

## Teacher Trainees' Perspectives of Teaching Graphic Novels to ESL Primary Schoolers

SURIANI MOHD YUSOF

*Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
surianiyusof@ymail.com*

ZALINA MOHD LAZIM

*Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

KHAZRIYATI SALEHUDDIN

*Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

*Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are exposed to multimodal texts, which are texts with the combinations of the modes of prints, images, gestures and movements. Graphic novel is one of the examples of a multimodal text and this genre is introduced in the Language Arts module as part of the English language subject in the new Curriculum for Primary Schools in Malaysia. Hence, it is important that teachers should first be aware of how to make the most of multimodal texts before introducing their pupils to the strategies necessary for comprehending the text. However, without proper training on how to approach the genre, the teaching of graphic novels may pose difficulties for teachers in general and especially so for teacher trainees. This paper reports the findings of a survey conducted on teacher trainees to explore the challenges they faced in teaching graphic novels to primary schoolers. Results show that although the graphics succeeded to entice the pupils into reading the text, the teacher trainee felt that the graphics did not help their pupils in understanding the storyline. The pupils' eagerness to go through the graphics has caused them to ignore the words in the speech balloons. Consequently this has led to incomprehensible input and misinterpretation of the content. Results from these preliminary findings can be used to further investigate the strategies good readers use to read and comprehend graphic novels, so that teacher trainee would be better prepared to utilise graphic novels in their English classes.*

*Keywords: graphic novels; multimodal; teacher trainees; primary pupils; reading graphic novels*

### INTRODUCTION

In the traditional view, literacy pedagogy has always focused on language texts, where language is the only mode of communicating and delivering information. Nonetheless, with the advancement in technology, texts are now produced on a multimodal platform. Siegal (2012) defines multimodality as the simultaneous presentation of more than one mode in a single text or event. On a similar note, Rajendra (2015) asserts that combining two or more semiotic systems in a text creates a multimodal text. These multimodal texts, such as websites, video games, school textbooks, pictures books, magazines articles, advertisements and graphic novels, involve a complex interplay of written text, visual images, graphics and design elements (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, Kress et. al 2001, Unsworth 2001).

In a visually-oriented culture today, children and teenagers are among the major audiences that are exposed to these varieties of information sources. Picture books, for instance, are multimodal texts that have been used widely in the elementary classrooms for many years (Serafini 2011). A study by Hassett and Curwood (2009) on children's picture books explains that the multimodality of picture books takes various forms. In such books, meanings are conveyed through the use of three sign systems, namely, written language, visual images, and visual design elements (Serafini 2012). However, in the context of English

as a Second Language (ESL) in particular, the use of multimodal texts is still limited, although the development is encouraging and highly commendable. This paper puts forth the argument that there is a need to take a closer look at using the multimodal texts in the primary ESL classroom. The present study investigates teacher trainees' perceptions and experiences when utilizing graphic novels, one of the examples of a multimodal text, in their primary classrooms.

The graphic novel was introduced in schools via the new Curriculum Standard for Primary Schools in Malaysia, as a genre to be taught in the Language Arts module of the English language subject in primary schools in 2011. The use of graphic novels in the English classroom is seen as a change from traditional texts that are generally mono-modal in nature, to texts that are multimodal. As such, graphic novels embrace the many varied modes like words, images, colours and page layout (Serafini 2012). Although the idea of using graphic novels as a new form of literature in the primary school curricular is still fairly new to teachers as well as pupils, the unique combination of the two rich forms of mode - the linguistic and the visual mode - makes it an effective pedagogical tool. Yang (2008, p. 187) states that graphic novels “bridge the gap between media we watch and media we read”. This is particularly accurate in describing the twenty-first-century society which is constantly surrounded by information delivered through a variety of visual media like the television, video games and the internet. It is the combination of these visual images and the traditional text that we normally read that emphasizes the uniqueness of graphic novels. Consequently, graphic novels can also be used to meet traditional literacy goals of text comprehension as well as multiple literacies (Brenna 2013, Lapp et. al 2012, Risko et al. 2011, Schwarz 2006).

The history of graphic novels is closely related to how comics developed. Many scholars agreed that comics and graphic novels have a lot in common. Abbot (1986), for instance, describes comics as “a medium that combines written and visual art to an extent unparalleled in any other art form” (p. 155). McCloud (1993) defines comics as a “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence” (p. 9). On the other hand, a graphic novel, according to Eisner (1985) is “an arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea” (p. 5). Carter (2007) identifies graphic novels as “book length sequential art narrative featuring an anthology-style collection of comic art” (p. 1). Similarly, Seelow (2010) defines a graphic novel as an “extended, self-contained comic book” (p. 57). Based on all these definitions, it can be concluded that comics are similar to graphic novels in terms of the relationship between graphics and words that are presented in sequence to form a narrative. The only difference between graphic novels and comics is their length. Weiner (2002) highlights that because an entire story is bounded and published in a single release, graphic novels are relatively thicker than comics. Comics on the other hand are produced in sequels and serials and released at regular intervals. In addition, Romagnoli (2013) further added that graphic novels usually have more serious contents than comics. Regardless of the differences, the evolvement of both comics and graphic novels has elevated to become more acknowledged and recognised among readers.

In the past, comics were believed to impede reading comprehension, imagination and can cause eyestrain (Dorrell, Curtis & Rampal 1995). Wright (2001) even claimed that comics promote negative values such as violence, racial stereotypes, homosexuality, rebelliousness, and illiteracy. However, times have changed as comics and graphic novels become more accepted as a valid form of literature and art. Emerging researches argue that graphic novels are assets to the teaching of literature in classroom settings. Among others, Öz and Efecioglu (2015) reported that the inclusion of graphic novel as a text used for high school students in Ankara, Turkey, was a huge success in increasing the students' motivation by stimulating visual reading. The findings showed that graphic novels played a significant role in helping the students to understand literature elements, vocabulary and infer deeper

meaning of the text. Another study that proves graphic novels have brought positive impact to the reading comprehension skills of EFL learners was conducted by Basola and Sarigulb in a Turkish University in 2012. This study however highlighted that the practice of pre-reading, while reading and post reading activities along with the use of graphic novels were the determining factors of a successful reading lesson. Earlier, Gavigan (2010) conducted a case study on four struggling male adolescent readers on how they responded to graphic novels during a graphic novel book club. The findings revealed that graphic novels improved their reading engagement as well as increased their motivation to read.

