

Enhancing Reading Skills in Malay: The Impact of the Easy Reading Module on Preschool Children.

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Abstract

Reading is a foundational skill in the learning process, particularly during the early childhood education stages. Furthermore, reading plays a pivotal skill in supporting children's acquisition of knowledge across various subjects. It is therefore essential to ensure that they develop basic reading proficiency from an early age. In Malaysia, Malay is the national language and serves as the primary medium of instruction, with most educational materials prepared in Malay. This study investigates the effectiveness of the Easy Reading Module in supporting preschool children who face difficulties in acquiring Malay reading skills. The module, which was developed in alignment with the National Preschool Standard Curriculum, comprises eight core reading components encompassing eight reading skills, namely (i) CV + CV words, (ii) CV + CV + CV words, (iii) CVC words, (iv) V + CV words, (v) V + CVC words, (vi) CV + CVC words, (vii) CVC + CV words, and (viii) CVC + CVC words, where "C" denotes consonants and "V" represents vowels. A quasi-experimental design with a quantitative approach was adopted, involving 50 preschoolers from a school in the Jelebu District, Negeri Sembilan. Participants were divided into a treatment group, taught using the Easy Reading Module, and a control group, which received the existing teaching method. Employing a 12-week intervention, the study found a significant improvement in reading scores in the treatment group compared to the control ($p < 0.001$, $d = 0.8$). These findings suggest that the Easy Reading Module is an effective instructional tool for enhancing foundational reading skills and has important implications for improving teaching practices and literacy outcomes in early years education.

Keywords: Early Malay Literacy Reading; Malay Literacy; Preschool; Quasi-Experimental.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental aspect of knowledge acquisition and a strong predictor of future academic achievement. As a core component of literacy, it must be developed during early childhood, as it plays a critical role in supporting the learning of other subjects, including science, mathematics, and language. Reading facilitates children's early interpretation of print and meaningful symbols, helping them connect with the wider world (Araújo & Costa, 2023). The development of strong reading and writing abilities is closely associated with early literacy experiences between the ages of one and five (NAEYC, 2009) highlighting the need for high-quality language and literacy instruction during this period. Beyond its academic value, reading contributes significantly to a child's intellectual, social, and emotional development by enhancing vocabulary acquisition, supporting fluent communication, and fostering independent learning (Nootens et al., 2019).

Evidence from existing literature indicates that early reading proficiency is strongly linked to later academic success (Al Jefri & Areepattamannil, 2019). Children who acquire reading skills at an early stage are more likely to develop stronger language abilities, improved comprehension, and better performance across multiple academic domains (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2023). In contrast, those who struggle with early reading are at greater risk of underperforming across subjects, often exhibiting lower confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning (Dixon et al., 2023). Reading also facilitates vocabulary expansion and comprehension, which are essential elements of linguistic proficiency (Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Exposure to a rich vocabulary through reading enables

children to express themselves with clarity and precision, supporting both cognitive and emotional growth across multiple developmental domains (Van der Kleij et al., 2023).

A variety of instructional approaches have been employed to support early reading development, including phonics-based instruction, whole-language methods, and integrated strategies (Westhisi, 2019). Phonics instruction emphasises the systematic relationship between letters and sounds, equipping children with the skills to decode words through phonological awareness (Ehri, 2022; Castles et al., 2024). In contrast, whole-language approaches promote meaning-making by immersing children in context-rich texts. Integrated approaches blend both methods, providing a balanced and flexible framework that addresses the varied learning needs of young children (Bredenkamp & Copple, 2022). Research further highlights that integrated pedagogical models enhance cognitive, social, and emotional development by combining explicit teaching with play-based learning, which has been shown to improve reading outcomes (Weisberg et al., 2024).

The importance of mastering reading skills during the preschool years is underscored by their strong association with vocabulary development, oral fluency, and overall language competence. As children's vocabulary expands, their reading comprehension improves accordingly (Kim et al., 2021). The National Preschool Standard Curriculum recognises reading as a key contributor to holistic child development encompassing physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social domains. Therefore, reading should not be viewed as an isolated skill but rather as an integral part of a developmental framework that lays the foundation for school readiness.

