

# Reading between the Frames: Enhancing Literary Appreciation through Comics Narratives in Saudi Higher Education

Afra Alshiban

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Translation, Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
Email: biblackiris@gmail.com

**How to cite this paper:** Alshiban, A. (2025). Reading between the Frames: Enhancing Literary Appreciation Through Comics Narratives in Saudi Higher Education. *Creative Education*, 16, 1402-1440.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2025.169084>

**Received:** May 28, 2025

**Accepted:** September 13, 2025

**Published:** September 16, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

Comics, graphic novels, and visual narratives have emerged as practical tools for enhancing literary appreciation and English language proficiency in modern education. While these mediums have gained recognition in Western academia, their integration into literature classrooms in Saudi universities remains limited. This study investigates the effectiveness of incorporating comics into literature courses to develop students' literary analysis skills, language proficiency, and overall engagement. Grounded in Bloom's Taxonomy, the research adopts a quasi-experimental design, employing pre- and post-tests administered to control and experimental groups. Results indicate significant improvements in cognitive domains, including knowledge, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and enhanced reading, writing, speaking, and listening proficiency. Qualitative data from focus groups further reveal increased student motivation, creativity, and engagement. The study underscores the potential of comics as a transformative pedagogical tool, bridging traditional literary instruction with contemporary student learning preferences, and offers actionable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in Saudi higher education.

## Keywords

Comics, Graphic Novels, Visual Narratives, Literary Appreciation, English Language Proficiency, Higher Education, Saudi Universities

---

## 1. Introduction

The terms comics, visual narratives, comics art, sequential art, and graphic novels are often used interchangeably to describe a range of literary and artistic works

that blend text and imagery to create cohesive narratives. Once dismissed as mere entertainment for children, comics have gained significant academic recognition, particularly within Western institutions, where they are now studied as legitimate subjects of literary analysis (Mandaville & Avila, 2009). For instance, the University of Oregon in the United States offers interdisciplinary Comics and Cartoon Studies programs. At the same time, the University of Florida provides courses that promote critical and historical engagement with the medium. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, universities such as Lancaster and Dundee have established specialized programs in comics studies, underscoring the growing academic legitimacy of the field.

Over the past two decades, scholarly interest in comics studies has surged, marked by the emergence of academic conferences and peer-reviewed journals dedicated to advancing the field. The *International Journal of Comics Art* (IJOCA), established in 1999, represented a pivotal moment by fostering rigorous academic discourse around comics beyond prevailing widespread criticism (Hague, 2014). Other influential publications, including *Image & Narrative*, *ImageText*, and *Studies in Comics*, have further solidified the field's academic legitimacy. As an inherently interdisciplinary medium, comics intersect with diverse domains such as journalism, autobiography, satire, political discourse, and cultural studies. This breadth offers fertile ground for theoretical inquiry into semiotics, aesthetics, textuality, and narrativity (Witek, 1989).

Despite the global expansion of comics studies, the field remains underexplored within the Saudi Arabian academic context. While Western institutions have embraced comics as a pedagogical tool for enhancing literary interpretation and critical thinking, Saudi universities have yet to integrate this emerging discipline into their literature curricula meaningfully. This study advocates the inclusion of comics studies in Saudi higher education, emphasizing its potential to bridge traditional literary instruction with contemporary student engagement. Given the medium's capacity to promote multimodal literacy, foster interpretive skills, and stimulate intellectual curiosity, this research demonstrates the effectiveness of comics in cultivating literary appreciation and enhancing English language proficiency.

This study begins by establishing a conceptual framework, defining key terms, and tracing the historical development of comics and graphic novels. It examines literary adaptations within the medium and explores the educational benefits of incorporating visual narratives into literature courses. Drawing on Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), the research adopts a quasi-experimental methodology to assess the impact of comics studies on students' cognitive development, critical thinking abilities, and language skills. Additionally, the study proposes a model curriculum, *Introduction to Comics Studies*, designed to encourage the integration of this discipline into literature programs at Saudi universities. As Randy Duncan et al. (2015) aptly observe, "A reader cannot sit passively and wait for meaning to arise from a graphic novel; understanding both images and words is

essential to grasping the overall narrative of each panel.” Embracing comics studies allows Saudi educators to revitalize literature classrooms, cultivate analytical thinking, and foster a dynamic learning environment aligned with 21st-century pedagogical imperatives.

### 1.1. Research Objectives

- 1) To measure students’ baseline literary appreciation skills across Bloom’s six cognitive levels.
- 2) To evaluate the improvement in literary appreciation skills after implementing a comics-integrated curriculum.
- 3) To analyze students’ attitudes towards using comics to learn literature.

### 1.2. Research Questions

- 1) What are students’ baseline literary appreciation skills across Bloom’s six cognitive levels before the intervention?
- 2) To what extent do students’ literary appreciation skills improve across Bloom’s six cognitive levels after participating in a comics-integrated curriculum?
- 3) What are students’ attitudes towards using comics as a teaching strategy for enhancing literary appreciation?

### 1.3. Research Significance

This study carries significant relevance in both academic and educational contexts. It aims to:

- **Enrich Literature Instruction:** By integrating comics and graphic novels into the curriculum, educators can diversify teaching materials and make literary texts more engaging and accessible to students.
- **Enhance Language Proficiency:** Comics’ combination of visual and textual elements supports the development of key English language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- **Foster Higher-Order Thinking Skills:** By applying Bloom’s Taxonomy, students are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize literary content, thereby enhancing their critical thinking and interpretative abilities.
- **Revitalize Student Engagement:** Comics offer a visually stimulating and interactive medium that resonates with students’ interests, helping to foster enthusiasm and deeper engagement with literary studies.
- **Promote Cultural Adaptation:** This study also investigates the use of culturally relevant comics materials, aiming to bridge the gap between Western literary traditions and the cultural context of Saudi students.

The findings of this research will provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers, facilitating the integration of innovative teaching tools that can enhance literature education outcomes in Saudi universities.

### 1.4. Research Problem Statement

Traditional literature instruction in Saudi university classrooms predominantly

relies on text-based methods, often failing to accommodate diverse learning preferences or sustain student engagement. This reliance can lead to decreased interest, reduced motivation, limited literary analysis skills, and the development of English language proficiency. Many students perceive canonical literary texts as overly complex, outdated, and disconnected from their personal experiences, resulting in disengagement and reluctance to participate in classroom discussions (Alshammari, 2022).

Recent research underscores the educational benefits of multimodal tools, such as comics, graphic novels, and visual narratives, as effective strategies for enhancing comprehension, engagement, and critical thinking. Comics, in particular, merge visual and textual elements, offering an interactive reading experience that promotes deeper cognitive processing. Duncan et al. (2015) argue that comics are powerful instructional tools that engage reluctant readers and foster enthusiasm for learning. Similarly, Krashen (1993) highlights comics as bridges to advanced reading, improving fluency, comprehension, and overall literacy.

In the Saudi context, literature curricula often do not align with students' cultural and cognitive needs, widening the disconnect between course materials and learning styles. Alshammari (2022) identifies limited access to innovative teaching tools and the dominance of canonical Western texts as key barriers to effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Furthermore, Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) emphasizes developing higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are frequently underemphasized in traditional, text-centric literature classes (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

**This study addresses the following research question:**

**Can the integration of comics, graphic novels, and visual narratives into Saudi university literature classrooms enhance students' literary appreciation and English language proficiency while fostering higher-order cognitive skills as outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy?**

By investigating this question, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship that advocates for multimodal literacy practices and offers evidence-based recommendations for curriculum designers and educators in Saudi universities. Integrating comics studies into literature instruction can bridge the gap between traditional and modern teaching methodologies, fostering a more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning environment tailored to the needs of 21st-century learners.

### 1.5. Research Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into the integration of comics and graphic novels in literature instruction, it has several limitations:

- **Sample Size:** The study focuses on a limited sample of undergraduate students from selected Saudi universities, which may not represent the broader student population.
- **Time Constraints:** The intervention was conducted over a single academic se-

mester, which may not be sufficient to assess long-term effects on student learning and engagement.

- **Cultural Barriers:** Comics and graphic novels may still face resistance or skepticism from traditional educators, administrators, or other stakeholders within the Saudi educational context.
- **Resource Availability:** There may be limited access to high-quality, culturally relevant comics and graphic novels appropriate for academic use in literature classrooms.
- **Teacher Training:** Educators may require additional professional development and training to incorporate comics and graphic novels into their instructional practices effectively.

Despite these limitations, the study establishes a foundation for future research and practical application, enhancing literature education through visual narratives.

## 2. Literature Review

The evolution of comics from a marginalized form of entertainment to a recognized literary and academic medium reflects their growing narrative complexity and cultural significance. Once dismissed as juvenile or superficial, comics have gained scholarly legitimacy due to their unique capacity to merge textual and visual storytelling. Scholars from diverse fields, including literature, semiotics, cultural studies, and education, have investigated the role of comics in enhancing narrative engagement, promoting multimodal literacy, and supporting pedagogical innovation. This literature review explores comics' historical and theoretical foundations, academic validation, and function in literary adaptation, ultimately demonstrating their value as an educational tool in literature instruction.

### 2.1. Comics: Definition and Historical Evolution

#### • Definition and Theoretical Perspectives

Comics theorists have long debated how best to define the medium. [Duncan et al. \(2015\)](#) describe comics as “anything in a sequence of juxtaposed scenes” that narrate a story, including examples such as ancient Grecian urns and the Bayeux Tapestry (p. xiii). Similarly, [Scott McCloud \(1993\)](#) conceptualizes comics as “an art of storytelling” that relies on sequential imagery to create meaning (p. 5). [Will Eisner \(1985\)](#) expands on this notion, referring to comics as “an interplay of words and images” that form a cohesive narrative. Eisner further emphasizes that comics, or sequential art, are deeply rooted in storytelling traditions, tracing their lineage from cave paintings and medieval tapestries to film and theater (*Graphic Storytelling*, p. 1).

#### • The Historical Development of Comics

The origins of sequential storytelling predate the modern comics book, tracing back to ancient visual narratives such as Egyptian tomb paintings, Aztec codices, and the Bayeux Tapestry. However, the structured format of modern comics is

often linked to the work of 18th-century British painter William Hogarth. His series *A Harlot's Progress* (1731), *A Rake's Progress* (1735), and *Marriage à la Mode* (1743) employed sequential imagery to convey moral and social narratives. Maurice Horn (1985) asserts that Hogarth's illustrations "can be acknowledged as the first direct forerunners of the comics strip" (p. 321).