Studies on the use of graphic novels in the Malaysian classrooms are still very much in its infancy since it has only been incorporated in the primary English language syllabus in 2011. A study by Faezal Muniran and Md. Ridzal Md. Yusof (2008) encourages the use of comics and graphic novels in Malaysian schools and libraries in promoting literacies. Yunus et al. (2011) reported that teacher trainees also benefited in using digital comics, particularly those which are downloaded from websites, to encourage their students to write in English. On top of that, Sabbah, Masood and Iranmanesh (2013) recommended that graphic novels to be used in primary schools based on the effective results in improving students' reading comprehension mainly for visual learners. In addition, the study, which used Felder and Solomon's (2001) learning style index to determine the students' learning styles, found that the use of graphic novels may also be beneficial for reluctant and struggling readers. Interestingly, besides English, other subjects have also benefited from the use of graphic novels. For instance, a study by Hii Sii Ching and Fong Soon Fook (2013) has revealed the positive value of multimedia-based graphic novels on students' critical thinking skills toward History learning. A more recent study focuses on the effectiveness of using comic as a learning tool in the process of teaching and learning of Science in primary schools shows a significant increase in the achievement of the pupils in the topic of Energy and thus improving their higher order thinking skills and their ability to remember the Science facts and concepts (Krishnan & Kamisah Othman 2016).

Despite the commendable values testified by these studies, claims that the use of graphic novels have been successfully implemented in the new curriculum for ESL primary schools cannot be made without seeking the opinions from the teachers. Fauziah Ahmad (2008) advocates that teachers' attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and background knowledge are among the most significant factors that have been cited as affecting the implementation of an educational reform. Ambigapathy Pandian (2006) expresses his concern on the challenges Malaysian teachers of English faced in the evolving literacy phenomenon. In this case, naturally, teachers should first be aware of how to make the most of multimodal texts before introducing the pupils to the strategies necessary for comprehending such texts (Serafini 2008, 2009). However, without proper training on how to approach the genre, the teaching of graphic novels may pose difficulties for teachers in general and especially so for pre-service teachers. This is because pre-service teachers may face difficulties in exploring contemporary texts that they themselves might not necessarily be familiar with; hence to teach literacy practices around multimodal texts that they might not equate with reading may be a problem (Hamston 2006).

A preliminary face-to-face enquiry on the teaching of graphic novels among pre-service teachers at the Institute of Teacher Education Raja Melewar Campus, Seremban revealed that the teacher trainees were not ready to teach the new form of literature to the primary pupils. In addition, the pro forma for teaching Children's Literature and Language Arts course in a TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) programme, includes no specific topic that addresses the teaching of graphic novels. It is based on these setbacks that this current research commences. It is hoped that the teacher trainees' personal perceptions of graphic novels and their experiences when teaching graphic novels during their final three

months practicum will provide useful insights on how graphic novels could be used in classroom practice. This study was a preliminary study to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of teaching graphic novels that may lead to future studies on how best graphic novels should be taught in primary schools. For these purposes, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do teacher trainees' perceive graphic novels in the teaching of Language Arts?
2. What were their experiences in teaching graphic novels to year four and five pupils?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### GRAPHIC NOVELS AND THE LITERATURE COMPONENT

The implementation of the literature component in the primary and secondary English language syllabus is seen as an effort to elevate the level of proficiency among Malaysian students. Incorporating literature in English into the English language programme was “to help students improve their language skills (especially reading) and also to experience both education and pleasure when reading literary texts” (Vethamani 2004, p. 57). The teaching of literature in the Malaysian ESL classrooms also aims to contribute to students’ “...personal development and character building and widen their outlook of the world through reading about other cultures and world views” (Ganakumaran 2003, p. 39). The implementation of the Contemporary Children’s Literature (CCL) in 2003 to upper primary pupils in Malaysia was intended to improve the teaching and learning of English in the ESL classroom through the use of storybooks or children’s literature (Nur Haslynda 2014). This is an intensive reading programme which uses three prescribed texts per year. The texts consist of short stories and poems.

In October 2010, the Ministry of Education issued a circular on the implementation of the new Standard Curriculum for Primary Schools to replace the Integrated Primary Schools Curriculum (Nor Haslynda A. Rahman 2014). The curriculum reform or its widely used Malay equivalent, ‘Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah’ (henceforth, KSSR) involves all subjects including English. Its main concern is “to restructure and improve the current curriculum to ensure that students have the relevant knowledge, skills and values to face the challenges of the 21st century” (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012, p. 6). Through this transformation, the English language teaching component is geared towards producing students with basic language skills to enable them to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts that are appropriate to the pupils’ level development (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2010). In the KSSR curriculum, literature in English is given a bigger role by introducing Language Arts and graphic novels as one part of the prescribed texts for the pupils. The Language Arts module has been added to the English language curriculum from Year 1 to allow pupils to engage and enjoy stories, poems, songs, rhymes and plays written in English. Through fun-filled and meaningful activities, this component allows pupils to use fictional and non-fictional sources so that they will gain a rich and invaluable experience using the English language (BPK 2011). At the upper primary level, classics like *The Jungle Book* (for Year 4), *Gulliver’s Travel* (for Year 5) and *The Wizard of Oz* (for Year 6) in the form of graphic novels are introduced as required literary texts.

### GRAPHIC NOVELS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

A significant amount of the research already attested to the literary and pedagogical value of graphic novels. Among others, graphic novels provide motivation for reluctant and struggling readers to read (Brozo, Moorman & Meyer 2013, Snowball 2005, Crawford 2004), improve comprehension and critical thinking skill (Sabbah et al. 2013, Maderazo 2010) and assist in the teaching of vocabulary (Basal et al 2016, Connors 2011). To date, however, little research has examined the manner in which teachers responded to these texts especially in the ESL context. Thus, this study aims to investigate the teachers' perceptions and attitudes in using graphic novels in the primary ESL classrooms.

Yunus et al. (2011) conducted a study using digital comics with the purpose of motivating low proficiency students to improve their writing skills. This study found that 30 TESL teacher trainees responded positively towards using digital comics in teaching writing. Due to their ease of use, the teacher trainees reported that digital comics allow low achieving ESL learners to write short sentences in English. These attributes motivated the learners to write creatively which in a way transformed a strenuous writing lesson into a more enjoyable experience.