Despite its importance, various challenges continue to hinder the development of early reading skills. These include limited access to reading materials, inadequate vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and low motivation or interest in reading. Early childhood represents a critical period for acquiring foundational literacy skills due to rapid brain development (Mathur, Schultz, & Wang, 2020). Neuroscientific research shows that children exposed to literacy-rich environments exhibit positive structural brain changes in areas related to language and reading (Sun et al., 2022). Conversely, excessive screen time and unsupervised use of digital devices may negatively affect language development (Lestari & Aeni, 2024). Teachers therefore play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges through engaging, differentiated, and developmentally appropriate instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024).

Interactive literacy practices such as story prediction, retelling, and shared reading have been proven effective in enhancing children's engagement and comprehension (Mol et al., 2022). Wasik and Hindman (2023), these strategies encourage active participation and foster a deeper connection between young learners and the text, thereby improving understanding and motivation to read. When children predict or retell stories, they develop critical thinking and expressive language abilities that strengthen overall reading comprehension (Wasik & Hindman, 2023). Thus, incorporating interactive literacy techniques into early childhood classrooms is vital for cultivating foundational reading skills.

In alignment with 21st-century learning principles, student-centred teaching positions educators as facilitators of learning (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). Effective early literacy instruction requires strong pedagogical knowledge, creative practices, and consistent professional growth. Studies indicate that children's reading difficulties often stem from limited phonemic awareness, confusion between letter forms, and insufficient parental support at home (Manaf & Bakar, 2022). Strengthening home-school collaboration and establishing consistent reading routines are therefore essential for sustainable literacy development. Nevertheless, reading remains a particularly challenging skill for many preschoolers. Recent reports reveal that more than 170,000 schoolchildren in Malaysia lack reading proficiency (Astro Awani, 2023), while preschool dropout rates increased from 17.1% in 2019 to 26.9% in 2021, presenting further barriers to early literacy development.

Despite various instructional efforts, there remains a lack of structured and developmentally appropriate reading modules specifically designed to address early reading challenges among Malaysian preschoolers. Existing practices often rely on fragmented approaches that do not sufficiently integrate phonics, syllable awareness, and meaningful reading activities in the context of the Malay language. In light of this gap, the present study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Easy Reading Module in enhancing preschool children's reading abilities through a systematic, engaging, and developmentally appropriate instructional framework. This module aims to provide structured, phonics-based learning experiences that align with the National Preschool Standard Curriculum while fostering enjoyment and motivation in reading among young learners.

Literature Review

Reading is a cognitive process that involves decoding written symbols to construct meaning. It extends beyond the mere recognition of letters and words to include comprehension, interpretation, and response to the text being read. This process requires the integration of visual recognition, phonological processing, and semantic understanding all of which are essential for interpreting and making sense of text (Ehri, 2020). The act of reading engages multiple domains of cognitive development, including attention, memory, and language processing, making it a complex yet fundamental skill in early education (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). As children learn to decode print, they progress from simple word recognition to fluent reading, enabling deeper comprehension and

critical thinking (Castles et al., 2024). This developmental progression underscores the importance of providing structured and developmentally appropriate reading instruction during the preschool years. Reading thus integrates language skills, prior knowledge, and critical thinking in a dynamic cognitive process.

In the educational context, reading is considered one of the core components of language literacy, defined as the fundamental ability to read and write in a given language. Reading is a complex process that integrates visual, phonological, syntactic, and semantic skills to support comprehension of written texts. Meaning is constructed through coordinated cognitive processes during interaction between the reader and the text (Perfetti & Helder, 2022). Among preschool children, reading skills refer to their emerging ability to recognize letters, understand phonemes, connect sounds to graphemes, and derive meaning from simple words and sentences. These foundational skills form the basis of early literacy, which is crucial for later academic success. Jimenez et al. (2024) highlighted that emergent literacy components such as letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and rapid naming are strong predictors of word reading outcomes among preschoolers. Similarly, Idris et al. (2024) explained that early reading skills should be developed progressively through approaches appropriate to children's cognitive and emotional development.