Comics as a mass medium began to emerge in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through illustrated newspaper strips. In the United States, single-panel cartoons evolved into serialized strips, eventually expanding into comics books primarily targeted at younger audiences. The rise of superhero comics in the 1930s and 1940s, featuring iconic characters such as Superman and Batman, catalyzed the industry's growth. Alongside superheroes, teen humor comics like *Archie* (1941–present) and funny animal comics featuring *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* gained widespread popularity. The 1940s and 1950s also saw the emergence of horror (*Tales from the Crypt*), crime, educational, and feminist comics that began to challenge traditional gender roles (Babic, 2014: p. 6).

By the 1970s, the comics industry experienced significant diversification, with the rise of martial arts, science fiction, underground comix, and graphic memoirs that explored complex personal and societal themes (Duncan et al., 2015: pp. 185–186). This period marked a shift toward a more mature readership and set the stage for the emergence of the graphic novel, a form that blends literary sophistication with visual artistry.

## 2.2. The Rise of Comics Scholarship

### • Academic Recognition and Theorization

The formal study of comics gained momentum in the latter half of the 20th century. Professor Ray B. Browne's establishment of *The Journal of Popular Culture* in 1967 helped legitimize the academic study of comics within the broader field of popular culture. By the 1970s, scholars began publishing critical comics histories, such as Jim Steranko's *History of Comics* (1970) and Les Daniels' *Comix: A History of Comics Books in America* (1971). These foundational texts laid the groundwork for serious academic inquiry into the medium. In 1972, Donald Ault introduced one of the first formal academic courses on comics, "Literature and Popular Culture," at the University of California. That same year, Umberto Eco's (1962) essay *The Myth of Superman* was translated into English, introducing comics criticism to a broader intellectual audience. David Kunzle's *The Early Comics Strip. Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825* (1973) further reinforced the academic legitimacy of comics. His work inspired the first academic conference on comics and contributed to the launch of *The Comics Journal* in 1976.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a surge in comics scholarship, with landmark publications such as Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* (Eisner, 1985), Trina Robbins' *Women and the Comics* (1985), and Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (McCloud, 1993), all of which expanded the field's theoretical discourse.

The establishment of *The International Journal of Comics Art* by John A. Lent in 1999, alongside the rise of online academic platforms such as *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies* (2004), further solidified comics studies as a recognized discipline. By 2010, academic publishers like Routledge and Intellect had launched dedicated journals, including *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* and *Studies in Comics* (Duncan, 2015: p. 331).

### 2.3. Comics Adaptations and the Rise of the Graphic Novel

#### • Early Literary Adaptations and Educational Potential

The adaptation of literary works into comics form has a long history, beginning with the launch of the *Classic Comics* series in 1941 by Albert Kanter. In response to literary critic Sterling North's (Sterling, 1940) condemnation of comics as a corrupting influence, Kanter adapted canonical texts such as *The Iliad*, *Hamlet*, and *Moby-Dick* into the comics format, illustrating the medium's educational potential (Waid, 2015: p. 77). These adaptations, later rebranded as *Classics Illustrated* in 1947, aimed to make literature accessible to a broader and more diverse readership. The 1970s and 1980s saw continued growth in literary adaptations through publications such as *Marvel Classic Comics* and Oval Projects' illustrated versions of Shakespearean plays like *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. By the 1990s, as comics gained greater legitimacy as a serious literary form, graphic novels began to move beyond simple retellings of classic texts to more complex reinterpretations that expanded upon their source material, offering new perspectives, visual depth, and contemporary relevance.

#### • Graphic Novels as a Literary and Pedagogical Tool

Eisner (1985) observes that modern comics increasingly engage with "autobiography, social protest, reality-based human relationships, and history," elevating the medium beyond its traditional association with children's entertainment (*Graphic Storytelling*, xv). Mazur and Danner (2014) similarly contend that comics now explore "adult themes" and complex narrative structures, solidifying their status within literary discourse (8). Echoing this view, Heer and Worcester (2009) assert that "comics are no longer synonymous with banality," as scholars increasingly recognize their cultural and intellectual significance (xi).

In the realm of adaptation, Linda Hutcheon (2006) defines adaptations as "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works," and highlights how comics adaptations in particular foster "an interpretive doubling, a conceptual flipping back and forth between the work we know and the work we are experiencing" (xiv, 139). Supporting this perspective, Tabachnick and Saltzman (2015) argue for the inclusion of graphic adaptations in literature curricula, noting that they "contribute to the study of literature" by offering fresh interpretive possibilities (Preface, 2).

### 2.4. The Rise of the Graphic Novel

The graphic novel has emerged as a sophisticated literary medium that transcends

traditional comic book storytelling. Scholars and educators increasingly recognize its potential for deep narrative engagement, exploring fictional and nonfictional themes with a complexity comparable to conventional literature. The growing acceptance of graphic novels within academic discourse reflects a broader shift in perception that acknowledges their literary merit, artistic innovation, and pedagogical value. This section explores the graphic novel's rise, evolving literary status, and integration into academic settings.

- **Definition and Literary Value**

Tabachnick (2015) defines the graphic novel as an extended form of the comics book that “explores both nonfictional and fictional plots and themes with the depth and subtlety we expect from traditional novels and extended nonfiction texts” (2). Unlike mass-market comics in newspapers and serial publications, graphic novels typically feature higher production values, greater artistic freedom, and mature themes that appeal to adult readers. They encompass various genres, including biography, memoir, history, reportage, and travelogue, reinforcing their versatility and legitimacy as a literary form.

- **Eisner's Legacy and the Emergence of the Graphic Novel**

The modern graphic novel owes much to Will Eisner's pioneering efforts to elevate comics into a legitimate art form. Uninterested in the superhero genre, Eisner sought to create “an art form for grown-ups” (Mazur & Danner, 2014: p. 181). His seminal 1978 work, *A Contract with God*, revolutionized the medium by presenting interconnected stories depicting Jewish immigrants' struggles during the Great Depression. The phrase “A Graphic Novel” appeared on the book's paperback edition for the first time, marking a pivotal moment in comics history (Duncan et al., 2015: p. xv). Eisner's innovative approach paved the way for subsequent works such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, a graphic memoir that chronicled the horrors of Auschwitz using anthropomorphic characters.

Mazur and Danner (2014) describe *Maus* as a watershed in comics history: “The strategy of portraying real-life characters in a dramatic/tragic context as anthropomorphic animals, combined with the weighty historical subject matter, elevated *Maus* over any autobiographical comics that had come before.... Adults unaccustomed to reading comics, much less approaching them as serious literature, found the juxtaposition of one of the modern world's worst horrors with a style associated with childhood pleasure, both powerful and moving.... *Maus* proved that comics could tell important, accessible stories that had nothing to do with superheroes at all. It made such a convincing argument that it was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize in 1992. The role of *Maus* in expanding the audience for comics is difficult to overstate. It paved the way for comics to enter the realms of serious literary discussion and academic study” (pp. 185-187).

The critical success of *Maus* further legitimized the graphic novel, prompting literary critic Lawrence Langer (1991) to describe it as “a serious form of pictorial literature” (p. 17). Duncan et al. (2015) likewise hailed it as “one of the scores of serious literary works that have shown the medium to be worthy of greater atten-

tion and study” (p. xviii). Other groundbreaking works, such as Frank Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and Alan Moore’s *Watchmen*, also elevated the form. As [Mark Waid \(2015\)](#) notes, before the emergence of these works, “almost everyone in America over the age of 12 considered all comics everywhere to be ‘junk literature,’ and nothing but” (p. viii). The academic community took notice when *Watchmen* was included in *Time* magazine’s list of the greatest American novels of the twentieth century, and *Maus* received the Pulitzer Prize ([Waid, 2015: p. ix](#)).

## 2.5. Comics in Academia

### • The Need for Visual Literacy in Higher Education

As visual culture increasingly dominates modern communication, scholars have emphasized incorporating visual literacy into university curricula. In *Teaching Visual Literacy*, [Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher \(2008\)](#) urge educators to prepare students to “interpret an increasingly digital world” (p. 1). Similarly, [Lynell Burmark \(2002\)](#) contends that “the primary literacy of the twenty-first century is visual,” arguing that students must not only read and write text but also “process both words and pictures” effectively (p. 5). She further emphasizes that visual literacy fosters critical thinking by enabling students to “connect text and images, evaluate significance, and understand underlying meanings” (p. 12).

The educational value of graphic novels extends beyond student engagement. As [McTaggart \(2009\)](#) observes, “Teachers use graphic novels because they support the struggling reader, motivate the reluctant one, and challenge the advanced learner” (p. 32). This versatility makes graphic novels powerful tools for fostering critical analysis, creativity, and comprehension.

### • The Historical Shift Toward Comics in Academia

The push to integrate comics into education has deep historical roots. As early as 1958, American illustrator John Robert McCloskey advocated using visual images in the classroom to enhance students’ analytical skills. In *Reading the Visual*, [Serafini \(2014\)](#) quotes McCloskey: “Let us teach design, and let us get it out of the museums, let us get it off the pages and drawing boards, and let us put it to work” (p. 1).

Likewise, in 1969, novelist John Updike predicted that “comics strip novels might become masterpieces of a new kind of literature” (as cited in [Schmitz-Emans, 2015: p. 390](#)). This vision gained further legitimacy in 1978 with the publication of Will Eisner’s *A Contract with God*, a foundational work that helped establish the graphic novel as a serious literary form.

### • Graphic Novels as Literature

The term “graphic novel” was deliberately coined to signal that these works should be regarded as literature. Scholars have increasingly explored the interplay between comics and literary traditions. [Duncan et al. \(2015\)](#) argue that comics, like traditional literary texts, create immersive story worlds with fully realized characters, environments, and sensory details (pp. xiii-xiv). [Eisner \(1985\)](#) rein-

forces this view: “The reading process in comics is an extension of text. In text alone, the process of reading involves word-to-image conversion. Comics accelerate that by providing the image. When properly executed, it goes beyond conversion and speed and becomes a seamless whole. This misnamed form of reading is entitled to be considered literature because the images are employed as a language” (*Graphic Storytelling*, p. xvi). Stein and Thon (2013) observes that the graphic novel encompasses many literary genres, including autobiography, historical narrative, and nonfiction journalism (p. 6). Comics are no longer limited to simplistic superhero plots; contemporary works now engage with political themes, social critique, and personal memoirs. As Skidmore and Stump (1989) note in *More Than Mere Fantasy: Political Themes in Contemporary Comics Books*, “plots and storylines are considerably more complex” than they were in the past (p. 83). Arthur Berger (1971) further praises the medium for its “remarkably intellectual use of language,” describing it as “extremely poetical... even reaching the level of the epic” (p. 165).

