminating innovative instructional media. The research specifically applied the Three Stages Research and Development (TSRD) model, which was developed to assist novice researchers in structuring developmental studies more practically (Ramli, 2019 in Alilifah, 2023). The TSRD model consists of three sequential stages: pre development, development, and post development. This design was selected because it allowed the systematic creation and evaluation of Webtoon based Arabic comics for *qirā'ah* learning, ensuring that both validity and practicality could be examined thoroughly.

2.1 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Tanjungbalai, located in Tanjungbalai City, North Sumatra, Indonesia, between January and June 2025. The participants included three categories: (1) expert validators, consisting of Dr. Harun Al Rasyid, M.A. (Arabic content expert, UIN Sumatera Utara), Dr. Hendra Kurniawan, M.Pd. (media expert I), and Dr. Gunawan, M.A. (media expert II); (2) one Arabic language teacher who evaluated the implementation in the classroom context; and (3) seventy three Grade X students who participated as end users in the product trial. This combination of participants ensured that the product was assessed from expert, teacher, and student perspectives.

2.2 Research Procedures

The TSRD model was operationalized in three stages.

1) ***Pre development stage:*** This stage involved needs analysis, material analysis, and storyboard design. Needs analysis was carried out through interviews with two Arabic teachers and fifteen Grade X students to identify challenges in *qirā'ah* learning. The findings revealed the lack of engaging instructional media and difficulties in comprehending Arabic reading texts. Based on this, the material selected was "في البيت" (*Fi al-Bayt* / "At Home"), from Chapter 2 of the official Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This selection was aligned with the *Kompetensi Inti* (Core Competencies) and *Kompetensi Dasar* (Basic Competencies) of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. A storyboard was then designed using the Ibis Paint application to prepare illustrations and dialogues for the Webtoon format.

2) ***Development stage:*** In this stage, the storyboard was transformed into a prototype of the digital comic. Adjustments were made to Webtoon technical specifications and visual elements were enhanced to attract learners' attention. The prototype was validated by both content experts and media experts using structured validation sheets with a five-point Likert scale. The validation focused on aspects such as content accuracy, linguistic clarity, visual presentation, and overall effectiveness. Experts also provided qualitative feedback, recommending stronger alignment between visuals and text and more interactive dialogue features.

3) ***Post development stage:*** After undergoing several rounds of revisions, the product entered the classroom trial phase, where it was implemented with a group of seventy-three students under the guidance of their Arabic teacher. At this stage, data were systematically collected from teachers and students using structured questionnaires to comprehensively evaluate the product's effectiveness and practicality. After validation confirmed its reliability, the product was disseminated through the Webtoon Canvas platform, ensuring wider reach, adaptability to different learning contexts, and extended educational impact beyond the classroom. The overall procedure of this study is summarized in Figure 1.

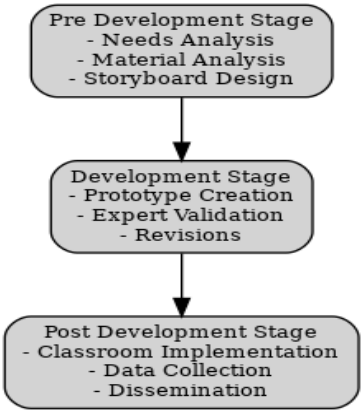

Figure 1 Flowchart of the Three Stages Research and Development (TSRD)

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

Two categories of data were collected, namely qualitative and quantitative.

- *Qualitative data* were obtained through interviews with teachers and students during the needs analysis, and through open ended feedback from experts during the validation process. These data provided context and supported improvements to the media design.
- *Quantitative data* were gathered using structured questionnaires administered to validators, the Arabic teacher, and the student respondents. Each questionnaire applied a five point Likert scale (Sugiyono, 2013) assessing dimensions such as accuracy, clarity, presentation, and effectiveness.

2.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and expert comments were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, which enabled categorization of recurring themes related to instructional needs and media suitability. Quantitative data were processed using percentage analysis, applying the formula suggested by Rahmatin et al. (2021). The scores were then classified into categories from highly invalid to highly valid (Ni'mah, 2024). This combination of analyses provided a balanced perspective that ensured both rigor and triangulation in evaluating the instructional media.

3. Result

This study produced and validated a Webtoon-based Arabic digital comic for *qirā'ah* instruction through a structured process consisting of three main stages: pre-development, development, and post-development. The findings reported here cover each stage in detail, integrating quantitative results with qualitative insights from experts, teachers, and students. The purpose of this section is not only to present validation scores but also to interpret how these findings support the feasibility, effectiveness, and innovation of the developed medium.

