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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

EMBRACING CHANGE:
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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OLIVER GREEN: IMPROVING HOMONYMS UNDERSTANDING THROUGH COMICS

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ABSTRACT:

It is vital for students in Malaysia to learn English as their second language because proficiency in English is considered as one of the requirements to enroll top universities. On the other hand, the students' knowledge on homonyms is essential in learning English as homonyms are often used in daily conversation which could lead to confusion through misunderstanding. Indeed, not all people know the meaning of homonyms and how it works, as it is less emphasised in schools. Therefore, Oliver Green comic was created to educate English language learners about homonyms in a fun and engaging way. It has been designed in a comic form to gain the readers' interest and lengthen their reading attention span in learning homonyms that can be pretty tedious in classroom settings. The findings showed that homonyms comics obtained positive feedbacks from the respondents and teachers as it helps them to learn new vocabularies in a fun way.

Keywords: homonyms; fun and engaging; comic form; limited attention span; homonyms comic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Comics, whether adults, teenagers or children, have always been everyone's favourite. In the past few years, people have invented a new way of educating students using comics instead of writing them in long paragraphs. Due to the positive feedback from the students as primarily visual learners, many publishers such as *Pelangi*, *Sasbadi* and *Fajar Bakti* have published educational comics.

In English, the use of homonyms have developed over the past few years. Homonyms refer to the words that share the same sound, spelling, and etymology but different in meanings or implications. For instance, the term "bank" can refer to the property next to a river, stream, or pond, as well as a facility or institution where money is held, lent or invested. This has always been seen as a challenge for second language learners which calls for the needs to be an agreed-upon definition of homonyms or standard vocabulary for this subject (Mamedova, 2019). However, even though homonym seems to be quite a challenge to the learners, studying homonyms is as crucial as studying grammar and sentence structure, given that multiple grammatical forms in a foreign language may have the same sound or spelling. Therefore, Oliver Green was produced as an educational comic to enlighten students more on homonyms, so they can learn and understand the words in an interesting way.

1.1 Problem Statement

There are many terms in English language that might be easily misinterpreted. Even worse, not all of them may be caught by grammar and spelling checkers (Altair, 2019). This is why second-language learners find it challenging to learn homonyms, as words share the same sound and spelling but differ in terms of meaning might interrupt the process of learning English language and mastering language skills as a whole.

1.2 Project Objective

The project aims to increase students' usage of homonyms as an additional tool for learning the English language in comic book style.

1.3 Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Oliver Green would be an excellent product for high school students and those wishing to learn more about English. It was created because there were not many well-produced comic on homonyms. Aside from that, homonyms serve as one of the most challenging elements to learn and retain. As a result, this comic will entertain students while teaching them about homonyms. The simple and easy storyline of the comic makes it uncomplicated for students to learn more about homonyms.

1.3 Literature Review

According to Rengur and Sugirin (2019), the lack of vocabulary, inadequate prior knowledge, and the text's inadequacy for learners' level of proficiency are the leading causes of English language learners' difficulties with reading comprehension and therefore, suitable materials are required. One of the most expert qualities and levels of proficiency in foreign speaking abilities language is the understanding, appropriate use, and practice of these kinds of terms. (Kostadinovska-Stojchevska, 2018). Apart from that, instructional comics engage students' imaginations and increase their desire for the class by including humorous characters and short stories in the teaching process (Topkaya & Yilar, 2017). Additionally, comics may be created, shared, and utilised with a large audience through web platforms at a reasonable cost (Hands et al., 2018) as they might make the learning atmosphere enjoyable for the kids by positively impacting the learning environment through cartoon characters (Ulfa et al., 2017). Indeed, the study of homonyms is fascinating since it allows language learners to follow changes in a word's historical meaning and how language evolves through time (Mamedova, 2019).

2. METHODOLOGY

After gathering thoughts and input on the audience's preferences via a need analysis survey to determine their understanding of homonyms, the "Oliver Green" product was produced. Forty-seven respondents participated in the study in which 74.5% were between the ages of 16 and 25; 12.8% were between the ages of 30 and above; 10.6% were between the ages of 15 and 24; and 2.1% were between the ages of 26 and 29. The respondents were high school students, college students, and those in the workforce.

In order to learn more about the audience's tastes and viewpoints about the homonyms comic, some questions were created using the Google Form platform and given to them. Six generic inquiries about the project were made in total.

Additionally, to produce this e-comic, the Canva platform was used to design the cover page and put all the storylines before converting it into a flipbook. Other than that, a website called flippingbook.com was used to convert the story and make it looks like an actual e-book.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results were obtained from the questionnaire created through Google Forms with a total of 47 respondents. The figures below show the pie chart of the gathered data.

3.1 Respondents' feedback on their interest towards English language

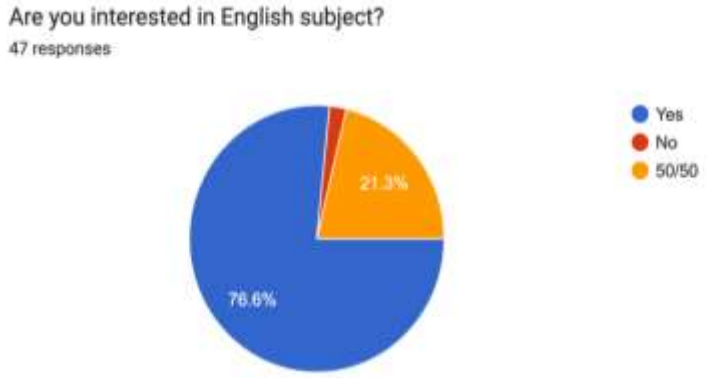

Figure 1. Respondents' Feedbacks towards English language.