The growing recognition of graphic novels as literature has increased their presence in university curricula. Witek (1989) outlines three approaches to teaching comics: as an introduction to the medium, as a comparative study alongside canonical literature, and as a form of contemporary cultural expression (p. 217). Likewise, Avila and Mandeville (2015) emphasize the value of comics in education, describing themselves as “two scholars and teachers of comics” (p. 245). As the academic study of comics continues to expand, their role in literature, education, and cultural studies becomes increasingly significant. Graphic novels have effectively bridged the gap between visual and textual literacy, offering new pathways for literary exploration and scholarly engagement.

## 2.6. Integrating Comics Studies into Saudi University English Curricula: A Pedagogical Necessity

The declining interest in English and American literature among Saudi university students reflects a broader shift in educational engagement. Traditional approaches to literature instruction, centered on canonical texts, dense readings, and rigid teaching methods, often fail to resonate with contemporary students who are increasingly attuned to multimodal forms of communication. To revitalize literature studies and foster a deeper appreciation for literary expression, the integration of comics studies presents a compelling and timely solution. This section explores the rationale for incorporating graphic narratives into Saudi university curricula, emphasizing their potential to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and linguistic proficiency while aligning with global educational trends in literary pedagogy.

### • Addressing the Decline of Literature Studies in Saudi Universities

Despite the concerted efforts of faculty to improve English literature instruction, many Saudi students increasingly gravitate toward linguistics and translation studies, often perceiving literature as outdated and irrelevant. Two key factors

contribute to this disengagement: reliance on outdated texts and excessive reading demands. James Paul Gee (2008) critiques this issue, observing, “We give students texts, and when they do not understand them, we give them more texts. If they do not understand a word, we provide them with more words, such as definitions, explications, and lectures” (p. xi). This overreliance on text-heavy curricula overlooks the reality that today’s students operate within a predominantly visual culture, where meaning is often conveyed through images rather than dense prose. The rigidity of traditional literary instruction further alienates students, making the subject feel disconnected from their lived experiences. As Rosenblatt (1995) argues in *Literature as Exploration*, “Teachers should never cram the classics down students’ throats,” particularly those irrelevant to students’ lives. “An intense response to work will have its roots in capacities and experiences already present in the personality and mind of the reader” (pp. 41-42). She emphasizes the need to select texts that align with students’ interests, emotional maturity, and cultural context. Moffett (1983) similarly calls on faculty to reevaluate their syllabi to reflect better students’ linguistic proficiency and backgrounds (p. 305).

In response to similar challenges, many Western universities have reformed their curricula to include contemporary and diverse literary works. Widdowson (1999) notes that by the early 1990s, some English programs had eliminated Shakespeare as a core requirement, reflecting a broader movement toward curricular inclusivity (p. 72). The 1988 Stanford University curriculum debate further exemplifies this shift, as traditional canonical texts were reconsidered in favor of works by women, Black authors, and writers from the Global South (Kernan, 1990: pp. 3-4). In contrast, Saudi universities have retained mainly a Eurocentric literary canon and have yet to embrace more accessible and engaging forms of literature. Integrating comics studies into literature curricula offers a promising strategy to address this gap. Graphic narratives can bridge the divide between traditional and contemporary literary instruction, making literature more relevant and engaging for modern students while aligning with global educational trends.

To implement comics studies effectively in Saudi university literature classrooms, instructors can select graphic novels that are both globally acclaimed and culturally sensitive. For example, Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* offers a compelling autobiographical account of growing up during the Iranian Revolution, blending personal narrative with historical context. Its Middle Eastern setting, themes of identity, religion, and resistance, and use of visual symbolism make it particularly resonant for Saudi students. Similarly, *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, though wordless, explores themes of migration, alienation, and hope through intricate illustrations that invite critical interpretation, making it ideal for developing visual literacy. Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* can be introduced with care to explore memory, trauma, and narrative structure, especially in upper-level courses focused on literary theory or memoir. Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese* tackles racial identity, stereotype, and assimilation by blending myth and contemporary realism for lighter, equally thought-provoking texts. By incorporating such texts, educa-

tors can foster deeper engagement, encourage literary analysis across modalities, and cultivate students' critical thinking in modern and meaningful ways.

## 2.7. The Case for Comics Studies in Saudi Higher Education

### • A Step Toward an Inclusive and Engaging Curriculum

Introducing graphic narrative studies into English departments, whether as standalone courses or integrated into existing literature classes, offers a promising way to revitalize literary engagement in Saudi universities. Carter (2007) argues that integrating comics studies represents “a step toward a realization of more democratic notions of text, literacy, and curriculum” (p. 47). Graphic novels and visual adaptations of literary classics can function as independent texts and as comparative tools alongside canonical works, enriching students' interpretive skills and broadening their literary perspective. Tabachnick (2009) emphasizes that the “high literary and visual quality of many graphic novels” is “the most compelling reason for the serious study of this new genre” (Introduction, p. 3). Beyond their aesthetic value, graphic narratives often tackle complex themes, feature richly developed characters, and employ evocative language, making them particularly effective for engaging students who struggle with traditional text-based literature while offering the analytical depth suitable for advanced literary study.

### • Enhancing Comprehension and Cognitive Skills

Integrating visual and textual storytelling through graphic novels fosters multimodal literacy, enhancing students' ability to interpret both verbal and visual information. Carter (2007) notes that “mixing words and images is a great way to foster comprehension and memory skills” (p. 48). Since narrative and action are primarily conveyed through visual cues, students must decode multiple modes of communication simultaneously, deepening cognitive engagement and analytical thinking. Moreover, graphic novels often address contemporary social issues that resonate with students, such as identity crises, family conflict, migration, racism, gender dynamics, and political struggles. Works like *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang, *Are You My Mother?* by Alison Bechdel, and *An Age of License* by Lucy Knisley present narratives of self-discovery and social awareness that mirror the complexities of students' lives. McTaggart (2008) supports the integration of such texts, arguing that “graphic novels offer excellent potential for classroom use” due to their combination of accessible storytelling and relevant, thought-provoking content (p. 27).

### • Comics and Language Acquisition

Beyond enhancing literary engagement, comics can also help Saudi students develop English language proficiency. Duncan et al. (2015) affirm that “research over the past seven decades has demonstrated that comics can motivate readers, enhance reading skills, and aid those engaged in learning a second language” (p. 333). Similarly, Krashen (1993) notes in *The Power of Reading*: “Those who reported more comic book reading also reported more pleasure reading in general,

greater reading enjoyment, and tended to do more book reading.... Comics have the benefit of functioning as a bridge to other kinds of reading, as they help readers develop linguistic competence and an interest in books” (p. 51). These findings suggest that integrating comics into literature curricula can foster a more positive reading culture that encourages students to transition from graphic texts to traditional literary works while building essential language skills.

## 2.8. Implementing a Comics Studies Course in Saudi Universities

To address ongoing challenges in literature instruction, a proposed course titled “Visual Literature: Graphic Novels and Adaptations” is designed for implementation at Al Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University, with potential for nationwide adoption. The course is structured into four main components:

1) **Introduction to Graphic Narrative:** A historical overview of comics, including key terminology and visual storytelling techniques such as panels, gutters, inking, lettering, and narrative sequencing.

2) **Graphic Novel Adaptations of Classical Literature:** A study of adaptations of epic poetry (*The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*), Romantic and Victorian poetry, and prose works including *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *The Great Gatsby*.

3) **Graphic Memoirs and Contemporary Graphic Novels:** Exploration of autobiographical and identity-focused works such as *Persepolis* (Satrapi), *American Born Chinese* (Yang), *Are You My Mother?* (Bechdel), and *Stitches* (Small).

4) **Creative Application:** Students will produce original graphic short stories, applying visual storytelling principles learned throughout the course.

Faculty and students will select course materials collaboratively to ensure alignment with instructional hours and learner interests. As students develop interpretive skills specific to graphic texts, they become more receptive to literature, enhancing their analytical and linguistic capabilities. While initial faculty hesitation may arise, instructors can be supported with pedagogical resources tailored to comics-based instruction. Serafini (2014) acknowledges that “one of the challenges [of teaching comics] may be the lack of experience teachers have with these types of texts” (p. 138). Nevertheless, as Tabachnick (2009) optimistically asserts in *Teaching the Graphic Novel*, “One of the delightful discoveries that new teachers of graphic novels will make is that students usually do not have to be urged to read them. Students enjoy them because of their contemporary content and because graphic novels fit students’ sensibilities at a deep cognitive level” (p. 4).

In sum, incorporating comics studies into Saudi university curricula offers a practical and engaging response to the declining interest in literature. Graphic novels provide an accessible entry point for literary analysis while promoting critical thinking, reading comprehension, and second-language acquisition. Educators can bridge the gap between traditional instruction and students’ contemporary sensibilities by integrating multimodal texts into literature courses, ensuring that literature remains a vibrant and relevant field of study.

### • Conclusion and Final Insights

This study advocates for integrating graphic novels and other visual literacy tools into university curricula in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing their potential to enrich literary education and boost student engagement. Including comics aligns with modern pedagogical approaches prioritizing multimodal literacy and student-centered learning. As [Carter \(2007\)](#) notes, incorporating graphic narratives reflects “a step toward a realization of more democratic notions of text, literacy, and curriculum” (p. 47). The fusion of text and image in graphic novels enhances comprehension, expands vocabulary, and stimulates critical thinking. It also promotes interdisciplinary connections and improves English language proficiency. Most importantly, it reignites students’ interest in literature, making literary studies more dynamic and relevant. As [Tabachnick \(2009\)](#) affirms, “The possibilities for graphic novel interventions in traditional literature courses are infinite” (Introduction, p. 7).

To explore these possibilities, this study employed a quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of graphic narratives on students’ cognitive and literary development. The upcoming sections present findings that evaluate how comics influence literary analysis skills, engagement with texts, and overall motivation to read. The study investigates whether this integration supports students in developing interpretive skills and higher-order thinking, as outlined in Bloom’s Taxonomy. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, the study offers empirical evidence demonstrating the educational effectiveness of comics in enhancing literary appreciation and language learning outcomes.