Another study which looked into teacher's and students' perceptions towards reading a graphic novel was conducted by Pishol and Kaur (2015). Combining multiliteracies approach in a reading lesson, the findings showed that the use of the graphic novel and multiliteracies approach had created a more engaging, enjoyable and interesting reading lesson. In addition to the positive findings of the previous studies, graphic novels can also be used creatively in teaching vocabulary. Basal et al. (2016), for example, conducted a study on 72 first-year students from an English Language Teaching Department of a state university in Turkey. Adopting a quasi-experimental method, this four-week-long study investigated the effectiveness of vocabulary learning via graphic novel. The presentation of figurative idioms was found to be more helpful when portrayed in texts that are accompanied by illustrations than in normal traditional texts.

Despite the commendable values that graphic novels have gained, there are still many educators who seem reluctant to use the genre in their classrooms. A study by Lapp et al. (2012), for example, used a survey on the teachers' attitudes towards graphic novels and how graphic novels are used in their classroom. It was found that although elementary teachers report a willingness to use graphic novels, their practice in the classroom showed otherwise. Their limited attempts to use graphic novels were due to the lack of instructional models, lack of graphic novels in the classroom and the teachers' level of familiarity with the genre. Similarly, a study conducted by Annett (2008) on six middle school, high school and college English teachers showed that although these teachers were keen to teach English using graphic novels, unfamiliarity towards the genre made them reluctant to do so. She added that teachers who wish to use graphic novels in the classroom should require "some techniques and strategies to analyse the visual aspect of the storytelling" (p. 151). Consequently, lacking the skills to explore the visual design of the graphic texts was one of the main reasons for the hesitance. Acknowledging this, Connors (2011) in another study, had put forth an initial stage of a shared vocabulary for analysing images that teacher educators and pre-service teachers can draw on to evaluate and analyse visual texts such as graphic novels. He specifically focussed on the role of three concepts played in the design of visual texts which were basic shapes, perspective and left-right visual structure. Connors also demonstrated how the concepts function by applying them to his own reading of panels excerpts from a graphic novel by Joe Kelly and J.M. Ken Niimura entitled *I Kill Giants*.

Despite the aforementioned benefits and shortcomings of using graphic novels in ESL contexts, much of the research to date focussed on teachers in secondary and tertiary levels.



In relation to the newly introduced graphic novels in the Malaysian primary schools, little is known about how teachers - pre-service and in-service alike - react towards the transformation that leads to their practice in the classroom. Carless (1998) emphasises that the teachers' perceptions and attitudes will govern the kind of behaviour that will be cultivated in real classroom activities. Thus, the current study aims at gaining a deeper understanding of a group of young teachers' perceptions and experiences in teaching graphic novels in Malaysian ESL primary school classrooms. The findings of this study will hopefully provide new insights on the pedagogical aspects of utilizing graphic novels in the ESL primary level classrooms.

## METHODOLOGY

### PARTICIPANTS

The participants for this research were 57 teacher trainees who were undergoing a five-year degree programme in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) at the Institute of Teacher Education in Negeri Sembilan. The programme requires the teacher trainees to experience three periods of practicum in primary schools for three different durations: the first is for a month, the second is for two months and the third is for three-months, i.e., during the last semester of their study. This research was conducted at the time when these teacher trainees had just completed all the three stages of their practicum teaching. The teacher trainees' respective schools determined which group of pupils (i.e., which year) they were supposed to teach for their final practicum. Since the inclusion of graphic novels as part of a text in the Language Arts module only affected Year Four, Year Five and Year Six, not all of the teacher trainees were given the opportunity to teach this new genre. Out of the 57 teacher trainees, only 28 had the opportunity to teach English using graphic novels to Year Four and Year Five pupils. None of the teacher trainees taught Year Six pupils since the pupils were sitting for the Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah, a national level examination, at the end of the year.

### INSTRUMENT

The data were gathered through a set of questionnaire with open ended items which were administered online. The main reason for distributing the questionnaire online was because the teacher trainees were located in different areas of Negeri Sembilan for their practicum. A questionnaire is a standard gathering instrument for a needs analysis (Griffie 2012). For this reason, it was an appropriate instrument for collecting data regarding the teacher trainees' perceptions and experiences towards teaching graphic novels.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section A is on the teacher trainees' reading habits. The questions aim to find out whether the teacher trainees enjoy reading and the types of reading materials that they prefer. Apart from that, their first encounter of graphic novels is also asked in this section. Section B covers the teacher trainees' perceptions towards graphic novels. Three main questions in this section are the teacher trainees' definitions of graphic novels, their text preference (traditional or graphic novel) and how the teacher trainees make sense of graphic novels. Section C consists of questions regarding the teacher trainees' experiences in teaching using graphic novels during the practicum period. This section has the most questions and it is further divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section is to find out their prior knowledge or experience in using graphic novels in their teaching; whether the teaching of graphic novels was taught during their degree programme

and which level of pupils did they teach during their practicum. The second sub-section is to seek the teacher trainees' opinion on their pupils' reactions when graphic novels were introduced in the classroom. Finally, the last sub-section covers the questions on methods of teaching, their preferences regarding the use of graphic novels and also the challenges that they face in the classroom.

The analysis of the data gathered drew on grounded theory informed techniques. This was done by developing theory from the themes and concepts that emerge from the data as the researcher analyses them (Corbin 2007). In the first phase, open coding allows the researcher to form initial categories of information about the teacher trainees' perceptions and experiences in teaching graphic novels. The second phase requires the researcher to select one open coding and positions it at the center of the process being explored and then relates other categories to it. This is known as axial coding (Creswell 2008). Finally, the third phase which is the selective coding allows the researcher to come out with a theory or in this case an explanation on the teacher trainees' perceptions of graphic novels and also discover what they experienced when teaching graphic novels to primary pupils.