The pie chart shows that 76.6% of the people are interested in English subjects while 21.3% are neutral. It is clear from the graph above that about a quarter of them have a neutral stance toward the English language. Thus, Oliver Green comic was created to pique their interest in English.

3.2 Respondents' knowledge of homonyms

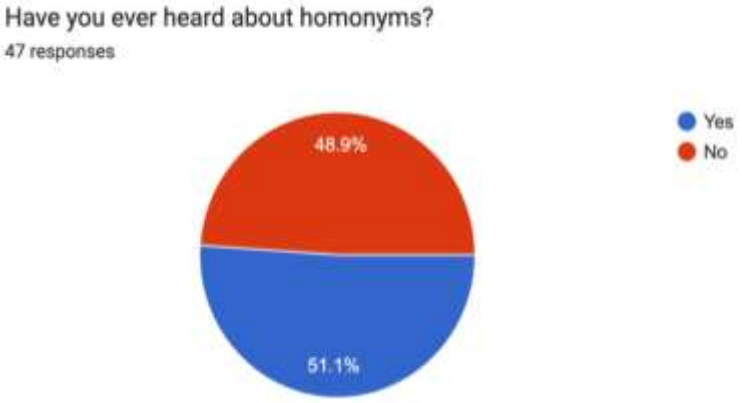

Figure 2. Respondents' knowledge of homonyms.

It was discovered that 48.9% of the respondents have never heard of homonyms as compared to 51.1% who have heard of homonyms. Through the responses, it has been revealed that adequate exposure to homonyms in classrooms is still lacking as school syllabus tend to focus more on grammar, essays, and literature. Because of this, producing an online comic on homonyms served as one of the platform for people to increase their knowledge and expand their vocabularies.

3.3 Respondents' exposure to homonyms

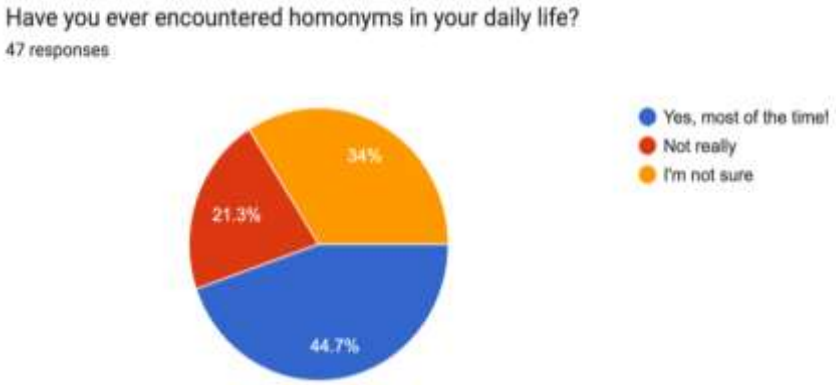

Figure 3. Respondents' exposure to homonyms

Based on the data gathered, it can be concluded that 44.7% of respondents have used homonyms in their everyday lives, compared to 34% who were unsure because they are unfamiliar with the term and 21.3% who did not use homonyms at all.

Due to a lack of exposure, some respondents were unsure and do not know if they have encountered homonyms in daily life. Although they may have encountered it daily conversation, some were still unaware of the term homonym. Therefore, Oliver Green comic is an appropriate medium to introduce them to homonyms.

3.4 Respondents' preferences on e-book

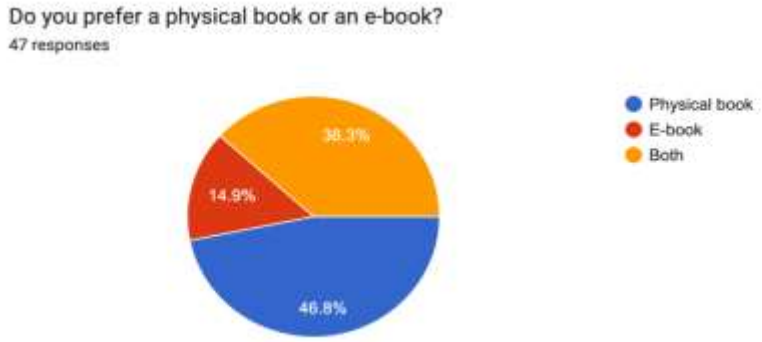

Figure 4. Respondents' preferences of e-books.

The pie chart shows that 46.8% of the respondents prefer a physical book, 14.9% prefer an e-book, and another 38.3% prefer both versions.

It is believed that majority of the respondents preferred physical book when it comes to educational comic due to the satisfaction in reading and learning through printed version which makes it easier for the learners to revise when needed.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning language in a fun and entertaining ways through educational comic has a great impact throughout the process. In addition to being a teaching tool for students, comics are also regarded as a pleasant and engaging learning tool. As Topkaya and Yilar (2017) have pointed through their study, instructional comics engage students' imaginations and increase their desire for the class by including humorous characters and short stories in the teaching process. In contrast to the traditional classroom setting, Oliver Green focuses more on enabling students to study according to their pace in a comfortable environment where they are not pressured to

acquire the knowledge on homonyms. To increase young learners' awareness of homonyms, the researchers believe that Oliver Green comic is a workable alternative to extra teaching materials that teachers and parents may employ.

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