Existing scholarship reinforces these insights. [Thalheimer \(2010\)](#) showcases the influence of female graphic novelists, while [Chaney \(2011\)](#) explores how African American comics narrate diasporic experiences and social struggles, expanding cultural awareness. [Barr \(2006\)](#) highlights how *Maus* deepens understanding of the Holocaust in educational settings. Furthermore, scholars such as [Ferguson \(2012\)](#) and [Baker \(2014\)](#) demonstrate how graphic novels can illuminate literary movements and theoretical frameworks, from Victorian literature to postmodern aesthetics. These studies confirm the adaptability and richness of comics in academic contexts. Based on conceptual foundation and forthcoming empirical data, this study concludes that comics offer powerful tools for reshaping literary education, making it more inclusive, relevant, and engaging for today’s students.

### 3. Methodology

This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating graphic texts (comics) into literature instruction to enhance literary appreciation and English language proficiency among Saudi EFL learners. Guided by Bloom’s Taxonomy for Literary Appreciation, the research evaluates students’ abilities to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate literary texts before and after exposure to comics-based instruction.

### 3.1. Research Design

A quasi-experimental research design was employed to assess the impact of graphic texts (comics) on students' engagement and cognitive development. The study involved two groups:

- **Experimental Group:** Students received instruction using comics-based materials, incorporating visual storytelling, dialogue interpretation, and contextual analysis.
- **Control Group:** Students followed a traditional literature curriculum based on conventional text-based teaching methods.

Both groups completed pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure improvements in literary comprehension and critical thinking. These assessments were aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy, covering cognitive domains from basic knowledge and understanding to higher-order skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

This structured approach enabled a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of comics-based teaching strategies versus traditional methods. The results offer empirical insights into whether integrating graphic narratives fosters deeper engagement, enhances interpretative skills, and improves English language proficiency among Saudi EFL learners. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on multimodal literacy and its potential applications in higher education curricula.

### 3.2. Participants

This study is conducted with a sample of 100 undergraduate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students enrolled in English programs at universities in Saudi Arabia. Participants are randomly assigned to two groups to ensure fair representation and minimize bias:

- **Experimental Group (n = 50):** Students received comics-based teaching strategies using a comics-integrated curriculum, emphasizing visual storytelling and interactive engagement.
- **Control Group (n = 50):** Students followed a traditional literature curriculum, focusing on conventional text-based instruction.

Using a random sampling method enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings by ensuring that both groups were demographically and academically comparable. **Table 1** presents a detailed summary of the participants' demographic information, highlighting key characteristics and supporting the generalizability of the sample to broader educational contexts.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of participants.

Demographic Variable	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)	Total (%)
Age 18 - 20	30%	32%	31%
Age 21 - 23	56%	54%	55%
Age 24+	14%	14%	14%

**Continued**

Urban Background	72%	74%	73%
Rural Background	28%	26%	27%
Gender: Female	60%	60%	60%
Gender: Male	40%	40%	40%
Prior English Proficiency			
Low	18%	22%	20%
Moderate	64%	60%	62%
High	18%	18%	18%

The demographic table presents key characteristics of the study participants to demonstrate the sample's representativeness. It includes data on age distribution, residence type (urban vs. rural), gender ratios, and baseline English proficiency levels. These variables were standardized across both groups to minimize potential confounding factors, enhancing the study's internal validity. Specifically:

### 3.3. Research Assessment Tools

This study employs a pre-test/post-test design grounded in Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate the effectiveness of graphic texts (comics) in enhancing literary appreciation and English proficiency. The assessments measure cognitive skills across six hierarchical levels, providing a comprehensive analysis of students' literary engagement and critical thinking abilities.

#### A. Pre-Test and Post-Test Framework Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

1) **Knowledge:** Measures recall of fundamental details within a text.

*Example:* List the main characters in the text.

2) **Comprehension:** Assesses the ability to grasp and interpret central themes and character motivations.

*Example:* Summarize the main idea of the text.

3) **Application:** Evaluates the ability to connect textual scenarios to real-life contexts.

*Example:* How would the protagonist react in a real-life situation?

4) **Analysis:** Involves identifying and interpreting literary devices, plot structures, and key turning points.

*Example:* Identify the turning point in the story and justify your answer.

5) **Synthesis:** Tests creativity by encouraging students to generate new perspectives or alternative storylines.

*Example:* Write an alternate ending for the story.

6) **Evaluation:** Assesses critical judgment and the ability to form reasoned opinions about literary elements.

*Example:* Critique the protagonist's final decision.

By aligning the assessment tools with Bloom's Taxonomy, the study ensures a structured evaluation of students' cognitive development, from basic knowledge

retention to advanced critical analysis. Comparing pre-test and post-test results will provide empirical insights into the impact of comics-based instruction on students' literary interpretation and language proficiency.

#### **B. English Proficiency Tests**

Adapted IELTS-style assessments evaluate participants' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, providing a standardized measure of language proficiency.

#### **C. Engagement and Attitudes Questionnaire**

A Likert-scale instrument measures students' engagement levels and perceptions regarding integrating comics into their learning experience.

### **3.4. Research Procedures**

#### **1) Pre-Test Phase**

- o The study commenced with a baseline assessment to evaluate participants' initial literary appreciation and English language proficiency levels.
- o This assessment employed the *Literary Appreciation Scale*, aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy, and standardized English Proficiency Tests to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.

#### **2) Intervention Phase**

- o The experimental group engaged in a comics-integrated curriculum, incorporating activities focused on literary elements, language structures, and cultural contexts.
- o The control group followed a traditional curriculum without including comics-based instructional materials.
- o Both groups received instruction over an equivalent time frame to maintain consistency in instructional exposure.

#### **3) Post-Test Phase**

- o Upon completion of the intervention, participants in both groups undertook a post-test using the same assessment tools as in the pre-test.
- o The purpose was to measure literary appreciation and English language proficiency changes, enabling a comparative analysis of the intervention's effectiveness.

#### **4) Qualitative Data Collection**

- o In addition to quantitative assessments, in-depth interviews were conducted with focus groups from the experimental group.
- o These interviews aimed to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and feedback regarding integrating graphic texts (comics) in their learning.
- o The qualitative data provided valuable insights into engagement levels, perceived effectiveness, and overall attitudes toward the comics-based approach.

### **3.5. Data Collection**

- **Quantitative Data:** Pre-test and post-test scores.
- **Qualitative Data:** Focus group discussions and open-ended survey responses.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

- **Quantitative:** Paired T-tests, ANCOVA.
- **Qualitative:** Thematic analysis.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Pre-Test Results by Bloom's Taxonomy Domains

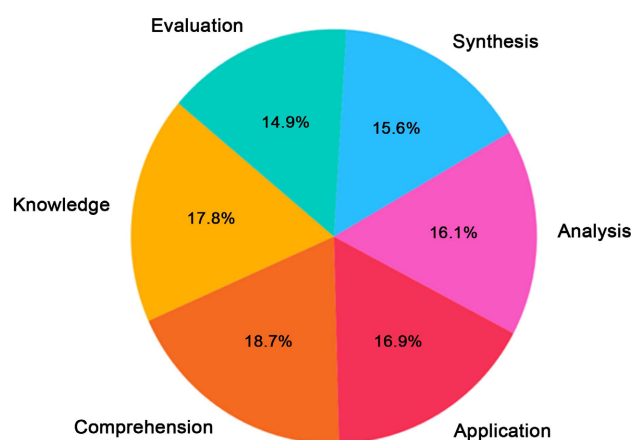
**Table 2** displays the pre-test scores in accordance with the literature. The experimental and control groups are compared to reach an equivalence before starting the treatment.

**Table 2.** Pre-test scores comparison of literary appreciation between experimental and control groups.

Cognitive Level	Experimental Group Mean Score	Control Group Mean Score
<b>Knowledge</b>	55.2	54.9
<b>Comprehension</b>	58.1	57.3
<b>Application</b>	52.4	51.7
<b>Analysis</b>	50.0	49.8
<b>Synthesis</b>	48.5	47.9
<b>Evaluation</b>	46.2	45.7

**Interpretation:** Baseline scores showed moderate performance across all cognitive levels, with slight variations. (**Figure 1**)

#### Distribution of Experimental Group Mean Scores Across Cognitive Levels



**Figure 1.** Distribution of experimental group mean scores across cognitive levels.

### 4.2. Pre-Test Results: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations

The pre-test results demonstrate initial equivalence between the experimental and control groups, ensuring a reliable baseline for comparing post-intervention outcomes. (**Table 3**)

- **Interpretation:** The mean score for the experimental group (65.2) was slightly higher than that of the control group (64.7), but the difference was not statistically significant.
- The standard deviation (8.1 for experimental, 7.8 for control) indicates that the distribution of scores was relatively consistent between groups.

**Table 3.** Literary appreciation pre-test scores.

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental Group	65.2	8.1
Control Group	64.7	7.8

These results confirm that the groups were similar enough in their initial literary appreciation abilities to allow for a fair comparison of post-test results. (Table 4)

**Table 4.** English proficiency pre-test scores by skill.

Skill	Experimental Mean	Control Mean	Standard Deviation
Listening	5.2	5.1	0.9
Speaking	5.0	5.0	1.0
Reading	5.1	5.2	1.1
Writing	4.9	5.0	0.8

- **Listening:** Slightly higher mean score in the experimental group, 5.2, compared to the control group, 5.1, with similar standard deviations, 0.9.
- **Speaking:** Identical mean scores 5.0 for both groups, with a standard deviation of 1.0.
- **Reading:** The control group's mean was slightly higher, 5.2, than that of the experimental group, 5.1, with a standard deviation of 1.1.
- **Writing:** The control group scored slightly higher, 5.0, than the experimental group, 4.9, with a standard deviation of 0.8.

These minor differences lack statistical significance, emphasizing the initial equivalence of both groups.

To conclude, the pre-test results show that both the experimental and control groups were statistically equivalent in terms of:

- 1) Literary appreciation: (mean scores and standard deviations).
- 2) English proficiency across four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

This baseline equivalence strengthens the validity of any observed differences in post-test outcomes, allowing them to be confidently attributed to the comics-based intervention rather than pre-existing disparities.