Early exposure to print-rich environments and language-based interactions plays a vital role in developing strong reading foundations. Research consistently shows that children raised in environments rich in print and oral language tend to develop better emergent literacy skills, including print awareness, vocabulary, and phonological sensitivity. These experiences allow children to engage with books, symbols, and spoken language in meaningful ways that promote both cognitive and linguistic growth essential for reading acquisition (Chowsomchat et al., 2023). Moreover, interactive reading experiences such as dialogic reading and shared storytelling enhance children's comprehension and motivation to read. Such findings emphasize the need to integrate reading activities into daily routines at home and in early childhood education settings. Parental and family involvement also plays a critical role in supporting children's reading development. According to Md Bashah et al. (2024), parental engagement in learning activities at home fosters motivation and reinforces early literacy development. Children who receive consistent support at home tend to make greater progress in reading than those with minimal family involvement. Early exposure to suitable reading materials also improves children's attention span, imagination, and creativity. Therefore, strengthening reading skills at the preschool level should be a key focus in early childhood education curricula and pedagogy (Asraf & Abd Halim, 2024).

However, despite the extensive body of international research on early reading development, limited attention has been given to how these findings are applied within the Malaysian preschool context. Much of the existing literature draws heavily from Western pedagogical frameworks, which may not fully align with the linguistic characteristics and orthographic structure of the Malay language. The syllable-based nature of Malay, for instance, requires a distinct instructional emphasis compared to alphabetic languages like English. Furthermore, previous studies tend to isolate aspects of reading such as phonics, vocabulary, or comprehension rather than integrating them within a cohesive, developmentally appropriate framework suited for young learners. There is also a lack of research that combines structured phonics instruction with engaging, meaningful reading experiences tailored to the cognitive and motivational needs of Malaysian preschoolers. This gap underscores the necessity for a localized, structured reading module that effectively bridges phonological awareness, syllable recognition, and reading comprehension within the Malay language context.

Reading skills are essential for children's holistic development. Reading is not limited to recognizing letters and sounds; it is deeply connected to thinking, communication, and understanding the world around them. Early mastery of reading stimulates cognitive, social, and emotional growth. The ability to read helps children understand instructions, interact with peers, and express emotions effectively. This skill not only facilitates learning but also fosters independence and responsibility. According to Meng et al. (2025), strong reading abilities allow children to process information more efficiently and follow instructions systematically, enhancing classroom participation. Therefore, early mastery of reading lays the foundation for lifelong learning.

Reading proficiency contributes not only to academic achievement but also to social and emotional development. Without sufficient reading skills, children may struggle to understand learning materials, affecting their performance in subjects such as science, mathematics, and languages. According to Earle (2025), a strong foundation in early literacy is closely associated with the ability to comprehend concepts, construct ideas, and apply knowledge critically. This is particularly important in both learning and assessment contexts, as children with limited reading proficiency may misinterpret questions and fail to grasp their intended meaning. Reading also helps children understand classroom discourse, instructions, and content-specific vocabulary, facilitating effective participation in learning activities. Furthermore, reading enhances pragmatic language skills by modeling how language functions across different social and academic contexts, enabling children to produce coherent oral and written responses. Logan et al. (2024), found that children who acquire reading early perform better in classroom tasks and assessments because they have a clearer understanding of content and expectations. Hence, reading serves as a fundamental skill that underpins both academic communication and intellectual growth.

Therefore, mastery of reading skills from the preschool level should be prioritized as the cornerstone of long-term academic success. Children with strong reading skills are better equipped to comprehend instructions and communicate effectively with peers using appropriate language. According to Logan et al. (2024), children who are able to read demonstrate greater comprehension in both oral and written tasks compared to their peers who have yet to master the skill. Reading mastery also strengthens children's ability to process and convey information accurately, supporting both verbal and written communication within classroom contexts. Moreover, research shows that children with strong reading skills demonstrate improved self-regulation, task persistence, and cooperative learning behaviors all of which contribute to academic success. Beyond academics, reading enables children to express emotions more effectively through storytelling, conversation, and early writing. This process nurtures empathy, emotional regulation, and positive social relationships from an early age (Flook et al., 2023).

Easy Reading Module

The use of learning modules has become increasingly common in Malaysian preschools, demonstrating that modular-based instruction is not a novel concept within the national early childhood education system. The Easy Reading Module was developed as a instructional tool to support preschool children in acquiring foundational reading skills. Designed for use by both teachers and learners, the module aims to facilitate structured, engaging, and developmentally appropriate reading instruction in the classroom. The content of the Easy Reading Module was developed in alignment with the Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document of the National Preschool Standard Curriculum of Malaysia. The National Preschool Standard Curriculum comprises six main strands, namely, (i) Communication, (ii) Spirituality, Attitudes and Values, (iii) Humanity, (iv) Personal Competence, (v) Physical and Aesthetic Development, and (vi) Science and Technology.