#### LIMITATIONS

When interpreting the results of the present study, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data utilised in this study come from one source i.e. the online survey questionnaires. In addition, interviews would have resulted in a more nuanced analysis. Second, the sample for the study is limited to one cohort of teacher trainees from Institute of Teacher Education Raja Melewar Campus; future studies should be conducted with larger samples from various Institute of Teacher Education in Malaysia. In addition, the research should also be extended to include in-service teachers for a more comprehensive outcome. Although the results cannot be generalised, the findings from this case study can serve as a basis for further investigation into understanding the best practices in teaching graphic novels in an ESL reading classrooms.

#### FINDINGS

##### TEACHER TRAINEES' READING BACKGROUND

Table 1 illustrates the first section of the questionnaire which focuses on getting background information regarding the teacher trainees' reading habits and reading materials preferences. In general, all 57 participants indicated that they enjoyed reading. As for the types of reading materials that they read, magazines were ranked as the highest (43%) and followed by online reading materials (21.0%). This survey also highlighted that newspapers were the least chosen with only nine participants (15.8%) who had opted for it. In terms of their first encounter with graphic novels, more than 84% of the teacher trainees had the experience of reading the genre when they were in primary and secondary schools. Conversely, seven (12.3%) of them admitted that they were only exposed to graphic novels during their degree programme at the Institute of Teacher Education. It is interesting to note that whether their early or late exposure to reading graphic novels may have some implications to their own experiences in teaching using graphic novels during the practicum periods.

TABLE 1. Section A - Teacher trainees' reading background (N=57)

Item	Theme	Total	Percentage
Enjoy reading	Yes	57	100%
	No	0	
Favorite reading materials	Magazines	25	43.9%
	Novels	11	19.3%
	Newspapers	9	15.8%
	Online materials	12	21.0%
First encounter with graphic novels	Kindergarten	2	3.5%
	Primary	25	43.9%
	Secondary	23	40.3%
	Tertiary	7	12.3%

#### TEACHER TRAINEES' PERCEPTIONS OF GRAPHIC NOVELS

Table 2 shows the teacher trainees' perceptions of graphic novels. Out of 57 respondents, 21 (36.8%) defined graphic novels as '*a novel with pictures*'. 29.8% of teacher trainees categorized graphic novels as a type of comic that was "*published in series*". Apart from that, '*graphics*' (17.5%) and '*illustrations*' (15.8%) were also used interchangeably.

TABLE 2. Section B - Teacher trainees' perceptions towards graphic novels (N=57)

Item	Theme	Total	Percentage
Definition of graphic novels	A novel with pictures	21	36.8%
	Illustrations	9	15.8%
	Graphics	10	17.5%
	Comics	17	29.8%
Text Preferences	Traditional Texts	11	19.3%
	Neutral	4	7.0%
	Graphic Novels	42	73.7%
How do teacher trainees make sense of graphic novels	Images	9	15.8%
	Speech Balloons	2	3.5%
	Combinations of images and speech balloons	46	80.7%

The questionnaire included a question regarding their preferences for either the graphic novel or traditional texts. There was a sizable number of teacher trainees (73.7%) who replied that they preferred graphic novels more than traditional texts. The illustrations were the main factor for graphic novels preference. Most of them who had chosen graphic novels over traditional texts commented that apart from being "*colorful*" and "*attractive*", the illustrations helped them to comprehend the texts better. One participant said "*...the illustrations help me to know what the writers are trying to deliver clearly*" [SP9]

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that those who disliked reading graphic novels (19.3%) said that they found the graphic novel "*confusing*" and "*messy*". Other than that, the teacher trainees commented that in traditional novels, the plot of the story would be padded out with detailed descriptions of the setting, the characters, even the tone and emotions. Graphic novels, to this group, seemed to provide less of these kinds of information. In addition, one participant responded that instead of having illustrations laid out for readers, she prefers to have her own imagination illustrating the events that occur in a novel. Among their responses were:

*"I feel that the graphics limits my imaginations and in some cases it doesn't require my imaginations at all."* [SP23]  
*"Graphic novels portrayed small size images that share the space with limited dialogues."* [JP12]



Another group of participants with the least percentage (7.0%), gave neutral comments when asked about their choice of text. They stressed that some novels are best portrayed in words. An example that one of them mentioned was: “...books that were too difficult to be drawn or illustrated-abstract concepts, for instance.” [SP5]. Another participant felt that her choice of text would depend on the content. Her response was:

*“If I need to read serious matter such as political issue and religion, I prefer traditional text to seek information. But if I want to read for enjoyment and to release tension or to fill my leisure time, graphic novel will do.”* [SP36]

In responding to the question on how the teacher trainees make sense of graphic novels, 46 (80.7%) of the teacher trainees felt that the combination of graphic images and speech balloons is the essence of a graphic novel. They felt that word balloons convey the story while graphic images enhance readers’ understanding. Another participant stated that with both elements relying on each other to deliver meaning, the pupils are then able to continue reading. A smooth reading experience without interruptions or pauses due to incomprehension is crucial so that reading will be an enjoyable task for the pupils. A participant commented that “Both elements should complement each other, not conquer. The imbalance would cause misinterpretation to the readers.” [SP17]

Nine (15.8%) participants expressed that images played a paramount importance for graphic novels to make sense. One participant who stressed that “pictures speak louder than words” [JP6] went on to say that the uniqueness of graphic novels lies in the creativity of the illustrator to deliver the meaning of the story meticulously. These participants argued that the images are more than just pictures as the use of colors can convey the exact mood and emotions. One of the comment was “if the image is drawn using black and brown, the author can create a mysterious, gloomy and somewhat scary mood.” [SP36]

In contrast to the other two groups, two (3.5%) participants voiced out that the speech balloons have the utmost role in graphic novels. They felt for any reading materials, the words should be the catalyst in boosting the imagination of the readers. To them, the presence of graphic images will only limit the imagination.

#### TEACHER TRAINEES’ EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING GRAPHIC NOVELS

The description of Section C in the questionnaire is displayed in Table 3. Twenty-eight teacher trainees were able to share their experiences teaching graphic novels during their practicum. Seventeen (60.7%) of them responded that they have been taught on how to read and teach graphic novels in the TESL degree programme. However, another 11 (39.3%) participants claimed that they were not trained before. This contradicting result was due to the fact that graphic novels is not taught as a specific topic in the Language Arts course. Moreover, the need to expose the teacher trainees on how to read and teach graphic novels only became necessary after graphic novels was introduced as part of the literature component in the Language Arts module in 2011. Thus, the teaching modules that came together with the texts was seen as a tremendous help to all the teachers, and especially so for these teacher trainees.