Overall, the product achieved validity ratings across four dimensions: material, media, teacher responses, and student responses. The material validation averaged 75 percent, classified as valid but highlighting presentation as an area requiring improvement. Media validation achieved 86.60 percent, placing it in the highly valid category and emphasizing strong design and display quality. Teachers' evaluation yielded an average score of 91.40 percent, reflecting exceptionally high feasibility and implementability, while student responses averaged 86.50 percent, confirming broad acceptance and positive engagement. Taken together, these results place the product within the highly valid category, affirming its readiness for classroom adoption and wider dissemination.

3.1 Pre-Development Stage

3.1.1. Needs Analysis

The needs analysis was conducted through interviews with two Arabic teachers and fifteen Grade X students at MAN Tanjungbalai. The findings revealed several recurring problems in the teaching of *qirā'ah*. Instruction was largely teacher-centered, with minimal use of instructional media. Students reported fatigue and boredom when engaging with text-heavy materials, resulting in reduced motivation, low attention span, and minimal participation. Teachers likewise acknowledged the absence of creative and interactive media, noting that reading sessions often became monotonous.

These conditions indicated an urgent need for instructional resources that could reduce cognitive load, support comprehension, and sustain attention. Four major clusters of needs emerged:

- **Pedagogic need.** Students required opportunities for active processing rather than passive reception. The use of a serial comic format allows for bite-sized reading, clear pacing, and turn-taking through panels and speech bubbles. This structure lends itself to micro-tasks such as prediction, scanning, and inference, which naturally activate learners' engagement during reading.
- **Affective need.** Students frequently expressed boredom with dense Arabic passages. The incorporation of color, character-driven narratives, humor, and episodic tension provides affective hooks that sustain motivation. Ending each scene with a small prompt or question was seen as a strategy to maintain curiosity and anticipation.
- **Linguistic need.** Learners required scaffolding to connect new lexical items with familiar contexts. Home-based scenarios allowed vocabulary to be anchored in real-life situations, while glosses,

repetition, and icons embedded within panels provided multiple exposures for reinforcement.

- **Practical need.** Teachers highlighted the importance of media that could be integrated easily into limited classroom time and accessible devices. A vertical Webtoon format optimized for smartphones addressed this by allowing quick circulation without the need for special equipment.

The needs analysis suggested that the primary challenge was not simply a lack of media but the absence of a narrative space where language could be noticed, practiced, and reused with minimal friction.

The Webtoon medium addressed this by embedding micro-tasks within the narrative, reframing reading as a sequence of achievable steps. This transformation shifts lessons from explanation-first to exploration-first, producing greater student talk, stronger noticing of form and meaning, and more durable comprehension.

Table 3.1 Needs Analysis Themes and Design Implications

Theme	Observed issue in class	Design choice in the comic	Expected effect on learning
Pedagogic	Passive reading of long passages	Short panels with cue words and task prompts per scene	More active processing and turn taking
Affective	Low interest and fatigue	Colorful characters, episodic tension, humor where suitable	Higher sustained attention and willingness
Linguistic	Vocabulary not grounded in context	Home based scenarios with on panel gloss and repetition	Faster form meaning mapping and recall
Practical	Limited classroom time and devices	Mobile first vertical layout and quick activity hooks	Easier adoption and smoother lesson pacing

3.1.2 Material Analysis

The instructional material was anchored to the Grade X Arabic textbook from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum. The theme selected for development was "في البيت" (*Fi al-Bayt* / "At Home"), taken from Chapter 2 of the textbook. This topic was chosen because it resonates with learners' daily experiences and allows for contextual learning of new vocabulary and structures.

The analysis identified three instructional layers embedded within the content:

1) **Lexical fields** included household members, furniture, daily routines, objects, and spatial relations.
2) **Grammatical structures** emphasized noun phrase patterns, gender and number agreement, simple verbal clauses, prepositions, and interrogative forms.
3) **Discourse moves** integrated functions such as identifying, locating, requesting, clarifying, and summarizing. Each was paired with a micro-task to ensure comprehension checks occurred throughout the reading process rather than only afterward.

The topic's controlled variability permitted natural recycling of grammatical structures across contexts. For beginners, this repetition with variation stabilized form and ensured meaning remained fresh across different rooms, situations, and characters.