However, Easy Reading Module study focused specifically on the Communication Strand in the Malay Language component. Within this strand, eight skills were selected, namely, (i) CV + CV words, (ii) CV + CV + CV words, (iii) CVC words (iv) V + CV words, (v) V + CVC words, (vi) CV + CVC words, (vii) CVC + CV words, and (viii) CVC + CVC words, where "C" denotes consonants and "V" represents vowels. The Easy Reading Module includes sample daily lesson plans and structured classroom activities tailored to the developmental stages of preschool learners. Each activity is designed to target specific reading skills while fostering a playful and stimulating learning environment through games, edutainment, puzzles, and other interactive methods. These resources are intended to support teachers in delivering more effective and student-centred literacy instruction. Each skill component within the Easy Reading Module comprises six interactive elements, namely (i) Guess Who I Am, (ii) Spell and Pronounce, (iii) Read Simple Passages, (iv) Spell Words, (v) Spell Words Pronounced by the Teacher, and (vi) Name the Picture and Spell. These activities aim to reinforce phonological awareness, decoding, and early word recognition in an engaging and age-appropriate manner.

The development of the Easy Reading Module was based on the objective of creating a set of teaching materials to help preschool children master reading skills both in the classroom and at home. In addition, the second objective is to provide guidance to teachers in conducting teaching and learning using various methods that are appropriate to the developmental level of preschool children. In the development of the Easy Reading Module used by preschool children, the selection of images was also given careful consideration to help them easily recognize, view, and pronounce the pictures. The images were chosen based on the children's environment, such as pictures of a ball, book, car, pen, bag, tree, boat, and so on. The selected images are in the form of doodles. The use of doodles in this module serves as a way to attract preschool children's interest in reading. Considering the current widespread use of doodles, whether in printed reading materials or online resources, the doodles selected by the researcher are suitable for children's preferences and indirectly create a fun and engaging atmosphere while reading the module. Among the types of doodles included in this module are cartoon illustrations of people, animals, plants, objects, and more. The Easy Reading Module was developed to be user-friendly, with each interface designed to be appealing and appropriate to ensure children are interested in reading it.

The selection of suitable fonts is an important feature to ensure that children can stay focused and attentive during classroom learning. In the development of the Easy Reading Module, the researcher used the Century Gothic font, as its rounded and clear letter shapes are considered child friendly. The font size ranges from 36 to 48 to help children easily recognize letter symbols. Words are placed alongside images and divided according to syllables, with each syllable highlighted in color. All text or words are bolded to help children with word recognition and spelling. The use of color is also crucial for each word, as dull or unclear colors can hinder children's ability to identify letters and spell words. For two-syllable words, the chosen colors must clearly differentiate both syllables, while three-syllable words require color combinations that are easy to distinguish and match between syllables. The selection of words used in the module is also based on the preschoolers' developmental level, ensuring they are capable of spelling and pronouncing each word presented. Each skill includes the same set of activities, which aim to develop children's creativity and aesthetic sense, as well as to apply critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills, along with problem-solving abilities in both learning and daily life.

During the design and development phase of the Easy Reading Module, two groups of experts. Expert Group A and Expert Group B were involved in reviewing and refining the module. Expert Group A consisted of 12 specialists, while Expert Group B comprised five experts. The involvement of these professionals was crucial to ensure that the research process remained aligned with its original objectives and did not deviate from its intended focus. Continuous discussions were held between the researcher and the expert panels until the module was completed within the scheduled timeframe. This process aimed to ensure both the content validity and reliability of the module. Their feedback also contributed to the development of high-quality and contextually appropriate items for early reading instruction.