### 4.3. Post-Test Results by Bloom's Taxonomy Domains

Table 5 presents the post-test results recorded after the experiment, comparing

the performance of the experimental and control groups across Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domains. These scores were collected following the intervention, where the experimental group engaged with comic-based instruction while the control group continued with traditional text-based learning methods.

**Table 5.** Post-test scores comparison of literary appreciation between experimental and control groups based on bloom's taxonomy.

Cognitive Level	Experimental Group Mean Score	Control Group Mean Score
<b>Knowledge</b>	85.4	65.2
<b>Comprehension</b>	82.7	64.5
<b>Application</b>	81.5	62.4
<b>Analysis</b>	78.9	61.3
<b>Synthesis</b>	76.8	60.2
<b>Evaluation</b>	74.5	59.8

The results indicate that, following the intervention, the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group across all cognitive domains: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The mean scores demonstrate significant differences in literary appreciation and English proficiency between students exposed to comics-based instruction and those who followed a conventional literature curriculum. These post-intervention findings offer valuable insight into the effectiveness of integrating graphic narratives in enhancing students' engagement and cognitive development in literature courses.

**Key Findings:**

- The experimental group showed significant improvement across all six cognitive levels.
- The most significant gains were observed in Application, Analysis, and Synthesis skills.
- Statistical analysis ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirmed the significance of these results.

#### 4.4. Statistical Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results for Literary Appreciation

**Table 6** presents the statistical comparison between pre-test and post-test results to evaluate the impact of the comics-based intervention on students' literary appreciation. The mean scores, standard deviation, t-value, and *p*-value are analyzed to determine the significance of the observed differences. The results provide empirical evidence on whether integrating graphic texts (comics) into literature instruction led to measurable improvements in students' analytical and interpretative skills.

**Results Interpretation:**

**1) Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Mean Scores:**

- o The mean score increased significantly from 65.2 (pre-test) to 85.4 (post-test).
- o This demonstrates a notable improvement in students' literary appreciation skills after the comics-based intervention.

**Table 6.** Pre-Test vs. Post-Test statistical comparison.

Metric	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value
Literary Appreciation	65.2	85.4	8.3	12.45	<0.001

### 2) Standard Deviation (8.3):

- o The recorded standard deviation suggests moderate variability in scores while maintaining consistency in data dispersion.

### 3) T-Value (12.45):

- o A t-value of 12.45 indicates a highly significant difference between pre-test and post-test results.

### 4) P-Value (<0.001):

- o The extremely small *p*-value (<0.001) confirms that the score difference is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance.

The statistical comparison supports the hypothesis that comics-based instruction significantly enhanced students' literary appreciation skills. The results indicate that using graphic texts as a pedagogical tool leads to meaningful academic improvements, reinforcing their effectiveness in literature education.

## 4.5. Post-Test Scores for English Proficiency in the Experimental Group

**Table 7** presents the post-test results for English proficiency among participants in the experimental group, comparing their pre-test and post-test scores across the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The analysis includes mean scores, standard deviations, *t*-values, and *p*-values to assess the statistical significance of observed improvements following the comics-based instructional intervention. These findings offer empirical insights into the impact of integrating graphic texts into literature instruction on students' overall English language development.

**Table 7.** Post-test scores for english proficiency (Experimental Group).

Skill	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value
Listening	5.2	6.8	0.9	7.3	<0.001
Speaking	5.0	6.5	1.0	6.8	<0.001
Reading	5.1	6.9	1.1	7.9	<0.001
Writing	4.9	6.3	0.8	6.5	<0.001

The results in **Table 7** indicate significant improvements across all four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, following the integration of comics into the instructional approach. The data show measurable gains in mean scores and statistically significant  $t$ -values and  $p$ -values ( $<0.001$ ), confirming that the observed enhancements are unlikely to be attributed to chance.

### 1) Improvement Across All Language Skills

- **Listening** skills increased significantly from 5.2 (pre-test) to 6.8 (post-test), with a  $t$ -value of 7.3. This suggests that exposure to dialogue-driven narratives in comics likely enhanced students' auditory comprehension and contextual interpretation.
- **Speaking** proficiency rose from 5.0 to 6.5, with a  $t$ -value of 6.8. Comics' interactive and conversational nature may have improved participation in spoken discussions, reinforcing vocabulary use and pronunciation.
- **Reading** skills showed the most notable improvement, increasing from 5.1 to 6.9, with a  $t$ -value of 7.9. This indicates that combining visual and textual elements in comics effectively supports comprehension and text analysis.
- **Writing** proficiency improved from 4.9 to 6.3, as reflected by a  $t$ -value of 6.5. Exposure to structured, visually supported storytelling may have enhanced students' sentence construction, creativity, and overall coherence in writing.

### 2) Statistical Significance and Learning Impact

The low standard deviations (ranging from 0.8 to 1.1) indicate moderate score variability among participants, suggesting consistent improvement across the experimental group. Furthermore, the  $p$ -values ( $<0.001$ ) confirm that the results are statistically significant, reinforcing the effectiveness of comics-based instruction in enhancing English language proficiency.

### 3) Interpretation and Educational Implications

The findings strongly support the integration of comics as an effective pedagogical tool for engaging students with literature. The observed improvements in reading and writing suggest that comics bridge visual literacy and literary interpretation, making complex texts more approachable and stimulating. Moreover, the dialogue-based format of comics enhances students' understanding of character voice, tone, and narrative structure, key components in literary analysis. The gains in speaking and listening also demonstrate that comics foster deeper engagement with literary dialogue and contribute to developing interpretive and expressive skills essential in literature classrooms.

## 4.6. Post-Test Comparison of Literary Appreciation between Experimental and Control Groups Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

**Table 8** compares post-test scores between the experimental group, which received comics-integrated instruction, and the control group, which followed a traditional literature curriculum. The comparison is structured around Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive domains, assessing students' performance in knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Statistical measures,

including mean scores, standard deviations, t-values, and *p*-values, demonstrate the effectiveness of the comics-based intervention in enhancing students' literary appreciation.

**Table 8.** Post-test comparison of literary appreciation between experimental and control groups.

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T-Value	<i>P</i> -Value
Experimental Group	85.4	8.3	9.2	<0.001
Control Group	70.1	7.5	—	—

The post-test results indicate significant differences in literary appreciation skills between the two groups. The experimental group outperformed the control group across all Bloom's Taxonomy domains, suggesting that integrating comics enhanced students' engagement and cognitive development.

#### 1) Knowledge

- The experimental group demonstrated superior recall and recognition of literary elements compared to the control group.
- The mean difference (15.3 points) suggests a stronger understanding and retention of key literary concepts.

#### 2) Comprehension

- Participants in the experimental group exhibited a deeper understanding of themes, symbols, and characters.
- The comics-based intervention enabled students to articulate literary themes and central ideas clearly.

#### 3) Application

- The experimental group demonstrated a heightened ability to apply literary knowledge, effectively analyzing character motivations and textual scenarios.
- The visual and contextual elements of comics supported the real-world application of literary insights.

#### 4) Analysis

- The experimental group exhibited stronger analytical skills, accurately identifying textual structures, conflicts, and narrative turning points.
- The standard deviations (8.3 for the experimental group and 7.5 for the control group) suggest moderate variability yet indicate a notable level of performance consistency within each group.

#### 5) Synthesis

- The experimental group excelled in creative synthesis, constructing alternative endings, and establishing thematic connections.
- The interactive and immersive aspects of comics fostered higher-order thinking skills.

#### 6) Evaluation

- The t-value (9.2) and *p*-value (<0.001) confirm that the differences between the two groups are statistically significant and not due to chance.

- Students in the experimental group provided more structured and well-justified critiques of literary texts, demonstrating higher levels of critical thinking.
- **Key Findings and Educational Implications**
- The mean difference of 15.3 points indicates a substantial improvement in literary appreciation within the experimental group.
- Standard deviation values (8.3 vs. 7.5) show that while both groups had moderate variability, the experimental group consistently achieved higher overall performance.
- A t-value of 9.2 and a  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$  provide strong statistical evidence supporting the effectiveness of comics-based instruction in literature education.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that a comics-integrated curriculum significantly enhances students' literary appreciation skills across all domains of Bloom's Taxonomy. This instructional approach improves knowledge retention and comprehension and fosters critical thinking, creativity, and evaluative abilities. The study strongly supports incorporating engaging, multimodal tools such as comics in literature education to promote meaningful learning outcomes and boost student engagement.

#### 4.7. Post-Test Comparison of English Proficiency between Experimental and Control Groups Across Four Skills

The findings strongly support the integration of comics as an effective pedagogical tool for engaging students with literature. The observed improvements in reading and writing suggest that comics bridge visual literacy and literary interpretation, making complex texts more approachable and stimulating. Moreover, the dialogue-based format of comics enhances students' understanding of character voice, tone, and narrative structure, key components in literary analysis. The gains in speaking and listening also demonstrate that comics foster deeper engagement with literary dialogue and contribute to developing interpretive and expressive skills essential in literature classrooms (**Table 9**).

**Table 9.** Post-test comparison of English proficiency scores.

Skill	Experimental Group Mean	Control Group Mean	T-Value	P-Value
Listening	6.8	5.4	8.2	<0.001
Speaking	6.5	5.1	7.5	<0.001
Reading	6.9	5.3	8.7	<0.001
Writing	6.3	5.2	7.1	<0.001

#### - Analysis of Post-Test Results Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

The findings indicate that the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group across all four language skills. These improvements align with Bloom's Taxonomy, showing advancements in cognitive skills in lower-order (Knowledge, Comprehension, Application) and higher-order (Analysis, Synthe-

sis, Evaluation).

### **1) Knowledge and Comprehension (Listening)**

- The experimental group scored 6.8, compared to 5.4 in the control group.
- A *t*-value of 8.2 and a *p*-value < 0.001 confirm a statistically significant difference.
- Bloom's Connection: The auditory elements in comics (e.g., onomatopoeic words, dialogue cues, and contextual sound effects) enhanced listening comprehension.
- Key Insight: Comics improved students' ability to recognize and interpret auditory cues, leading to better listening proficiency.

### **2) Application and Analysis (Speaking)**

- The experimental group scored 6.5, compared to 5.1 in the control group.
- A *t*-value of 7.5 and a *p*-value < 0.001 indicate a substantial improvement in speaking skills.
- Bloom's Connection: Role-playing comics dialogues and discussing character interactions facilitated verbal fluency.
- Key Insight: Comics-based discussions enhanced spoken language application, allowing students to practice pronunciation, dialogue structuring, and expression.