Seventeen (60.7%) participants had the experience of teaching *Jungle Book* by Carl Bowen to Year 4 pupils and 11 (39.3%) participants taught *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift to Year 5 pupils. Thirteen participants (46.4%) reported that none of the pupils had read graphic novels before. Nine (32.1%) of them commented that half of the pupils had been exposed to graphic novels and six (21.4%) of the participants found that almost all of their pupils have read graphic novels. However, the teacher trainees highlighted that most of the

pupils read graphic novels in Malay and most of them were exposed to reading comics which have similar features to graphic novels.

The pupils' reactions were also varied according to the teacher trainees. More than 85% of the teacher trainees stated that their pupils were excited when the graphic novel was first introduced in class. Most of them were eager to read the text due to the graphic images. A participant commented that "...the children loved it, especially the boys because 'The Jungle Book' has dark colors which seems more masculine and it features many animals that captures the boys' and the girls' attention." [SP29]

TABLE 3. Section C-Teacher trainees' experiences teaching using graphic novels (N=28)

Item	Responses	Total	Percentage
<b>Background</b>			
Names of Text and Year	Jungle Book(Year 4)	17	60.7%
	Gulliver's Travel (Year 5)	11	39.3%
Teacher trainees have been taught how to use graphic novels in classroom (in degree programme)	Yes	17	60.7%
	No	11	39.3%
<b>Pupils</b>			
Pupils' exposure to graphic novels	Yes	17	60.7%
	No	11	39.3%
Pupils' reactions to graphic novels	Yes	17	60.7%
	No	11	39.3%
<b>Teacher Trainees</b>			
Teacher trainees' experiences of explaining the features of graphic novels to their pupils	Positive	4	14.3%
	Negative	24	85.7%
Teacher trainees' opinion whether their pupils enjoy graphic novels	Positive	28	100%
	Negative	0	0
Teacher trainees' opinion whether they like teaching graphic novels	Positive	21	75%
	Negative	7	25%

Another reason for the enthusiasm to read was because graphic novels were not like the ordinary texts that they usually encountered. Graphic novels had "*more pictures and lesser words*" [SP16], similar to comics which they were familiar with. Nonetheless, there were four (14.3%) participants who reported that their pupils were "*blank and blur*" [JP12] when the graphic novels were given to them. The teacher trainees felt that this was probably because the texts were new to them and not knowing how to read them properly would cause confusion to the pupils.

The majority of the teacher trainees (85.7%) admitted that they did not explain the features of graphic novels to their pupils before they started teaching. Most of them felt that the act was unnecessary since the main purpose of the lesson was to understand the content of the story. Some of the participants claimed that they were not aware of the importance of teaching the features to their pupils. Another reason was because the participants felt that by introducing the features would probably "*kill their excitement*" [JP9] to read the graphic novels. Some of the participants also argued that their pupils had already known about the features of graphic novels since most of them were familiar with reading comics.

All 28 of the teacher trainees agreed that their pupils enjoyed reading graphic novels. This was evidenced when one of the participants commented that "...the pupils were more focused and paid attention during the reading activity." [SP7]. The illustrations were a major motivating factor for the pupils. Since the graphic images enable them to rely on those images to aid comprehension, the pupils would be able to "*guess the content*" [JP10] and continue reading without having to pause to decode the meaning. This is especially so for pupils who have low proficiency in English.

Due to the pupils' positive reactions to graphic novels, 21 (75%) teacher trainees felt that they too took pleasure in teaching the genre. They commented that because the pupils took less time to read the graphic novels, more activities could be done during the lesson. This group of teacher trainees was also fortunate to be able to use the teaching modules that proposed creative activities to be done in the classroom. Nevertheless, seven (25%) teacher trainees (four of them taught Year 4 pupils and three of them taught Year 5 pupils) realised that teaching graphic novels was not an easy task. They admitted that this was probably due to the lack of knowledge on how to utilize the genre effectively. They opined that because they did not have enough pedagogical exposure to the genre, they ended up using the same strategies that lead to boredom for the pupils. Apparently, their reluctance in using graphic novels was concurrent with their claim of not getting the access to the teaching modules. Other than that, the features of graphic novels as described by a participant as having *"watered down language and content, and confusing gaps in the story and panels"* [SP38] made it even harder to teach.

Despite the mixed responses towards the teaching of graphic novels, the teacher trainees revealed some of the challenges they faced in the classroom. The majority of them felt that although the graphic images had tremendously fascinated the pupils to read, the act of ignoring the dialogues in the speech balloons made them fail to understand the storyline correctly. The participants expressed their fear that by merely interested in looking at the pictures alone may lead to misinterpretation of the story. They commented:

*"It is important for pupils to look at the pictures as well as read the words given so that they are able to obtain correct information. Sometimes, looking at the pictures alone can be misleading."* [SP3]

*"the pupils are not focused in reading but rather flipping to other pages to see the illustrations."* [SP5]

As a result, the pupils may not benefit from the uniqueness of graphic novels that blend dialogues and graphic images to tell the story.

## DISCUSSION

The teacher trainees' perceptions towards graphic novels were mainly influenced by their own early exposure to reading comics when they were in school. Their association of graphic novels to comics is in accordance with Cary's (2004) definition which positions graphic novels under the umbrella of 'comics'. A study by Annamalai and Muniandy (2013) found that the reading habit among Malaysian Polytechnics students indicated a high rate of reading for entertainment, and not for academic purposes. Apparently, apart from newspapers and magazines, comics are one of the reading materials that is popular among the teenagers. In addition, it was worth noting that some of the teacher trainees who prefer traditional texts over graphic novels had only started reading graphic novels when they were much older. One of the reasons for their preference is probably due to the fact that they were not used to reading in the graphic novels layout.