In addition, the reading assessment instruments namely the *Pre-Test* and *Post-Test* were also reviewed by another group of expert panelists. These experts were tasked with evaluating the appropriateness of selected vocabulary for preschool children, particularly in relation to their reading skill level. The panel unanimously agreed that the selected words were suitable and aligned with the developmental stage of preschool learners. Several constructive suggestions for improvement were provided. One recommendation was to replace numerical labels (1 to 10) with alphabetical labels (A, B, C, etc.) for the listed words, to enhance clarity and usability. The use of CV + CV word structured words was deemed appropriate for preschool learners, and the overall sequence of the test items was considered suitable. The typeface used in the instruments was also approved as being legible for young children. Experts further emphasized the importance of teaching vowel recognition and vowel sounds, particularly in combination with CV syllables, to help children form simple words before progressing to spelling. Another suggestion was to include a note taking section below each marking box on every page of the instrument. This section would allow teachers to document additional observations, such as the reading strategy used by the child (e.g., phonics, spelling aloud), whether the child could read but in a very soft voice, or if the child demonstrated unclear pronunciation due to speech articulation issues. These improvements are intended to enhance the instructional and evaluative quality of the module while supporting more accurate and comprehensive documentation of children's reading behaviours in preschool settings.

For the *Guess What This Is?* activity, children will identify and say the name of the image shown in the module. This activity aims to assess how well the children recognize the objects or images presented. Indirectly, it also encourages two-way communication between the children and the teacher during the activity. In the *Spell and Say* activity, children will spell out each word and say it aloud, with guidance from the teacher if they have difficulty spelling. Each word in this section is accompanied by an image to support their understanding. The next activity is *Read a Simple Passage*, where children read short and simple texts that have been provided. In the *Spell the Word* activity, children will spell out words without any accompanying images, helping to strengthen their spelling skills independently. This is followed by *Spell the Word Said by the Teacher*, in which the teacher will randomly say a word, and the children are expected to spell it correctly. The final activity for each skill is *Name the Picture and Spell It*, where children will first identify and name the picture, and then proceed to spell the word. The teacher will act as a facilitator, assisting children who may struggle with either identifying the picture or spelling the word. At the end of each skill section, there is a children's assessment form provided to evaluate their progress while using the Easy Reading Module in mastering reading skills. This form is used to gain an overview of a child's learning performance in a particular subject or learning activity. The assessment activities are carried out continuously. The purpose of conducting assessments in the classroom is to obtain a clear picture of each child's learning performance throughout the process.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a quantitative approach. The quasi-experimental research design was selected as the research design due to its ability to examine the effects between two comparative conditions, (i) pre-intervention against post-intervention, and (ii) control group against treatment group. The quasi-experimental design was selected for this study as it offers a more practical, ethical, and contextually appropriate approach within real educational settings, where random assignment of participants is often not feasible. In this case, the school administration had predetermined the class placement of preschool children during the registration process, thereby making random allocation impossible. This design, therefore, allows for a controlled comparison between groups while maintaining the natural structure of the learning environment. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach was chosen due to its ability to permit numerical data collection under well-organised research instruments that enabling the thorough study of causal links and variations ^[47].

3.1 Research Participants

This study was conducted in the District of Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, involving two preschool classes from one school. In Malaysia, the maximum number of preschoolers allowed in one preschool class is 25 with one teacher and teaching assistant. Therefore, the numbers of participants that participate in this study are two teachers and 50 preschoolers. Table 1 provides the information on the children's participants according to the

group. As for teacher's information, both teachers are female with more than 10 years of teaching experience in preschool.

Table 1.**Participants Information**

Group	Gender		Total
	Boy	Girl	
Control Group	10	15	25
Treatment Group	11	14	25
Grand Total			50

3.2 Research Instruments

The pre-test and post-test were conducted using the same set of instruments known as early reading assessment. The early reading assessment instrument was developed by researchers guided by the Malay reading competencies outlined in the Standard Curriculum and Assessment of the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (2017). To ensure the validity aspects, three experts have been appointed to evaluate the content of the instrument. The focus group discussion has been carried out with the experts to provide opportunities for in-depth discussion and to ensure the preciseness of the items in the instruments. **Table 2** provides the background information of the experts.

Table 2.**Expert's Information.**

Code	Gender	Expertise Area	Experiences (Years)	Academic Qualification	Organisation
Expert A	Female	Malay Language Education	10	PhD (Malay Language) Master's Degree (Malay Language) Bachelor's Degree (Malay Language)	University
Expert B	Female	Early Childhood Education	12	Master's Degree (Early Childhood Education) Bachelor's Degree (Early Childhood Education)	School
Expert C	Female	Early Childhood Education	18	Post-graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education Bachelor's Degree (Malay Literature)	School

Based on the focus group discussion, the experts agree that early reading assessment instruments are valid to be used in measuring preschool reading ability. However, the experts did suggest a few improvements that would enhance the quality of the instruments. The first recommendation is about vocabulary usage. The experts suggested that the vocabulary used in the instruments must be comprised of words that preschoolers use in daily life and are familiar with. Second, the experts also recommend the level of language difficulty progress gradually, commencing from simple to more complex words. Third, the experts also suggested that the instructions provided in the instrument must be clear and easy to comprehend by preschoolers.