Table 3.2 Content to Task Map for "**Fi al Bayt**"

Scene focus	Target language focus	Micro task embedded in panels	Evidence of success to look for
Rooms and layout	Prepositions and location expressions	Match item to location, then verify in dialog	Accurate pointing and self correction
Objects at home	Noun phrases with gender and number	Spot the phrase in bubbles, copy to caption	Correct agreement patterns in captions
Daily routines	Simple verbal clauses with time expressions	Order panels chronologically	Coherent sequencing with correct markers
Requests	Polite request and response patterns	Choose the appropriate bubble to continue scene	Pragmatic fit and successful turn taking
Clarification	Yes or no and WH questions	Replace ambiguous bubble with clearer question	Improved clarity and correct information flow

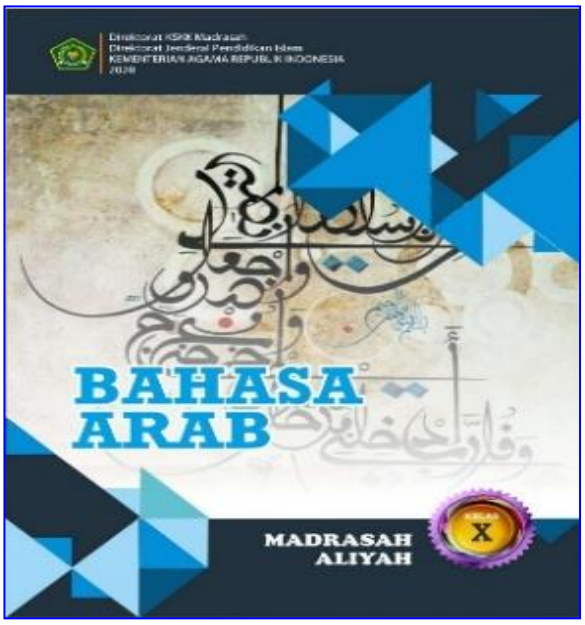

Figure 1. Source textbook used for content selection

Figure 2. Development focus, "At Home," and its concept map.

3.1.3 Storyboard Design

The storyboard developed using Ibis Paint carefully mapped out the visual sequencing, shot composition, and dialogue pacing, ensuring that the format was optimized for vertical screen reading. The dialogues were deliberately structured to balance narrative flow with pedagogical cues that facilitate decoding, scanning, and inference, thereby supporting both comprehension and engagement. Each scene concluded with a small decision point or comprehension check designed to sustain learners' attention and curiosity. In this way, the storyboard effectively transformed the needs analysis and content maps into a coherent and readable mobile-based learning experience that is both accessible and engaging:

- ***Readability on vertical screens.*** Panels are designed for one idea per scroll. Speech bubbles sit near the speaker and follow a clear left to right then top to bottom order. Font size, line spacing, and bubble contrast are tested on a mid range smartphone to ensure comfortable reading.
- ***Cognitive cueing.*** Key lexical items appear first in visually simple panels before reappearing in richer scenes. Icons and color accents help learners notice target words without overloading the page. Where possible, the picture carries the heavy meaning, while text carries the precise form.
- ***Task embedded pacing.*** After two or three panels of input, one panel invites a micro action: predict the next move, match object and location, choose the accurate bubble, or re order captions. This keeps the narrative moving while turning reading into doing.
- ***Progressive disclosure.*** New linguistic forms are first introduced in simple, low-complexity contexts and then gradually combined with other structures to build proficiency step by step. For instance, a location expression may initially appear in isolation, then reappear alongside a routine verb, and eventually be integrated into a full request. This layering approach ensures that learners encounter new material in manageable increments, allowing comprehension to develop naturally. Each reappearance is deliberately kept short and reinforced with strong visual support, so that students can recognize patterns, connect meanings, and internalize usage without being cognitively overloaded.

The storyboard conceptualizes each panel as a turn in an ongoing conversation between the learning material and the student. Every turn is intentionally crafted to be brief, purposeful, and rewarding, so that learners remain engaged without feeling overwhelmed. By embedding tasks directly into the narrative, the comic evolves into a living worksheet where exercises are seamlessly integrated into the storyline rather than placed at the end as separate activities. This design allows learners to interact with the material continuously, fostering active participation and comprehension. Such an approach proves especially effective in mixed-ability classrooms, as it ensures that all students can remain attentive and benefit from the incremental learning process woven into the story.