The teacher trainees also perceive graphic novels as loaded with pictures. Likewise, Mouly (2011) describes graphic novels under the guise of comics that aim to tell stories in pictures. Like many other researchers who support graphic novels (Brenna 2013, Lapp et al. 2012, Mouly 2011, Risko et al. 2011) 74% of the teacher trainees also felt the same. It was the power of pictures that drew the teacher trainees to choose graphic novels over traditional texts. This finding is expected as images have been an essential part of life in the twenty-first century. These images, in one way or another, define a generation's identity, popularity, and

power (Baylen & D' Alba 2015). Naturally, children today, whom Connors (2011) labelled as the 'visual generation', would be more attracted to read materials with images as they live immersed in a visual culture where images surround them. Despite the inclusion of appealing images in the graphic novels, the teacher trainees still believe that a good graphic novel should have a balanced ratio between speech balloons and images. Graphic novels, according to the teacher trainees, should portray the words and the images concurrently as both contribute to making meaning. This notion supports Çakir (2015, p. 71) who claimed that "in order to create a meaningful learning atmosphere and to offer comprehensible input, word and pictures need to be presented simultaneously".

A mixed response was obtained on the issue of whether the teacher trainees felt that they had been taught the basic skills in teaching graphic novels in their TESL degree programme. Being an educator at an Institute of Teacher Education, the researcher is aware that graphic novels were not specifically taught as a genre. Graphic novels are included as a component in the Language Arts syllabus alongside short stories, poetry and novels. The need to focus on graphic novels only became necessary when it was made as one of the texts for the Literature Component in primary schools in 2011. The teacher trainees' lack of knowledge on how to teach using graphic novels is evident when they admitted that the focus of their lesson was mainly to understand the content of the graphic novels. Their failure to expose the pupils to the features of graphic novels which could aid the pupils to deepen their understanding of the story highlights the teacher trainees' perception that graphic novels are another kind of traditional text.

There are a number of reasons that explain the pupils' overwhelmingly positive reactions to the use of the graphic novel in the classroom. The first is the similarity between the formats of the graphic novel and those of comics, as most of the pupils have experienced reading comics in the Malay language. Secondly, the fact that reading materials that are commonly found in bookstores are now being used in formal classrooms has made the pupils excited to read in a format that they are familiar with. This notion backs the assertion made by Hines and Delinger (2011) when they say that the use of graphic novels have positively changed their students' view towards reading because they were now eager to read. Besides being an effective element in enticing the pupils to read, the images were able to assist comprehension where pupils were able to make educated guesses about the storyline based on the images when they could not make sense of the dialogues in the speech balloons. According to Krashen (1989, p. 402), "visuals accompanying texts can provide clues that shed light on the meaning of unfamiliar word or grammatical structure". Due to the positive reading influences that graphic novels have brought upon the pupils, the teacher trainees unanimously concurred that they too enjoyed their lessons using the graphic novels. The teacher trainees spent less time to explain the content of the graphic novels and were therefore able to carry out more language-based activities during the lesson.

In addition to highlighting the benefits cited by teacher trainees in the use of graphic novels in the ESL classroom, this study also provides valuable insights into the challenges that they faced during their teaching practice. The study revealed that the pupils were more engrossed in looking at the pictures rather than the dialogues. Students' dependence on visuals and consequent neglect of the linguistic elements should be looked into as it may lead to incomprehensible input and worse, misinterpretation of the content. It is also often assumed by both teachers and literacy educators that young people today have "built-in" multimodal schema that allows them to interpret multimedia texts, such as websites, films and graphic novels without having to teach them (Groenke & Youngquist 2011). However, the findings of this study may show that Visual Literacy like other forms of literacies, still need to be taught formally. Although children are able to use cellular phones, iPods and other devices even before they enter school, the skills used to create and interpret images and the

awareness of the vocabulary of shapes and colors must also be learned. In addition, students also need to learn how to read each mode and acquire the techniques on how to choose which information to focus on (Steeves 2015). Due to this insufficient metalanguage to comprehend visual texts that not only students but teachers also lack, it is believed that these 21st century literacy skills may have to be explicitly taught in schools (Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila 2006).

With respect to the teaching of graphic novels, various studies that promote the use of graphic novels in education have intensely emphasised the significance of a balance between visual imagery and written words so that comprehension can be attained (Brozo, Moorman & Meyer 2013, Cakir 2015, Carano & Clabough 2016, Murukami & Bryce 2009). Basal et al. (2016) also emphasised that “the quality of illustrations as well as how they are used in relation with the text are among the several criteria which determine their effectiveness in the language classroom” (p. 526). McDonald (2009) who conducted a study on foreign language students using graphic novels further explained that the reading became more challenging if there was a weak relationship between the text and the illustrations “...because they cannot rely on the images to repeat the key linguistic items” (p. 24). In addition Whithin (2009) claimed that graphics could also interfere in the process of comprehension. Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003) supported this claim based on their findings that students failed to connect the overall idea of the story when they focus too much on the small visual details presented in the frames of graphic novels. In relation to this current study, we may conclude that failing to embrace the marriage between visuals and texts may affect comprehension and cause further damage such as causing confusion and disrupting the reading process of graphic novels.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In language teaching, the value of graphic novels has been acknowledged for its ability to enhance critical thinking (Hii Sii Ching & Fong Soon Fook 2013), to increase comprehension of the reading texts (Brena 2013), to address students having different learning styles (Seelow 2013), to promote active learning process when combined with multiliteracies approach (Pishol & Kaur 2015) and to enrich vocabulary instruction (Basal et al. 2016). On top of all these advantages of using graphic novels, the current study places emphasis on the importance of having formal instruction on how to utilize the multimodal text effectively.

The study explores the perceptions and experiences of teacher trainees using graphic novels in the ESL primary school classrooms. The teacher trainees find that although pupils prefer graphic novels over traditional novels, the preference does not ensure better comprehension. Regardless of their exposure to the multimodal surroundings they live in, the pupils still need to be explicitly taught on how to make sense of the visuals (graphics) and the verbal (text) in a multimodal text like the graphic novels. Similar to traditional texts, visual images are also subject to interpretations. However, the skills, expertise and strategies needed to interpret the combination of images and words may be different from the traditional word dense text that pupils normally encounter (Burnmark 2008 in Lapp et al. 2012). Hence, the requirement to educate students on how to read visual images is necessary (Burnmark 2002, Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila 2006, Steeves 2015).

At this point, some suggestions could be made for the teacher education programmes. The Institutes of Teacher Education Malaysia should be offering courses that are specifically designed to help teacher trainees learn about graphic novel conventions and explore multimodal teaching techniques in pre-service training. At the same time, teacher education programmes should also include professional development for in-service teachers on the



pedagogical aspects of multimodal texts. Thus, teacher trainees and in-service teachers will be better equipped with appropriate pedagogical practices to face challenges to teach multimodal texts such as graphic novels in schools.