Taking into account all the recommendations provided by the experts, the final version of the instrument comprised nine sections with a total of 85 items. The instrument was administered by the teachers. Teachers were instructed to mark a tick (✓) if the child successfully spelt or pronounced the word and a cross (×) if the child was unable to do so for each skill assessed in each section. The information on the early reading assessment outlined in **Table 3**.

Table 3.**Early Reading Assessment Sections.**

Sections	Reading Skill Assessed	Number of Items
Sections 1	CV + CV	10
Sections 2	CV + CV + CV	10
Sections 3	CVC	10

Sections	Reading Skill Assessed	Number of Items
Sections 4	V + CV	10
Sections 5	V + CVC	10
Sections 6	CV + CVC	10
Sections 7	CVC + CV	10
Sections 8	CVC + CVC	10
Sections 9	Simple sentences	5
Total		85

*c = consonant; v = vowel.

3.3 Ethical Considerations and Research Procedure

The researchers obtained written permission and approval from the relevant authorities before commencing the study. This covered permission from the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education of Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan State Department of Education, and headmaster of the participating school. In this permission letter, the researchers request permission to conduct a study that includes teacher training and the use of the Easy Reading Module as a learning material in Malay language learning activities in the preschool classroom. Later, permission and consent letters were also handed to the teachers and the guardians of pupils participating in the study. Once all the pertinent parties approved, the researcher sought authorisation from school administrators to get the preschool class timetables. This ensures that the study plan did not interrupt the educational process and was set in line with preschool class timetables. This plan also has been shared and discussed with teachers for their approval and to enable the research to proceed without complications.

The second phase is teacher training activities. The first training session was only attended by a teacher from the treatment group. This training was conducted in one day, one-to-one, and aims to guide the teacher on the Easy Reading Module. In this training session, the researcher explains the content of the module, the components, the activities and the materials. Furthermore, the researcher also explains the pedagogical approaches, strategies, and appropriate techniques for delivering the module effectively. This is crucial to ensure that teachers implement the module in the way it should be implemented. During this training session, the researcher also allows the teacher to ask questions regarding the subject. One week after the first training session, the second training session was conducted. This training was participated in by both teachers from the treatment group and the control group. The second training session aims to familiarise the teacher with the usage of easy reading assessment to ensure both teachers have the same understanding in assessing reading skills.

The third phase is data collection activities. The data collection activities were carried out for twelve weeks. Pre-test data for the control and treatment groups has been collected in the first and second week of August 2024. Later, the intervention process was started in the third week of August 2024. During this period, the control group teacher conducted Malay language learning activities as usual, using existing practices and instructional materials, including preschool textbooks, written worksheets, spelling and basic syllable reading exercises, as well as letter and simple word recognition activities based on the teacher's usual approach. Meanwhile, a treatment group teacher carried out Malay learning activities using the Easy Reading Module. After ten weeks of intervention, the intervention process was completed in the third week of October 2024.

To ensure the fidelity of treatment implementation throughout the 12-session intervention, a series of systematic monitoring procedures were employed. The researcher developed a comprehensive implementation manual to guide the delivery of each session in accordance with the prescribed steps and activities outlined in the Easy Reading Module. Prior to the commencement of the intervention, the treatment group teacher received a detailed briefing and initial training to ensure a clear understanding of the instructional procedures and intended learning outcomes. Furthermore, periodic classroom observations were conducted by the researcher to verify the consistency of instructional delivery and adherence to the module's procedural framework. Each reading skill introduced to the preschool children was accompanied by an assessment checklist to be completed by the teacher, allowing for systematic tracking of children's progress and mastery of reading competencies. Teacher feedback was collected after each session to document implementation experiences, challenges encountered, and any instructional adjustments made during the process. These combined monitoring measures served to strengthen the reliability, validity, and overall consistency of the intervention throughout the 12-session implementation period. Later, the post-test data has been gathered by teachers from both groups. Throughout the research procedure, ethical standards were maintained to safeguard the rights and welfare of participants. Participants' identities were anonymised in all records and publications, and all data were handled with the utmost confidentiality.