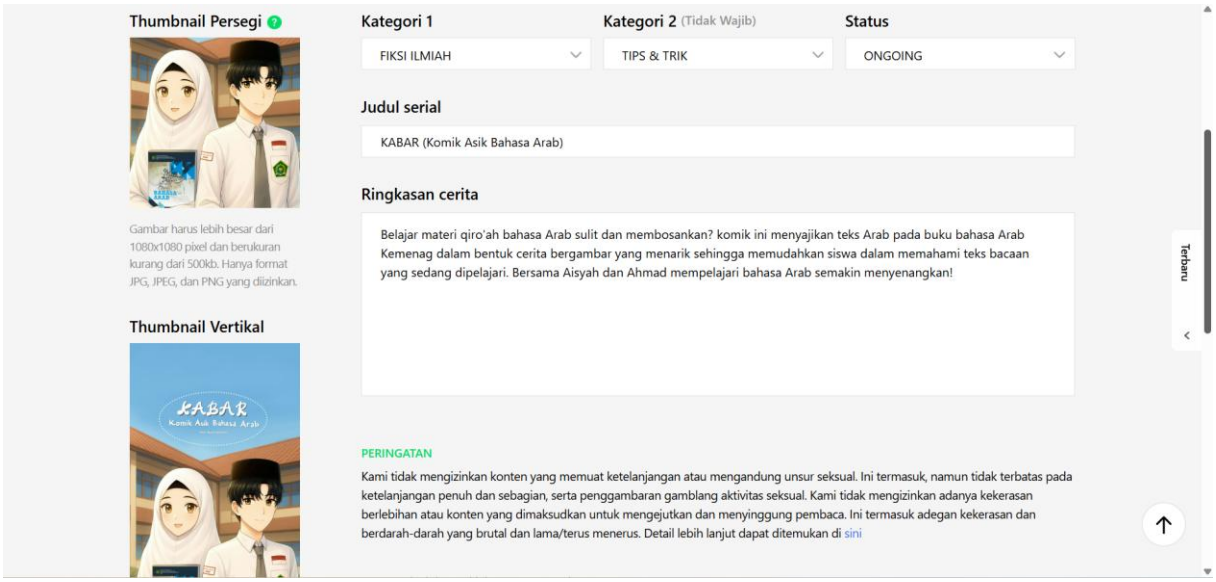

Figure 3. Storyboard layout schema for a vertical Webtoon episode

3.2 Development Stage

3.2.1 Material Expert Validation

Material validation produced an average of 75 percent, categorized as valid. Content and linguistic aspects each scored 76 percent, while presentation scored 70 percent. The findings indicate that the instructional foundation was strong, but the presentation dimension needed refinement to optimize learning.

Experts recommended:

- Stronger alignment between visuals and text, ensuring illustrations reinforced rather than duplicated information.
- Shifting from monologic narratives to more dialogic interactions that promote learner involvement.
- Enhancing micro-layouts for clarity.
- Cueing difficult vocabulary with on-panel glosses to aid comprehension.

These refinements were not structural but representational, highlighting how subtle improvements in presentation could significantly elevate pedagogical effectiveness.

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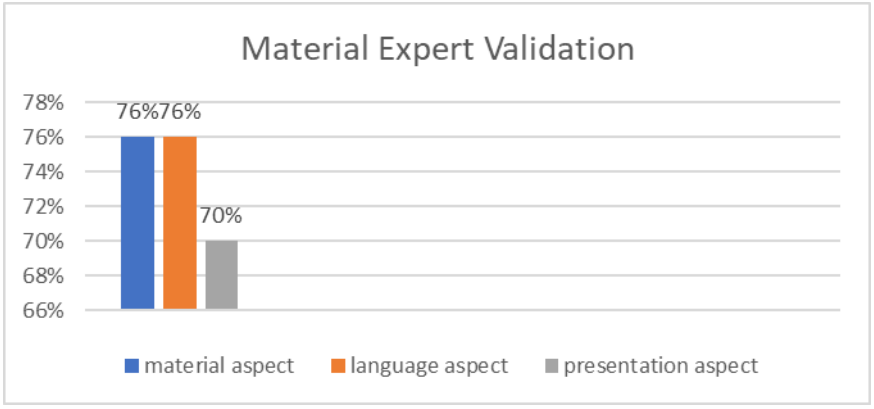

Diagram 3.1 Material Expert Validation.

3.2.2 Media Expert Validation

Media validation averaged 86.60 percent, classified as highly valid. Display quality scored 86.25 percent, effectiveness 85 percent, and presentation 90 percent. Experts noted that the product already demonstrated strong readability, typography, and visual flow on mobile devices.

Recommendations included repositioning watermarks, designing a more eye-catching cover title, and ensuring font and illustration style consistency. These were surface-level adjustments that did not affect the instructional core but could raise the professional polish and appeal of the product.