Apart from teachers, the results of this study also shed light on how the pupils perceive graphic novels and the potential problems the pupils may face in understanding the text if they fail to pay attention to both the visual and verbal elements. However, to make claims based on off-line information, such as evidence that are centred on what the teacher trainees think happened while the pupils are reading graphic novels, may still not enough. In the past, similar research had to depend on read-aloud protocols when gathering data to understand how participants make sense of what they read. With the advancement of technology, experiments that collect real-time empirical data to observe and understand how a person performs language tasks are now possible and doable. One such technology is the eye tracking device that is able to empirically and accurately track and analyse eye movements as a respondent reads a text. Thus, further investigation into the pupils' behaviours when reading and understanding graphic novels using eye tracker is strongly recommended to confirm the results of this research. It is hoped that that a truer understanding of what happens during the process of reading and comprehending multimodal texts such as graphic novels will emerge. Hopefully, this would provide educators with the most effective techniques on how to teach it.

The findings of this study have enhanced our understanding on the utilization of graphic novels from the teacher trainees' perceptions in their ESL primary classrooms. Although graphic novels come with great benefits, it is only with careful pedagogical planning and necessary knowledge on how to impart the powerful combination of text and image that the teachers can innovatively integrate graphic novels into their classrooms to support students' language learning processes.

#### REFERENCES

- Abbot, L. L. (1986). Comic art: Characteristics and potentialities of a narrative medium. *Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 19(4), 155-176.
- Ambigapathy Pandian. (2006). What works in the classroom? promoting literacy practices in English. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*. Vol. 11, 15-39. ISSN 0128-5157
- Annamalai, S. & Muniandy, B. (2013). Reading Habit and Attitude among Malaysian Polytechnic Students. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*. Vol. 5(1), 32-41.
- Annett, D. (2008). Implementing Graphic Texts into the Language Arts Classroom. *Minnesota English Journal*. Vol. 44(1), 150-179.
- Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum. (2011). *Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Sekolah Rendah: Modul Teras Asas: Bahasa Inggeris Sk: Tahun & Dua*. Putrajaya: Malaysia: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
- Basal, A., Aytan, T. & Demir, I. (2016). Teaching Vocabulary with Graphic Novels. *English Language Teaching*. Vol. 9(9), 95-100.
- Basol, H. C. & Sarigul, E. (2013). Replacing Traditional Texts with Graphic Novels at Efl Classrooms. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 70, 1621-1629.
- Baylen, D. M. & D'alba, A. (2015). *Essentials of Teaching and Integrating Visual and Media Literacy: Visualizing Learning*. Springer.
- Brenna, B. (2013). How Graphic Novels Support Reading Comprehension Strategy Development in Children. *Literacy*. Vol. 47(2), 88-94.
- Brozo, W. G., Moorman, G. & Meyer, C. (2013). *Wham! Teaching with Graphic Novels across the Curriculum*. Teachers College Press.
- Burmark, L. (2002). *Visual Literacy: Learn to See, See to Learn*. ERIC.
- Çakir, I. (2015). Instructional Materials Commonly Employed by Foreign Language Teachers at Elementary Schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*. Vol. 8(1), 69-75.
- Carano, K. T. & Clabough, J. (2016). Images of Struggle: Teaching Human Rights with Graphic Novels. *The Social Studies*. Vol. 107(1), 14-18.
- Carless, D. R. (1998). A Case Study of Curriculum Implementation in Hong Kong. *System*. Vol. 26(3), 353-368.

- Carter, J. B. (2007). *Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels: Page by Page, Panel by Panel*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Ching, H. S. & Fong, S. F. (2013). Effects of Multimedia-Based Graphic Novel Presentation on Critical Thinking among Students of Different Learning Approaches. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*. Vol. 12(4).
- Connors, S. P. (2011). Toward a Shared Vocabulary for Visual Analysis: An Analytic Toolkit for Deconstructing the Visual Design of Graphic Novels. *Journal of Visual Literacy*. Vol. 31(1), 71-92.
- Corbin, J. S. A. (2007). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crawford, P. (2004). A Novel Approach: Using Graphic Novels to Attract Reluctant Readers. *Library Media Connection*. 26-29.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Dorrell, L. D., Curtis, D. B. & Rampal, K. R. (1995). Book-Worms without Books? Students Reading Comic Books in the School House. *Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 29(2), 223-230.
- Eisner, W. (1985). *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles & Practice of the World's Most Popular Art Form*. Paramus, NJ: Poorhouse Press.
- Fauziah Ahmad. (2008). Presage, context, process and product: influencing variables in literature instruction in an ESL context. *GEMA Online<sup>®</sup> Journal of Language Studies*. Vol. 8(1), 1-21. ISSN 1675-8021.
- Felder, R. M. & B. A. Soloman. (2001). "Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire." North Carolina State University. <http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ILS-a.htm>
- Ganakumaran, S. (2003). *Literature Programmes in Malaysian Schools: A Historical Overview. Teaching of literature in ESL/EFL contexts*. Petaling Jaya: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd.
- Gavigan, K. W. (2010). Examining Struggling Male Adolescent Readers' Responses to Graphic Novels: A Multiple Case Study of Four, Eighth-Grade Males in a Graphic Novel Book Club. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* 169(3418818).
- Griffiee, D. T. (2012). *An Introduction to Second Language Research Methods: Design and Data*. TESL-EJ Publications, Berkeley.
- Groenke, S. L. & Prickett, R. (2012). *Continued Absences: Multimodal Texts and 21st Century Literacy Instruction*.
- Groenke, S. L. & Youngquist, M. (2011). Are We Postmodern Yet? Reading Monster with 21st-Century Ninth Graders. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Vol. 54(7), 505-513.
- Hamston, J. (2006). Pathways to Multiliteracies: Student Teachers' Critical Reflections on a Multimodal Text. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, The*. Vol. 29(1), 38-45.
- Hassett, D. D. & Curwood, J. S. (2009). Theories and Practices of Multimodal Education: The Instructional Dynamics of Picture Books and Primary Classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol. 63(4), 270-282.
- Hibbing, A. N. & Rankin-Erickson, J. L. (2003). A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Using Visual Images to Improve Comprehension for Middle School Struggling Readers. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol. 56(8), 758-770.
- Hines, S. & Elementary, M. V. (2011). The Impact of Reading Graphic Novels on Student Motivation & Comprehension. Working paper. Appalachian State University.
- Krashen, S. (1989). Language Teaching Technology: A Low-Tech View. *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*. 393-407.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Ogborn, J. & Tsatsarelis, C. (2001). *Multimodal Teaching and Learning: The Rhetorics of the Science Classroom*. London: Continuum.
- Krishnan, S. & Othman, K. (2016). The Effectiveness of Using Comic to Increase Pupils' Achievements and Higher Order Thinking Skills in Science. *International Journal of English and Education*. Vol. 5(3), 281-292.
- Lapp, D., Wolsey, T. D., Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2011). Graphic Novels: What Elementary Teachers Think About Their Instructional Value. *Journal of Education*. 23-35.
- Manderazo, C., Martens, P., Croce, K., Martens, R., Doyle, M. & Aghalarov, S. (2010). Beyond the Picture Walks: Revaluing Picturebooks as Written and Pictorial Texts. *Language Arts*. Vol. 87(6), 437-446.
- Mccloud, S. (1993). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Northampton, Mass.
- Mc Donald, P. (2009). To What Extent Can Defining Graphic/Written Text Relations Support the Teaching of Reading Comprehension in Multi-Modal Texts? Tesis University of Birmingham.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2010). *Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Sekolah Rendah: Modul Teras Asas Bahasa Inggeris SK Tahun Satu & Dua [Primary Curriculum Standards Document: Core Basic Module English SK Year One & Two]*. Kuala Lumpur.

- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2012a). Ministry of Education policies: Frequently asked questions. Retrieved October 5, 2016 from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/105793167/Dasar-Dasar-KPM-BI-NCM>
- Mouly, F. (2011). Visual Literacy: Exploring this magical portal. *Children and Libraries*. Vol. 9(1), 12-14.
- Muniran, F. & Yusof, M. R. M. (2008). Using Comics and Graphic Novels in School and Libraries to Promote Literacies. Library & Information Science Unit, Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology, University of Malaya.
- Murakami, S. & Bryce, M. (2009). Manga as an Educational Medium.
- Öz, H. & Efecioglu, E. (2015). Graphic Novels: An Alternative Approach to Teach English as a Foreign Language. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*. Vol. 11(1), 75-90.
- Pishol, S. & Kaur, S. (2015). Teacher and students' perceptions of reading a graphic novel using the multiliteracies approach in an ESL classroom. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*. Vol. 12, 21-47
- Rahman, A. & Haslynda, N. (2014). From Curriculum Reform to Classroom Practice: An Evaluation of the English Primary Curriculum in Malaysia. Tesis University of York.
- Rajendra, T. R. (2015). Multimodality in Malaysian Schools: The Case for the Graphic Novel. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*. Vol. 3(2), 11-20.
- Risko, V. J., Walker-Dalhouse, D., Bridges, E. S. & Wilson, A. (2011). Drawing on Text Features for Reading Comprehension and Composing. *Reading Teacher*. Vol. 64(5), 376-378.
- Romagnoli, A. S. (2013). Comics in the Classroom: A Pedagogical Exploration of College English Teachers Using Graphic Novels. Thesis Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Sabbah, M., Masood, M. & Iranmanesh, M. (2013). Effects of Graphic Novels on Reading Comprehension in Malaysian Year 5 Students. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*. Vol. 4(1), 146-160.
- Schwartz, A. & Rubinstein-Ávila, E. (2006). Understanding the Manga Hype: Uncovering the Multimodality of Comic-Book Literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Vol. 50(1), 40-49.
- Schwarz, G. (2006). Expanding Literacies through Graphic Novels. *English Journal* 58-64.
- Seelow, D. (2013). The Graphic Novel as Advanced Literacy Tool. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. Vol. 2(1), 5-15.
- Siegel, M. (2012). New Times for Multimodality? Confronting the Accountability Culture. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Vol. 55(8), 671-681.
- Serafini, F. (2008). The Pedagogical Possibilities of Postmodern Picture Books. *The Journal of Reading, Writing & Literacy*. Vol. 2(3), 23-41.
- Serafini, F. (2009). *Understanding Visual Images in Picture Books*. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking Beyond the Page: Reading and Responding to Contemporary Picture Books*. London: Routledge.
- Serafini, F. (2011). Expanding Perspectives for Comprehending Visual Images in Multimodal Texts. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. Vol. 54(5), 342-350.
- Serafini, F. (2012). Reading Multimodal Texts in the 21st Century. *Research in the School*. Vol. 19(1), 26-32.
- Snowball, C. (2005). Teenage Reluctant Readers and Graphic Novels. *Young Adult Library Services*. Vol. 3(4), 43-45.
- Steeves, N. (2015). *Fairytales in Secondary English Classrooms?: Exploring Multimodality, Visual Literacy and Student Resistance*. Tesis University of Victoria.
- Unsworth, L. (2001). *Teaching Multiliteracies Across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*. Great Britain: Open University Press.
- Vethamani, M. E. (2004). Changing Tides: Teaching Literature in English in Malaysian Secondary Schools. In David, M. K. (Ed.), *Teaching of English in Second and Foreign Language Settings: Focus on Malaysia* (pp. 52-58). Berlin: Peter Lang
- Weiner, S. (2002). Beyond superheroes: Comics get serious. *Library Journal*, 127(2), 262-266.
- Whithin, P. E. (2009). "Tech-to-Stretch": Expanding Possibilities for Literature Responses. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol. 62(5), 408-418.
- Wright, B. W. (2001). *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. JHU Press.
- Yang, G. (2008). Graphic Novels in the Classroom. *Language Arts*. Vol. 85(3), 185-193.
- Yoo, D. G. & Lee, J. (2013). Using Contextual Information in Learners' Spoken Language Communication: An Eye-Tracking Study. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*. Vol. 13(2), 1-12.
- Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H. & Embi, M. A. (2012). Effects of Using Digital Comics to Improve Esl Writing. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology*. Vol. 4(18), 3462-3469.