4. Data Analysis

Inferential statistical analyses were performed to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. A paired samples *t*-test was performed to assess the differences in mean reading scores between pre-test and post-tests within the treatment group and control group. Meanwhile, the independent samples *t*-test was performed to compare the pre-test scores and post-test scores between the treatment group and control group. These analyses were performed to test the following hypotheses:

Is there a significant difference in preschool children's reading skills before and after the intervention between the treatment group and the control group?

Is there a significant difference in preschool children's reading skills before and after the intervention within the treatment group and the control group?

5. Result

A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the differences in mean reading scores between pre-test and post-test within both the treatment and control groups. Additionally, an independent samples *t*-test was carried out to compare the pre-test and post-test scores between the treatment and control groups.

5.1 Differences In Preschool Children's Reading Skills Before and After the Intervention Within the Treatment Group and the Control Group

For the treatment group, the results showed a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test ($M = 36.44$, $SD = 26.43$) to the post-test ($M = 79.88$, $SD = 27.35$), $t = 1.94$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the implementation of the *Easy Reading Module* had a substantial and positive impact on enhancing preschool children's reading performance. Similarly, the control group, which utilized conventional teaching practices and existing classroom materials, also demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 39.08$, $SD = 38.40$) and post-test ($M = 64.36$, $SD = 36.79$), $t = -10.48$, $p < .001$. This improvement suggests that standard classroom exposure and instructional routines contributed to the development of reading skills among preschoolers. Table 4 presents the results of the paired samples *t*-test analyses. However, when comparing the magnitude of improvement between the two groups, the treatment group exhibited a markedly greater gain in reading scores than the control group. This finding supports the effectiveness of the *Easy Reading Module* as a more structured, engaging, and developmentally appropriate approach to fostering early reading competence.

Table 4.

A Paired Samples *t*-test Analyses for Pre- and Post- Test Reading Scores.

Group	Test	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Treatment Group	Pre-test	36.44	26.43			
	Post-test	79.88	27.35	1.94	48	0.001
Control Group	Pre-test	39.08	38.40			
	Post-test	64.36	36.79	-10.48	48	0.001

5.1 Differences in preschool children's reading skills before and after the intervention between the treatment group and the control group

For the pre-test, there was no statistically significant difference between the treatment group ($M = 36.44$, $SD = 26.43$) and the control group ($M = 39.08$, $SD = 38.40$), $t = -0.30$, $p > 0.05$, indicating that both groups had comparable reading abilities prior to the intervention. However, for the post-test, the results revealed a statistically significant difference in mean reading scores between the treatment group ($M = 79.88$, $SD = 27.35$) and the control group ($M = 64.36$, $SD = 36.79$), $t = 1.94$, $p < 0.001$. This suggests that the *Easy Reading Module* was more effective in enhancing preschool children's reading performance compared to conventional teaching methods. It is important to note that while both groups demonstrated improvement from pre-test to post-test, the magnitude of improvement was greater for the treatment group. The control group's progress, although substantial, may reflect the natural development of reading skills and continued exposure to classroom instruction. In contrast, the structured and phonics-based nature of the *Easy Reading Module* contributed to a more pronounced and statistically significant gain in reading proficiency. These findings support the conclusion that the *Easy Reading Module* not only improved reading outcomes significantly but also did so to a greater extent than existing classroom practices. Table 5 presents the results of the Independent Samples *t*-test analyses comparing the Treatment and Control Groups

Table 5.

An Independent Samples t-test Analyses for Treatment and Control Group.

Test Time	Group	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre-test	Treatment Group	36.44	26.43			
	Control Group	39.08	38.40	-0.30	48	0.001
Post-test	Treatment Group	79.88	27.35			
	Control Group	64.36	36.79	1.94	48	0.001

6. Discussions

This study has demonstrated that the use of the Easy Reading Module significantly enhances the reading skills of preschool children. The structured and developmentally appropriate design of the module contributed to improvements in phonetic awareness, letter recognition, and overall reading engagement among young learners. These findings reinforce the importance of using targeted instructional tools in early literacy education. The results are consistent with previous research that highlights the effectiveness of modular instruction in early reading [4]. Scholars reported that interactive reading modules increased children's interest and engagement, while improvements in phonetic skills and letter recognition were observed among preschoolers using similar resources [49–51]. In addition, structured teaching modules not only promote literacy acquisition but also build children's confidence in reading [50]. This alignment supports the idea that well-designed modules are an effective strategy in early childhood classrooms.