### **3) Comprehension and Analysis (Reading)**

- The experimental group scored 6.9, compared to 5.3 in the control group.
- A *t*-value of 8.7 and a *p*-value < 0.001 indicate the highest improvement among the four skills.
- Bloom's Connection: Role-playing comics dialogues and discussing character interactions supported the development of verbal fluency.
- Key Insight: Comics-based discussions enriched spoken language application by providing opportunities to practice pronunciation, dialogue structuring, and expressive communication.

### **4) Synthesis and Evaluation (Writing)**

- The experimental group scored 6.3, compared to 5.2 in the control group.
- A *t*-value of 7.1 and a *p*-value < 0.001 confirm significant progress in writing proficiency.
- Bloom's Connection: Creative tasks such as writing alternate endings and composing comics scripts helped students develop synthesis and evaluative skills.
- Key Insight: Exposure to visual storytelling fostered creative expression, enhanced narrative structuring, and supported the development of coherent writing.

#### **- Key Findings Across Language Skills**

- Significant Improvement: The experimental group showed statistically significant gains in all four language skills.
- Balanced Skill Development: Comics enhanced foundational (Listening, Reading) and productive (Speaking, Writing) skills.

- **Effective Learning Pathway:** Comics fostered growth across lower-order (Knowledge, Comprehension, Application) and higher-order (Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation) skills.
- **Engaging Learning Environment:** Comics' interactive, visual, and contextual elements created a more engaging, relatable, and practical learning environment.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that comics-based instruction significantly enhances English language proficiency across various cognitive levels. Notable improvements were observed at both fundamental (Knowledge, Comprehension) and advanced (Synthesis, Evaluation) stages, supporting the integration of visual narratives into language education. The results underscore how comics foster immersive, interactive, and multimodal learning experiences, positioning them as a powerful tool for effective language acquisition.

#### 4.8. Engagement and Attitudes toward Comics-Based Learning (Experimental Group)

**Table 10** presents the engagement levels and attitudes of participants in the experimental group following their exposure to a comics-integrated learning approach. The results, derived from a follow-up survey, assess students' engagement (participation and interest) and attitudes (perceptions and acceptance) toward comics as an educational tool. The mean scores and standard deviations provide insights into responses' overall reception and consistency regarding this innovative instructional method.

**Table 10.** Engagement and attitudes toward comics-based learning.

Metric	Mean Score (Max = 10)	Standard Deviation
Engagement	8.7	1.2
Attitudes	9.2	0.8

##### - **Analysis of Engagement and Attitude Scores Using Bloom's Taxonomy**

The findings indicate high engagement levels and overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward comics-based learning. This analysis, structured according to Bloom's Taxonomy, highlights how students engaged with and evaluated this instructional approach.

##### 1) **Engagement (Application and Analysis)**

- The mean engagement score of 8.7 suggests strong student involvement and interest in comics-based learning activities.
- Focus group discussions revealed that students found lessons more interactive, enjoyable, and engaging when graphic texts were incorporated into the curriculum.
- **Bloom's Connection:** Students applied their learning in interactive scenarios, using visual cues and comics dialogues to enhance participation and comprehension.

The findings indicate high engagement levels and overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward comics-based learning. This analysis, structured according to Bloom's Taxonomy, highlights how students engaged with and evaluated this instructional approach.

### **2) Attitudes (Evaluation and Comprehension)**

- The mean attitude score of 9.2 reflects a highly positive perception of comics as an effective educational tool.
- Students reported that visual storytelling and comics narratives simplified complex literary and linguistic concepts, making them more accessible and engaging.
- Bloom's Connection: Learners evaluated the effectiveness of comics-based instruction and expressed well-reasoned preferences for this visually enriched learning method.

### **3) Response Consistency (Standard Deviation and Variability)**

- The standard deviation for engagement (1.2) suggests moderate response variability, indicating that while most students were highly engaged, a few had differing interest levels.
- The standard deviation for attitudes (0.8) reflects greater response consistency, signifying a widespread positive perception of comics as a learning tool.
- Interpretation: The low variability in attitude scores indicates that most students viewed comics-based instruction as effective and beneficial, reinforcing its widespread acceptance.

### **- Key Findings and Educational Implications**

- High Engagement Levels: Students demonstrated Active participation and motivation, showing enthusiasm for comics-integrated lessons.
- Positive Perceptions: The overwhelmingly high attitude scores highlight strong student approval of comics as a valuable and effective instructional tool.
- Consistent Responses: The low variability in attitude scores suggests uniform positive experiences, indicating that most students favor comics as an educational medium.

In conclusion, the follow-up survey results present strong empirical support for integrating comics as a pedagogically effective medium in literature education. Students demonstrated sustained engagement, expressed positive attitudes toward the methodology, and reported notable improvements in literary and linguistic competencies. The interplay of visual and textual modes inherent in comics facilitates deeper literary comprehension, promotes interpretive analysis, and supports the development of critical reading skills. These findings reinforce the scholarly argument for incorporating comics into literature curricula to enhance student motivation, textual understanding, and academic performance in literary studies. The findings indicate notably high levels of student engagement and a strong positive response to using comics as an instructional medium within the context of English and American literature. When examined through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy, the results highlight how students interacted with the mate-

rial and demonstrated critical engagement with literary texts, particularly in their ability to analyze and interpret complex themes and structures through the multimodal affordances of the comics medium.

### 1) Engagement: Application and Analysis

- A mean engagement score of 8.7 suggests significant student enthusiasm and cognitive investment in literature lessons delivered through comics-based pedagogy.
- Qualitative data from focus group discussions revealed that students perceived literature instruction as more engaging, accessible, and intellectually enriching when comics were integrated into the curriculum. This was particularly evident in students' engagement with abstract literary concepts such as moral ambiguity, symbolic representation, narrative framing, and character development.
- Aligned with Bloom's higher-order thinking skills, students exhibited applied analytical abilities by deconstructing visual narrative elements and dialogic exchanges within comics texts. This process supported deeper literary interpretation and cultivated multilayered comprehension of canonical and contemporary literary works. The dual-channel modality of visual and textual storytelling provided a scaffold for critical analysis, encouraging students to synthesize meaning across linguistic and visual dimensions.

## 4.9. Emergent Qualitative Themes from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

**Table 11** presents key qualitative themes that emerged from focus group discussions with participants in the experimental group. These findings provide insights into students' perceptions and experiences within the comics-integrated curriculum.

**Table 11.** Emergent qualitative themes from focus group discussions (FGDs).

Theme	Example Quotation
Increased Motivation	<i>"I looked forward to every class because it was fun."</i>
Enhanced Understanding	<i>"The visuals helped me grasp difficult concepts."</i>
Improved Creativity	<i>"I enjoyed creating my own comics stories."</i>
Better Collaboration	<i>"Working in groups on comics projects was enjoyable."</i>

### Thematic Analysis of FGDs Using Bloom's Taxonomy Framework

The qualitative analysis of the focus group discussions was based on Bloom's Taxonomy, aligning student reflections with its cognitive and affective domains. The themes illustrate increased student engagement, deeper conceptual understanding, creative expression, and collaborative learning fostered by the comics-integrated curriculum.

#### 1) Increased Motivation

**Domain:** *Affective - Engagement & Interest*

- Students consistently expressed heightened enthusiasm for lessons featuring comics.
- Comics' visual and narrative elements created an engaging, enjoyable learning atmosphere.
- **Bloom's Link:** Reflects affective engagement, promoting emotional readiness and sustained attention.

**Key Insight:** The integration of comics fostered a positive learning environment, enhancing *student* participation and reducing disengagement.

**2) Enhanced Understanding****Domain:** *Cognitive - Comprehension & Application*

- Learners reported that comics facilitated comprehension of complex or abstract concepts.
- The multimodal format—combining text and visuals—resonated with dual coding theory, reinforcing understanding.
- **Bloom's Link:** Shows enhanced understanding and application of knowledge gained from comics.

**Key Insight:** Comics effectively support cognitive processes, bridging conceptual gaps through the synergy of visuals and words.

**3) Improved Creativity****Domain:** *Cognitive - Synthesis & Application*

- Students highlighted that creating comics narratives encouraged the imaginative use of language and storytelling.
- Activities allowed the synthesis of ideas into original, expressive outputs.
- **Bloom's Link:** Corresponds with the synthesis tier, where students create innovative content from learned material.

**Key Insight:** Comics-based tasks encouraged higher-order thinking, fostering originality and narrative *development*.

**4) Collaborative Engagement****Domain:** Social & Affective - Interaction & Teamwork

While students were tasked with independently creating their graphic novels or memoirs, the instructional design embedded structured opportunities for peer collaboration, particularly during the ideation, feedback, and revision phases. These group-oriented components promoted cooperative learning and encouraged students to collectively exchange perspectives, refine narratives, and troubleshoot design challenges.

Students valued the dialogic process, sharing creative decisions, negotiating meaning, and solving visual-literary problems collaboratively. This interplay between individual authorship and communal discourse fostered a socially enriched classroom environment.

**Bloom's Connection:** These activities engaged students in affective and interpersonal domains, supporting empathy, mutual respect, and shared responsibility—core components of the social dimension of learning.

**Key Insight:** Although the final product was independently authored, the collaborative scaffolding cultivated a classroom culture of critical dialogue, peer support, and creative synergy, reinforcing teamwork and communication as essential skills in literary interpretation and production (Table 12).

**Table 12.** Synthesis of key findings.

Thematic Area	Pedagogical Implication
<b>Engagement &amp; Motivation</b>	Increased enthusiasm for learning through interactive content.
<b>Cognitive Comprehension</b>	Visual and textual elements enhanced understanding of complex material.
<b>Creative Expression</b>	Narrative tasks fostered imaginative thinking and content creation.
<b>Collaborative Learning</b>	Group work supported peer learning and teamwork skills.

The qualitative findings offer compelling evidence for the pedagogical efficacy of a comics-integrated curriculum in the field of literary studies. Far from merely a tool for engagement, comics are a sophisticated multimodal medium through which students access, interpret, and respond to complex literary texts. Grounded in Bloom's Taxonomy, this pedagogical model extends beyond foundational knowledge acquisition to foster higher-order thinking, most notably at the Application, Analysis, and Evaluation levels, while promoting emotional resonance, creative articulation, and collaborative inquiry.