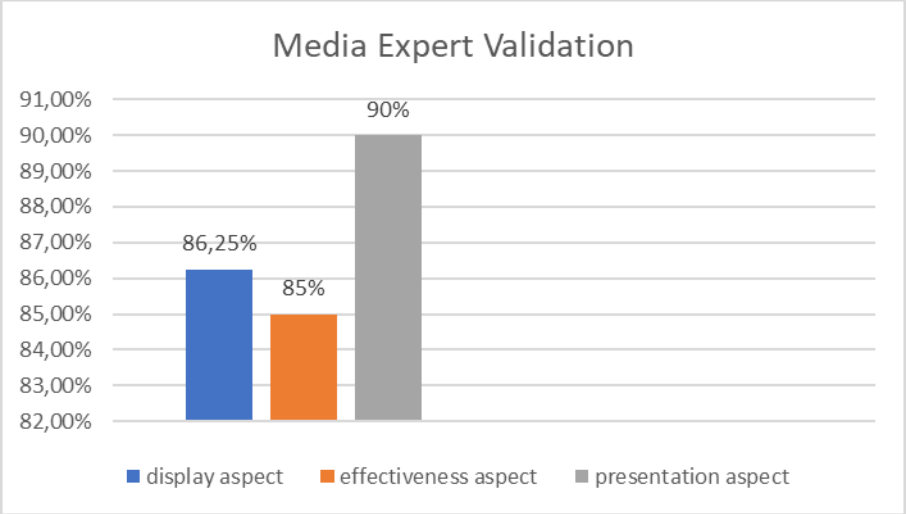

Diagram 3.2 Media Expert Validation.

3.2.3 Evaluation of Arabic Language Teachers' Response Questionnaire

Teachers rated the product very highly, with an overall mean of 91.40 percent, categorized as highly valid. The highest score was implementability at 97.50 percent, confirming that the comic could be seamlessly integrated into existing schedules and devices. Material presentation (92.50 percent) and display quality (90 percent) also scored highly. Curriculum alignment, while strong at 80 percent, was slightly lower, suggesting potential benefits in adding explicit prompts and formative checks directly linked to curriculum indicators.

The exceptionally high implementability score demonstrates that teachers perceived the product as practical, efficient, and easily adoptable without major changes to their teaching practices.

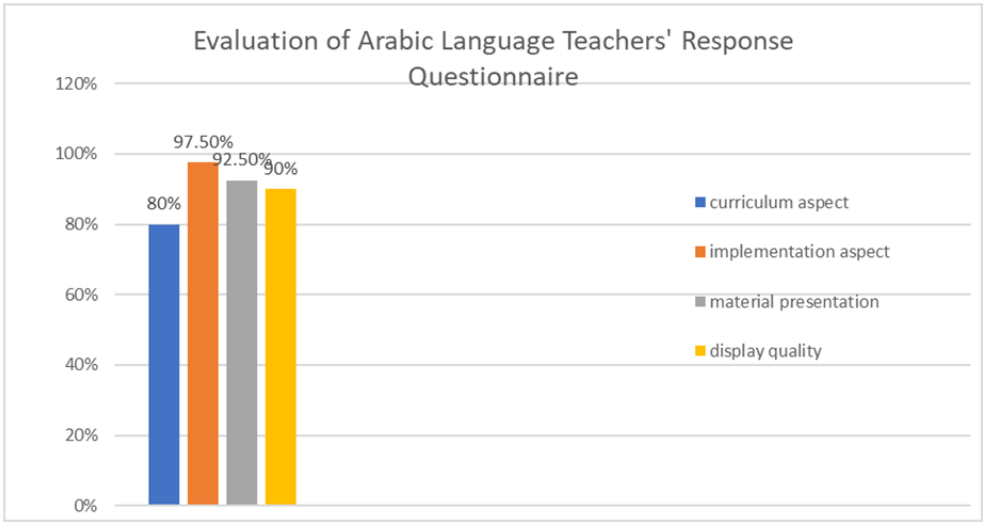

Diagram 3.3 Evaluation of Teachers' Responses.

3.2.4 Evaluation of the Questionnaire on Student's Responses

Students provided positive feedback, with an average score of 86.50 percent, categorized as highly valid. Display quality (88.29 percent) was the strongest dimension, reflecting the visual appeal of the Webtoon format. Satisfaction scored 86.39 percent, while effectiveness scored 83.56 percent.

The high ratings for display and satisfaction confirmed that students found the medium engaging and enjoyable, breaking the monotony of conventional texts. The lower effectiveness score, however, suggested that more task-embedded scaffolding could further improve comprehension. Small additions such as in-panel exercises, hints, and quick self-checks could convert passive enjoyment into active processing.

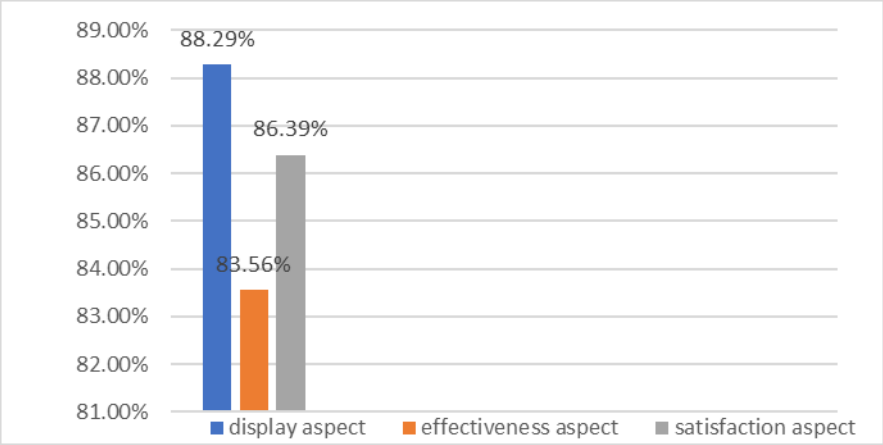

Diagram 4. Evaluation of Students' Responses

3.2.5 Mean Score of the Product Feasibility Test

Across all evaluations, the product demonstrated a robust profile:

- Material validation: 75% (valid)
- Media validation: 86.60% (highly valid)
- Teacher responses: 91.40% (highly valid)
- Student responses: 86.50% (highly valid)

The aggregate mean was approximately 85 percent, which corresponds to a highly valid classification. Triangulating across expert, teacher, and student perspectives, the findings suggest that the product is both feasible for classroom adoption and attractive to learners, with the clearest gains expected from enhancing presentation and embedding tasks more systematically.

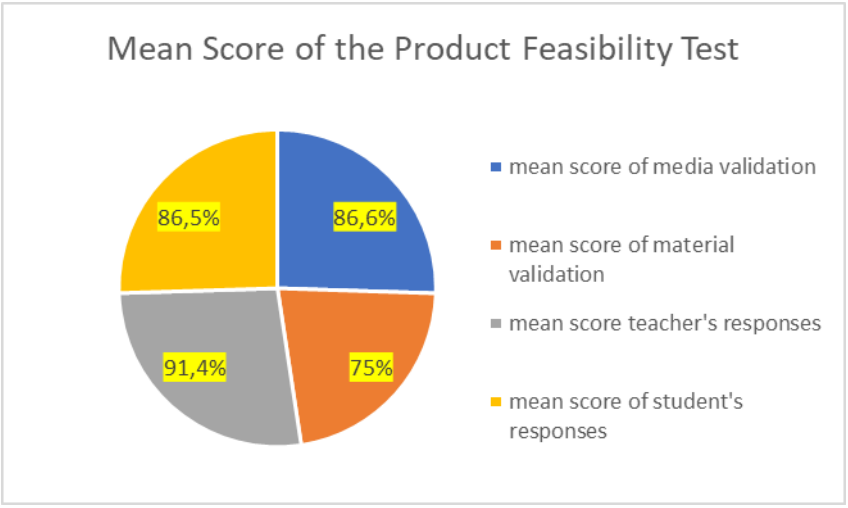

Diagram 5. Mean Score of the Product Feasibility Test.

3.3 Post-Development Stage

The post-development stage focused on dissemination. Following validation and revisions, the Webtoon-based comic was published on the Webtoon Canvas platform. Publication involved creating an account, completing required metadata, and uploading episodes. Dissemination on Webtoon provided several benefits:

1) **Accessibility.** The comic became available both via desktop browsers and mobile applications, ensuring compatibility with multiple devices.
2) **Offline usability.** Once downloaded, episodes could be accessed without internet connectivity, addressing classrooms with limited digital infrastructure.
3) **Searchability.** The title and series description facilitated easy retrieval, making the material discoverable for both teachers and students.
4) **Engagement.** Aligning instructional material with a platform already familiar to learners leveraged their digital habits to reinforce motivation.

Publishing on a mainstream digital comic platform confirmed the scalability and sustainability of the product. By embedding curriculum-based Arabic content in an accessible and engaging format, the Webtoon-based comic bridged formal learning goals with popular culture, positioning it as a resource that could transform perceptions of Arabic reading from monotonous to enjoyable.

Figure 4. Webtoon Canvas publication interface used to upload, describe, and publish the instructional comic.