Reading is widely acknowledged as a particularly challenging skill for preschoolers to master (Baharudin; Masnan & Zain, 2021). This study contributes to the field by offering a practical solution to this challenge through a resource that is both enjoyable and accessible to children. The close relationship between reading and writing skills further underscores the importance of early literacy interventions such as this module (Kim, 2023). The development of the Easy Reading Module also aligns with national educational priorities. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has emphasized the importance of student centred and enjoyable learning experiences, particularly through the implementation of the Classroom Assessment framework at Level 1, which empowers teachers to plan, implement, assess, and report pupils' progress throughout the learning process. By integrating play-based and student-centred approaches, the module addresses this policy direction, creating a stimulating learning environment that encourages active participation and intrinsic motivation among young learners (Zosh et al., 2022).

A key strength of the module lies in its design, which incorporates six thematic sections, namely (i) What Is This?, (ii) Spell and Say, (iii) Read Simple Passages, (iv) Spell Words, (v) Spell Words Spoken by the Teacher, and (vi) Name the Picture and Spell It. These sections are aligned with Malaysia's early childhood curriculum standards and support the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. They also encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving competencies that are essential for holistic development. However, the findings should be interpreted with some caution. One limitation of the study is the lack of long-term follow-up to assess the sustained impact of the module. Additionally, variations in children's baseline reading abilities may have influenced the outcomes, and future studies should consider a more detailed assessment of learners' initial skill levels. It is also crucial to examine how factors such as teacher training, classroom environment, and parental involvement may mediate the effectiveness of such modules.

For practitioners, the findings highlight the need for preschool teachers to adopt flexible and engaging teaching approaches. As children often struggle to sustain attention during lessons, instructional strategies must be dynamic and adaptive. The Easy Reading Module offers a practical tool that teachers and parents can use to make reading instruction more appealing and effective. To further support implementation, education authorities may consider offering professional development workshops to familiarise educators with the use of such modules in classroom contexts. Future research should explore the scalability of the Easy Reading Module across diverse educational settings, including rural and underserved communities. Comparative studies examining its effectiveness against other literacy interventions would also provide deeper insights into best practices for early reading instruction. In conclusion, this study provides strong evidence for the use of structured, interactive modules in supporting preschool children's reading development. The Easy Reading Module not only addresses key learning outcomes but also promotes enjoyable, student-centred instruction that aligns with national education goals. With proper implementation and ongoing support, such modules can play a critical role in enhancing early literacy outcomes.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides strong evidence that the Easy Reading Module is an effective and developmentally appropriate intervention for enhancing early literacy skills among preschool children. Its structured yet flexible design, which integrates age-appropriate materials, singing techniques, and play-based learning, aligns well with the pedagogical principles outlined in Malaysia's National Preschool Standard Curriculum, particularly the Communication Strand. The module promotes active learning, oral engagement, and concept retention, making it especially beneficial for children who face challenges in acquiring foundational reading skills. These findings underscore the essential role of teachers in selecting and adapting instructional strategies that meet the diverse developmental needs of young learners. From a practical perspective, teachers and early childhood educators are encouraged to incorporate the Easy Reading Module as a supplementary literacy tool in preschool classrooms. Its interactive and phonics-based approach not only supports reading mastery but also enhances children's motivation and participation in learning activities. For curriculum developers, the findings highlight the need to embed structured yet engaging literacy components in national preschool programmers to ensure consistency in reading instruction across different educational settings. For researchers, future studies are recommended to conduct long-term follow-up investigations to assess skill retention and sustained literacy outcomes among children after the intervention period. Additionally, further research could explore the module's effectiveness across diverse demographic and linguistic contexts or examine its integration with digital and gamified learning platforms. Overall, the Easy Reading Module holds significant potential as a model for improving early literacy instruction in Malaysia, bridging the gap between theory, curriculum, and classroom practice

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