In English and American literature, student responses revealed exceptionally high levels of engagement and overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward comics-based instruction. Integrating texts such as *Persepolis*, *Fun Home*, and graphic adaptations of canonical works like *Frankenstein* and *The Great Gatsby* gave students alternative narrative modalities that enriched their understanding of genre, tone, character construction, and thematic complexity. A mean engagement score of 8.7 quantitatively reflects this intellectual investment, particularly in response to texts that invited intertextual analysis and multimodal interpretation.

Critically, the fusion of visual and verbal elements enabled a distinctive form of close reading that redefined traditional literary analysis. Students were encouraged to interpret narrative structure, symbolism, and voice through textual cues, as well as through visual composition, layout, and sequential storytelling skills that mirror and extend core literary competencies. This dual-channel engagement facilitated a more inclusive and layered exploration of literature, especially for students struggling with dense or abstract prose in conventional formats.

Moreover, this approach nurtured transferable analytical skills that transcend genre and medium, equipping students to read across diverse literary forms with increased sensitivity to style, perspective, and authorial intention. In doing so, the comics-based curriculum did not dilute the rigor of literary inquiry. Instead, it expanded it, inviting students to explore literature through a lens that is at once

critically demanding, aesthetically rich, and culturally responsive.

In sum, integrating comics into literature instruction constitutes not simply an engaging pedagogical innovation but a robust literary methodology, one capable of deepening textual interpretation, expanding the scope of literary engagement, and preparing students for critical encounters with a broad spectrum of narrative forms.

#### 4.10. ANCOVA Results Adjusted for Pre-Test Scores

An ANCOVA was conducted to assess the impact of the comics-integrated curriculum, controlling for baseline (pre-test) performance, following the guidelines outlined by Rabanus (2014). This method clarifies the curriculum's influence on post-test outcomes, particularly in literary appreciation and English proficiency. (Table 13)

**Table 13.** Adjusted ANCOVA results for post-test scores.

Outcome	F-Value	P-Value	Effect Size (Partial $\eta^2$ )
<b>Literary Appreciation</b>	29.4	<0.001	0.35
<b>English Proficiency</b>	26.7	<0.001	0.32

#### - Interpretation of Results Using Bloom's Taxonomy

The analysis reveals significant improvements in both measured outcomes linked to the comics-integrated curriculum. The findings are interpreted through Bloom's Taxonomy, offering insights into the nature and depth of learning achieved.

##### 1) Literary Appreciation

**Taxonomy Levels:** *Analysis & Evaluation*

- A robust F-value of 29.4 and a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = 0.35$ ) indicate a significant enhancement in students' ability to analyze and critically engage with literary texts.
- The highly significant *p*-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) reinforces the reliability of this result.
- Students demonstrated more refined evaluative judgments and interpretive reasoning, consistent with higher-order cognitive processing.

**Conclusion:** The integration of comics was an effective pedagogical tool for cultivating analytical depth and literary appreciation.

##### 2) English Proficiency

**Taxonomy Levels:** *Comprehension & Application*

- The F-value of 26.7 and effect size of 0.32 point to a considerable positive impact on language proficiency.
- Statistical significance ( $p < 0.001$ ) verifies the strength of this effect.
- Participants improved core language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening, indicating enhanced language application in varied contexts.

**Conclusion:** The curriculum successfully supported linguistic development, promoting functional language use and deeper comprehension.

### 3) Interpretation of Effect Sizes

- Both outcomes demonstrated large effect sizes based on Cohen's benchmarks, with  $\eta^2$  values of 0.35 (literary appreciation) and 0.32 (English proficiency).
- These values reflect the curriculum's strong predictive power in enhancing student performance beyond what could be attributed to prior knowledge alone.

**Table 14.** Synthesis of key findings and educational implications.

Dimension	Insight
Statistical Validity	Both improvements were highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).
Cognitive Development	Gains spanned from foundational (comprehension) to higher-order (evaluation) domains.
Holistic Learning	Students not only gained proficiency but also showed greater engagement and motivation.

The ANCOVA findings strongly support the effectiveness of the comics-integrated curriculum in promoting literary insight and linguistic competence. The combination of statistical significance and large effect sizes highlights its potential as an innovative instructional model. In addition to enhancing academic performance, the curriculum encourages critical thinking, creative engagement, and collaborative learning, positioning comics as both practical pedagogical tools and cognitively enriching resources in language and literature education. (Table 14)

## 5. Discussion

Integrating comics into educational curricula has received growing recognition as an effective strategy for enhancing language proficiency and literary appreciation. This study examined the effects of a comics-integrated curriculum on Saudi university students' literary appreciation and English proficiency skills. The findings affirm existing research and underscore the potential of visual storytelling as a powerful instructional tool in literature courses.

### 1) Improvement in Literary Appreciation and Language Proficiency

The study revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in literary appreciation and English proficiency. These results align with prior research indicating that comics provide a multimodal approach to literacy, combining visual and textual cues to enhance meaning-making and engagement (Liu, 2017; Rankin, 2021). Comics necessitate students to synthesize visual and textual information, promoting higher-order cognitive processes such as analysis, evaluation, and critical thinking (Chou, 2014).

Additionally, Wijaya et al. (2021) found that comics enhance language learners' reading comprehension and narrative interpretation by making abstract concepts

more concrete and accessible. Similarly, Morrison and Erkan (2019) emphasized the role of visual media in improving students' interpretative and critical reading skills, which aligns with our findings.

The statistically significant improvements in the experimental group's mean scores across listening, speaking, reading, and writing indicate that comics can effectively address multiple language domains. Salehi (2012) noted that comics strips can enhance writing proficiency, particularly for students with limited English language skills, by stimulating creativity and encouraging the construction of narrative development.

## **2) Comics' Impact on Language Skills Across Four Domains**

### **Listening and Speaking:**

The dialogue-driven nature of comics exposes students to natural conversation patterns and authentic spoken language scenarios, enhancing their listening comprehension and speaking fluency (Liu, 2017). In the current study, students in the experimental group exhibited improved listening and speaking scores, attributed to the contextual cues provided by comics dialogue and classroom discussions centered on comics scripts.

### **Reading:**

Comics' visual storytelling approach provides cognitive scaffolding that enables students to decode textual information more efficiently. Research by Chou (2014) supports this finding, demonstrating that comics images reduce cognitive load and facilitate text comprehension. This study reported that comics helped students understand abstract literary concepts while improving their reading comprehension.

### **Writing:**

Writing skills improved significantly as students were encouraged to develop their comics scripts, dialogues, and alternative storylines. This aligns with Salehi's (Salehi, 2012) findings, which indicated that comics foster creativity, narrative construction, and expressive writing abilities among ESL learners.

## **3) Student's Engagement and Motivation**

The experimental group reported elevated levels of engagement and motivation during the intervention. Comics provided a dynamic, interactive, visually appealing learning environment that students found enjoyable and stimulating. Al-Wossabi (2018) highlighted that innovative teaching tools such as comics can inspire reluctant learners by reducing anxiety and engaging lessons.

Kara and Çelik (2020) also argued that incorporating comics into educational settings enhances student focus and participation, especially in language classrooms. Our findings support this viewpoint, as students demonstrated a positive attitude toward lessons that integrated comics, noting increased motivation and enthusiasm for language tasks.

## **4) Creativity and Collaboration**

The study also highlighted the role of comics in fostering creativity and collective learning. Group tasks like creating comic scripts, role-playing, and analyzing

comic dialogue encouraged teamwork, peer learning, and cooperative problem-solving. This aligns with Alghonaim's (Alghonaim, 2020) observations that collaborative tasks based on visual storytelling enhance interpersonal communication skills and peer learning outcomes.

Additionally, Kwee (2021) emphasized the importance of creative tasks in enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students in the experimental group could synthesize ideas into imaginative narratives and apply language skills in meaningful contexts, resulting in comprehensive learning experiences.

### **5) Addressing Literature Learning Challenges in Saudi Arabia in Alignment with Vision 2030**

Literature education within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia faces persistent challenges, including limited student motivation, restricted access to authentic literary materials, and barriers to critical engagement with texts (Alshammari, 2022). Integrating comics into literature curricula offers a promising strategy for overcoming these obstacles. By presenting complex narratives through accessible visual formats, comics enhance students' motivation, foster active participation, and facilitate a deeper understanding of literary themes, structures, and genres.

Alshammari (2022) argues that authentic, multimodal materials such as comics and graphic novels help bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, enabling learners to interact meaningfully with literary content. This study's findings substantiate this view: Students developed core language competencies and cultivated interpretive and analytical skills essential for literary analysis. Comics provided a scaffold for engaging with narrative techniques such as symbolism, irony, and character development, fostering critical reading practices aligned with the demands of advanced literature study.

This approach directly supports the goals of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and global cultural literacy within the education sector. By integrating culturally relevant and globally resonant literary forms like comics, Saudi institutions can move beyond rote memorization models traditionally associated with EFL instruction toward a more dynamic, learner-centered model of literary education. Through the study of comics and graphic novels, students engage in interpretive practices that require synthesis of textual and visual elements, critical evaluation of narrative techniques, and comparative analysis of literary adaptations. Such multimodal literacy skills are indispensable in the 21st-century knowledge economy, where flexibility in reading across genres, cultures, and media is paramount. Moreover, this methodology fosters a deeper appreciation of literary aesthetics and thematic complexity, empowering Saudi students to contribute meaningfully to global literary conversations. Thus, comics integration is not merely a pedagogical innovation but a strategic alignment with Vision 2030's ambition to produce globally competent, culturally literate graduates who can bridge local and international literary traditions.

### **6) Qualitative Insights from Focus Groups**

Focus group discussions offered additional evidence of the intervention's effectiveness, highlighting key recurring themes such as:

- **Increased Motivation:** Students felt more enthusiastic and looked forward to lessons.
- **Enhanced Understanding:** Visual aids simplify abstract and complex literary concepts.
- **Improved Creativity:** Students enjoyed creating their own narratives and comics strips.
- **Better Collaboration:** Group projects enhanced teamwork and peer interaction.

These qualitative themes align with the findings of [Wijaya et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Alghonaim \(2020\)](#), highlighting the multidimensional benefits of visual storytelling in language instruction.

### 7) Educational Implications

The findings from this study provide strong evidence supporting the integration of comics into EFL curricula, particularly in contexts facing challenges of low student motivation and engagement. Educational stakeholders should consider the following:

- 1) Developing teacher training programs focused on comics-based pedagogy.
- 2) Integrating comics as supplementary instructional resources in English language curricula.
- 3) Encourage task-based learning activities that use comics narratives to enhance language skills.