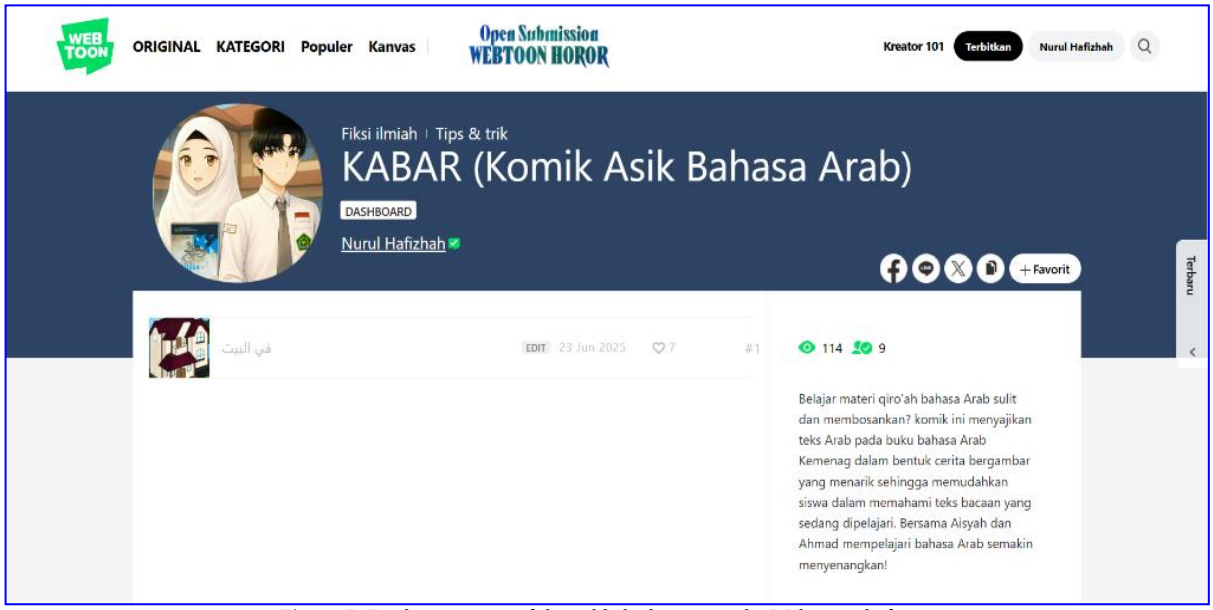

Figure 5. Final appearance of the published comic in the Webtoon platform,

4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Webtoon-based Arabic comics represent a highly valid and feasible instructional medium for *qirā'ah* learning. Validation across experts, teachers, and students yielded an average score of 85 percent, placing the product in the highly valid category. Material validation reached 75 percent, indicating that while content and linguistic aspects were strong, presentation required refinement to maximize pedagogical impact. Media validation scored 86.6 percent, reflecting effective visual flow and readability on digital devices. Teacher responses averaged 91.4 percent, highlighting ease of classroom integration and curriculum alignment. Student responses were similarly positive at 86.5 percent, emphasizing visual appeal, satisfaction, and engagement with Arabic reading tasks. Collectively, these results suggest that the developed Webtoon-based comic not only satisfies expert standards but also meets classroom needs by enhancing motivation, comprehension, and participation.

Several dimensions of these findings align with earlier scholarship on Arabic and foreign language instruction. The emphasis on integrating visuals and text reflects Izzah and Ma'sum (2021), who demonstrated that digital comics improve contextual understanding when images complement rather than merely duplicate text. Aini (2024) also confirmed that comic-based media enhance translation activities and learner motivation. This study builds on such insights by validating the integration of visuals, dialogues, and episodic tension within Webtoon narratives, showing how these features significantly strengthen learners' affective and cognitive engagement with Arabic texts.

The results of media validation resonate with literature on digital storytelling and multimodal design. Kodrle and Savchenko (2021) stressed that media effectiveness depends not only on aesthetics but also on cognitive accessibility, where typography, pacing, and flow facilitate language processing. Fradana et al. (2025) similarly found that well-structured multimodal texts enhance critical comprehension and motivation. Within this framework, the Webtoon format's vertical scrolling, episodic breaks, and dialogic design provide a mobile-optimized literacy environment that mirrors students' digital reading habits, enabling smoother processing and stronger engagement.

Teacher responses, which reached 91.4 percent, deserve particular attention. Many studies indicate that teacher acceptance often lags behind technological advancement due to concerns about integration (Nabila Luqiana & Al-Rasyid, 2021; Gholami & Salahshour, 2025). However, this study demonstrates that the Webtoon-based comic was not only validated but also considered highly practical and easily implementable. This highlights the importance of designing instructional media that align with teachers' pragmatic needs such as ease of use, curricular compatibility, and accessibility, which increases the likelihood of sustainable adoption.

Student responses further underscore the importance of visual and narrative appeal in enhancing engagement. Display quality received the highest rating, reaffirming findings by Yunus et al. (2013), who showed that visual aids enhance reading interest, and Batubara (2021), who identified comics as effective tools for stimulating enthusiasm through colorful illustrations and concise storytelling. Nevertheless, the slightly lower effectiveness score of 83.56 percent indicates that enjoyment alone does not guarantee comprehension unless supported by embedded tasks. This aligns with Miao and Li (2024), who found that while digital storytelling fosters creativity and engagement, deliberate integration of comprehension activities is necessary to ensure long-term learning. Thus, while Webtoon enhances motivation and participation, its effectiveness must be optimized through scaffolding and task-based integration.

The dissemination of this product through the Webtoon Canvas platform also underscores its scalability. Hamzah (2024) and Panjaitan and Rasyid (2023) argued that instructional media must ensure accessibility and sustainability. By situating Arabic instructional content within a widely used youth-oriented platform, this study demonstrates how formal education can leverage students' digital practices to normalize Arabic reading as part of everyday media consumption. This reflects Gholami and Salahshour (2025), who emphasized that technology-based media reduce anxiety and expand learning opportunities by embedding education in familiar contexts.

These findings are consistent with previous research that highlighted innovative media as a means to reshape students' perceptions of Arabic, which is often viewed as monotonous and difficult (Aini, 2024; Izzah & Ma'sum, 2021). They also extend studies confirming that digital comics improve vocabulary, translation skills, and contextual understanding (Panjaitan & Rasyid, 2023; Hamzah, 2024). By aligning with multimodal literacy principles (Yunus et al., 2013; Carcamo & Pino, 2025), this study demonstrates how the combination of textual, visual, and interactive elements fosters richer and more engaging learning experiences. Importantly, the findings expand prior work by showing that Webtoon's narrative and episodic features directly address the pedagogical, affective, and linguistic needs of Arabic learners, advancing the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered *qirā'ah* instruction.

Despite growing scholarship on comics and digital media for language learning (Batubara, 2021; Nabila Luqiana & Al-Rasyid, 2021; Gholami & Salahshour, 2025), the use of Webtoon in Arabic *qirā'ah* instruction remains underexplored. Earlier studies tended to focus on vocabulary enrichment, general proficiency, or translation tasks (Izzah & Ma'sum, 2021; Aini, 2024). Meanwhile, other foreign language contexts have utilized multimedia storytelling and interactive platforms (Kodrle & Savchenko, 2021; Miao & Li, 2024), whereas Arabic *qirā'ah* largely remains bound to conventional methods. This study addresses that gap by embedding curriculum-based Arabic reading materials into a youth-oriented digital platform, engaging both pedagogical and cultural aspects of learning.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating Arabic *qirā'ah* with the multimodal affordances of Webtoon, a platform already embedded in students' digital lives. Unlike traditional textbooks, Webtoon's vertical scrolling, episodic sequencing, and task integration transform reading into interactive exploration rather than passive decoding. This reframes *qirā'ah* as an active literacy practice supported by visual storytelling. Pedagogically, this suggests that Arabic instruction can be redesigned as a learner-centered process aligned with students'

digital habits, countering perceptions of rigidity and difficulty. Dissemination on Webtoon Canvas further demonstrates the scalability and sustainability of this approach, bridging formal educational objectives with digital culture.

At a broader level, this study reinforces evidence that multimodal and technology-enhanced media deepen comprehension, motivation, and participation (Fradana et al., 2025; Gholami & Salahshour, 2025). It also positions Webtoon-based comics as a replicable model for integrating digital storytelling into language education, with applications extending beyond Arabic to other foreign languages.

Nonetheless, several limitations should be noted. The developed product was limited to a single theme, *Fi al-Bayt*, restricting coverage across broader topics. Moreover, the Webtoon relied on static images without audio or interactive exercises. These constraints highlight opportunities for future research, including extending development across multiple *qirā'ah* units, incorporating audio narration or video, and embedding interactive tasks. Comparative studies across different skills such as listening, speaking, and writing are also needed to evaluate the versatility of Webtoon-based instruction. Finally, cross-institutional and cross-cultural studies would further enrich understanding of how digital comics function in diverse learning contexts, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on multimodal literacy and technology-enhanced Arabic pedagogy.

5. Conclusions

The study concludes that the development of Webtoon-based Arabic comics represents a highly valid and feasible instructional medium for *qirā'ah* learning, achieving an overall validity score of 85 percent and consistently positive responses from experts, teachers, and students. The key findings highlight that material validation reached 75 percent, media validation 86.6 percent, teacher responses 91.4 percent, and student responses 86.5 percent, confirming both pedagogical soundness and learner engagement. The novelty of this research lies in embedding Arabic *qirā'ah* content from the national curriculum into a youth-oriented platform such as Webtoon, which transforms conventional reading lessons into interactive and visually engaging narratives aligned with students' digital habits. This integration not only enhances motivation, comprehension, and participation but also demonstrates the pedagogical potential of multimodal literacy in shifting Arabic instruction from teacher-centered to learner-centered practices.

The broader implication is that Webtoon-based comics can serve as a scalable and sustainable model for technology-enhanced language education, bridging formal curricular goals with popular digital culture. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges limitations, including the focus on a single theme, static images without audio or interactive tasks, and restriction to the *qirā'ah* skill alone. Future research is therefore recommended to expand development across multiple Arabic language skills, integrate audio-visual and interactive features, and conduct cross-institutional as well as cross-cultural studies to further validate the applicability and adaptability of Webtoon-based media in diverse educational contexts.

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