Future research could explore the long-term impacts of comics-based instruction, comparative studies across different proficiency levels, and the integration of other visual media tools in language education.

## 6. Conclusion

This study confirms that comics are valuable instructional tools for enhancing English proficiency and literary appreciation among Saudi EFL learners. Statistically significant improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing suggest that comics promote engagement, creativity, and critical thinking within language classrooms. The findings align with previous studies ([Salehi, 2012](#); [Alghonaim, 2020](#); [Wijaya et al., 2021](#)) and highlight the potential of visual storytelling as a transformative approach to language education.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of comics in enhancing English language proficiency and literary appreciation among university students in Saudi Arabia. The results demonstrated significant improvements across key language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with the experimental group consistently outperforming the control group. These improvements closely align with Bloom's Taxonomy, which emphasizes a structured progression of cognitive skills from foundational knowledge to higher-order thinking.

### 1) Role of Bloom's Taxonomy in Understanding the Results

- **Knowledge and Comprehension:** Comics offer students visual cues and narrative context, enhancing their recall and understanding of literary concepts and language structures.
- **Application:** Students can apply their learned vocabulary and grammar in practical contexts by engaging with comics narratives, especially in speaking and writing tasks.
- **Analysis:** Students developed their ability to analyze character motivations, plot structures, and themes, demonstrating critical thinking skills as they deconstructed comics narratives.
- **Synthesis:** Creative tasks like developing original comics strips and writing alternate endings allowed students to synthesize their knowledge into meaningful outputs.
- **Evaluation:** Students demonstrated their capacity to critically assess literary themes, character choices, and narrative styles, reflecting the highest cognitive level of Bloom's Taxonomy.

These results confirm the structured learning progression outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy, demonstrating how comics can effectively aid cognitive skill development across various levels.

### 2) Engagement and Motivation

Beyond skill enhancement, students demonstrated increased interest and positive attitudes toward comics-based instruction. The incorporation of visual storytelling lowered cognitive barriers, made abstract concepts more concrete, and stimulated imagination and collaborative learning. These findings reflect Bloom's emphasis on effectively engaging students and fostering motivation as a crucial precursor to deeper cognitive engagement.

### 3) Insights from Qualitative Data

Qualitative findings highlighted several recurring themes:

- **Simplifying Complex Ideas:** Visuals and narratives in comics facilitate the interpretation of abstract literary and linguistic concepts.
- **Enhanced Creativity:** Comics creation activities encouraged students to think creatively and express ideas innovatively.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Group tasks involving comics encouraged teamwork, peer interaction, and knowledge sharing.

These qualitative insights align with Bloom's higher-order cognitive domains, emphasizing synthesis and evaluation as students participate in collaborative tasks and reflective discussions.

### 4) Addressing Saudi EFL Challenges

In Saudi Arabia, where learning English faces ongoing motivational and structural challenges, comics provide an innovative and engaging alternative to traditional methods. Comics' contextual and culturally relatable narratives bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, enhancing language immersion and promoting sustained engagement. This approach equips students with language skills while fos-

tering critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding.

### 5) Future Prospects and Research Directions

The potential for integrating comics into cross-curricular teaching frameworks is considerable. Future research should investigate:

- The long-term impact of comics-based instruction on language retention and academic performance.
- The effectiveness of **comics** across diverse cultural and educational settings.
- The role of Bloom's **Taxonomy** in designing scaffolded curricula that utilize comics to maximize cognitive and affective outcomes.

### 6) Final Thoughts

Using comics as a teaching tool in English language education represents an innovative departure from traditional instructional methods. When aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy, this approach supports a structured, measurable, and comprehensive framework for language learning. Comics foster the development of linguistic skills across all four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, while encouraging engagement, creativity, and collaboration. Integrating comics into EFL curricula enhances student motivation and academic performance and supports cognitive development, contributing to more inclusive and dynamic learning environments.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Alghonaim, S. (2020). Impact of Watching Cartoons on the Acquisition of English Inflections: A Case Study of an Arab Child. *International Journal of English and Education*, 9, 41-55.
- Ali Alshammari, H. (2022). Investigating the Low English Proficiency of Saudi EFL Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 13, 129-144. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no1.9>
- Al-Wossabi, N. (2018). Saudi Students' Reluctance to Engage in English Communication: Critical Issues and Considerations. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 17, 45-60.
- Anderson, W., & Krathwohl, R. (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Longman.
- Avila, E., & Mandaville, A. (2015). Comics in the Classroom: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Popular Culture. In S. E. Tabachnick (Ed.), *Teaching the Graphic Novel* (pp. 245-260). Modern Language Association of America.
- Babic, A. (2014). Introduction. In A. Babic (Ed.), *Comics as History, Comics as Literature* (pp. 1-14). Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Baker, W. (2014). *Media Literacy in the K-12 Classroom*. ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education).
- Barr, R. (2006). Visual Learning in the Digital Age. In D. J. Leu, C. K. Kinzer, & K. A. Hinchman (Eds.), *Handbook of Literacy and Technology* (pp. 98-112). Routledge.
- Berger, A. (1971). Comics and Culture. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 5, 45-57.
- Bloom, S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational*

- Goals. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain.* David McKay Company.
- Burmark, L. (2002). *Visual Literacy: Learn to See, See to Learn.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Carter, B. (2007). Comics, the Canon, and the Classroom. In N. Frey, & D. Fisher (Eds.), *Teaching Visual Literacy* (pp. 77-89). Crown Press.
- Chaney, C. (2011). Self-Esteem: A Critical Analysis of Definitions, Dimensions, and Measures. In R. M. Kowalski (Ed.), *Psychological Constructs: Understanding the Interplay between Personality and Behavior* (pp. 341-372). Nova Science Publishers.
- Chou, Y. (2014). *Visual Storytelling and Language Comprehension.* Doctoral Dissertation, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Duncan, R., Smith, M. J., & Levitz, P. (2015). *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Eisner, W. (1985). *Comics and Sequential Art.* W.W. Norton & Company.
- Ferguson, R. (2012). *The State of Learning Analytics in 2012: A Review and Future Challenges.* Technical Report KMI-12-01, Knowledge Media Institute, The Open University. <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/publications/pdf/kmi-12-01.pdf>
- Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2008). *Teaching Visual Literacy: Using Comics Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons, and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills.* Crown Press.
- Gee, P. (2008). Foreword. In N. Frey, & D. Fisher (Eds.), *Teaching Visual Literacy* (pp. 12-27). Crown Press.
- Hague, I. (2014). *Comics and the Senses: A Multisensory Approach to Comics and Graphic Novels.* Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315883052>
- Heer, J., & Worcester, K. (2009). *A Comics Studies Reader.* University Press of Mississippi.
- Horn, M. (1985). *Sex in the Comics.* Chelsea House.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation.* Routledge.
- Kara, T., & Çelik, S. (2020). Enhancing EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension through Comics. *International Journal of Language Academy*, 8, 45-60.
- Kernan, A. (1990). *The Death of Literature.* Yale University Press.
- Krashen, S. (1993). *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research.* Libraries Unlimited.
- Kwee, C. T. T. (2021). I Want to Teach Sustainable Development in My English Classroom: A Case Study of Incorporating Sustainable Development Goals in English Teaching. *Sustainability*, 13, Article No. 4195. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084195>
- Langer, L. (1991). A Fable of the Holocaust. *New York Times*, p. 17.
- Liu, J. (2017). *The Impact of Comics on Speaking and Listening Skills in EFL.* Thames & Hudson.
- Mandaville, A., & Avila, P. (2009). Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching Comics. In S. Tabachnick (Ed.), *Teaching the Graphic Novel* (pp. 241-252). Modern Language Association.
- Mazur, D., & Danner, A. (2014). *Comics: A Global History, 1968 to the Present.* Thames & Hudson.
- McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art.* Kitchen Sink Press.
- McTaggart, J. (2008). Graphic novels: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. In N. Frey & D. Fisher (Eds.), *Teaching Visual Literacy: Using Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons, and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills* (pp. 27-46). Corwin Press.

- McTaggart, J. (2009). Graphic Novels: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. In N. Frey, & D. Fisher (Eds.), *Teaching Visual Literacy* (pp. 111-127). Crown Press.
- Moffett, J. (1983). Chapter on Teaching Literature. In J. Moffett (Ed.), *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (2nd Ed., pp. 233-259). Houghton Mifflin.
- Morrison, A., & Erkan, S. (2019). *Visual Literacy in Language Education*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Rankin, L. (2021). *Designing Effective Online Learning Experiences: A Step-by-Step Guide for Instructional Designers*. Routledge.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as Exploration* (5th ed.). Modern Language Association of America.
- Salehi, H. (2012). Enhancing Writing Skills through Comics Strips. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 2, 528-529.
- Schmitz-Emans, M. (2015). Graphic Narrative as World Literature. In D. Stein, & J.-N. Thon (Eds.), *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels* (pp. 385-406). Walter de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110427660-017>
- Serafini, F. (2014). *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy*. Teachers College Press.
- Skidmore, J., & Stump, J. (1989). *More than Mere Fantasy: Political Themes in Spiegelman and Harvey Pekar*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Stein, D., & Thon, J.-N. (2013). *From Comics Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Sterling, N. (1940). A National Disgrace. *Chicago Daily News*, p. 77.
- Tabachnick, E. (Ed.). (2015). *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139628694>
- Tabachnick, E., & Saltzman, A. (2015). *Drawn from the Classics: Essays on Graphic Adaptations of Literary Works*. McFarland & Company.
- Tabachnick, S. E. (2009). *Teaching the Graphic Novel*. Modern Language Association.
- Thalheimer, W. (2010). *The Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model: Sending Messages to Enable Learning Effectiveness*. Work-Learning Research.
- Waid, M. (2015). Preface. In R. Duncan & M. J. Smith (Eds.), *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture* (2nd Ed., pp. vii-x). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Widdowson, P. (1999). *Literature: The New Critical Idiom*. Routledge.
- Wijaya, H., Suwastini, A., Adnyani, S., & Adnyani, K. (2021). Comics Strips for Language Teaching: The Benefits and Challenges According to Recent Research. *Eternal (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 7, 230-241.
- Witek, J. (1989). *Comics Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar*. University Press of Mississippi.