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THE EFFECT OF A SELECTED GRAPHIC NOVEL ON READING
COMPREHENSION

THESIS BY

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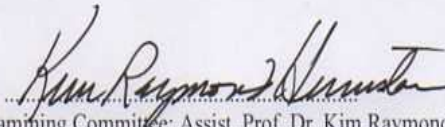
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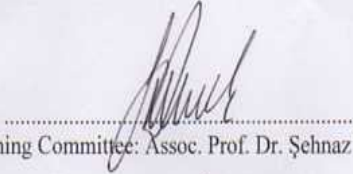MERSİN/JUNE 2013

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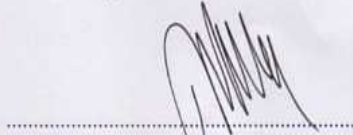## DIRECTORSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ÖZET

SEÇİLEN BİR ÇİZGİ ROMANIN OKUDUĞUNU ANLAMA ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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Çalışmanın sonucu, öğrencilerin seçilen Çizgi Roman için yapılmış olan okuma anlama sınavında, kısa hikaye sınavındaki sonuçlarına kıyasla başarı göstereceklerini ve bu Çizgi Roman uygulamasının öğrencilerin okumaya bakış açılarında olumlu bir değişiklik yaratacağını savunan hipotezi desteklemediğini gösterdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çizgi Roman, Okuma Anlama, Okuma Tutumu

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF A SELECTED GRAPHIC NOVEL ON READING COMPREHENSION

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Literacy in the 21st century is constantly evolving. To teach literacy effectively, educators need to embrace and understand linguistic, cultural and textual practices that are relevant for students. Reading graphic novels is one of the 21st century literate practices.

This study focuses on how 18 preparatory school students who are in intermediate level develop their reading comprehension after reading a selected graphic novel and a non-graphic novel. In addition, it focuses on whether reading a graphic novel has changed students' attitudes toward reading at the end of the study. The study evaluated the reading comprehension scores of these students after reading selected non-graphic novel and selected graphic novel through reading comprehension check questions. The results were considered. These two sets of scores were then compared. In addition, a reading attitude questionnaire was administrated to these students as pre- and post-test to learn students' attitudes toward reading and whether this graphic novel implementation has changed their attitude at the end of the study and the mean of the responses were compared through SPSS.

The results of this study did not conform the hypothesis that graphic novels increase the reading comprehension scores of students and students' attitudes toward reading will change in a positive way.

Key Words: Graphic Novel, Reading Comprehension, Reading Attitude

ABBREVATIONS

EFL   :   English as a Foreign Language

ELT   :   English Language Teaching

ESL   :   English as a Second Language

ELL   :   English Language Learning

MI   :   Multiple Intelligences

SPSS :   Statistical Package for Social Scientists

SFL   :   School of Foreign Languages

ELT   :   English Language Teaching

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

When educators attempt to provide students with reading materials, they often search for a variety of texts that meet a diverse range of interests. As teachers are aware, students, especially struggling readers, need to have access to texts that intrigue and appeal to each student's interests. So in recent years, graphic novels have been utilized in classrooms for learning purposes. Graphic novels have long been regarded as a unique byproduct of comic books. What once was perceived as a text for fun has now assumed a crucial role in education. The benefits of graphic novels have been identified as serving as a motivational factor, aiding in reading comprehension. Furthermore, graphic novels have been regarded as a tool for education in the development of cognitive activities (Lavin, 1998).

With a genre that has the ability to spark an interest in reading with a combination of striking graphics and engaging text, graphic novels present a reading experience that will also build and develop student reading skills. As teachers attempt to provide texts that interest their students, they are beginning to follow the current research on graphic novels and turn to this genre to raise the interests of their students.

As it currently stands, graphic novels have been studied primarily with regard to the motivational factors they present to reluctant students. It has been proposed that graphic novels serve as a motivator for struggling readers. Graphic novels often provide the needed contextual clues to aid in comprehending narrative texts (Brozo, Shiel & Topping, 2007). Readers are able to use the visual images to gain meaning in regards to the text. This mindset had until recently been mainly applied to young learners or readers. However, with their arrangement of text, engaging plots and vivid graphics, educators should explore the possibility of providing graphic novel options to all of their students.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

There can be many reasons why students are reluctant to read. For instance, for some students, the link between reading and learning can be difficult (Callahan, 2009, p.4). Also, there may be some students who regard reading as an obligation. Others cannot enjoy reading and see it as words without meaning, or they can enjoy reading, but do not make any time for reading. Therefore, we can say that this might be a matter of students' interest, motivation, uninteresting reading materials, teachers' attitudes towards students, as interest has an important role on the reading process. Hidi & Renninger (2006) state that the level of a person's interest has repeatedly been found to be a powerful influence on learning. Hidi (2001) explains "the effects of interest on readers' text processing and learning as both readers' well-established individual interests and their situational interests (elicited by text segments, topics, and themes) contributed to increased comprehension and learning" (p.195).

Another important issue is motivation. Gardner (2006) states that the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials and facilities, as well as the personal characteristics of the student (such as studiousness) will have an influence on the individual's classroom learning motivation. Dörnyei (1994) suggests that it is important to promote the development of group cohesion and enhance intermember relations by creating classroom situations in which students can get to know each other and share genuine personal information (feelings, fears, desires, etc.) (p. 282). It is really important to keep students alert and on task throughout the learning process. In addition to the effect of motivation on learning process, Jolanda & Saskia (2001) say that motivation and attention are necessary or primary aspects of reading behaviour as well. Kelley (2007) states that students who have been disenfranchised with reading, for any number of reasons, are often reluctant readers. Unmotivated students have generally negative attitudes towards reading and prefer not to read. For struggling readers, visual demonstrations of literary elements may be crucial to their understanding (Schwetner, 2008, p.10). Visual details are one of the aspects of graphic novels that are appealing to reluctant students. Through graphic novels, students may develop positive attitudes toward reading and accordingly, their comprehension skills may increase. According to Lamanno (2007), we can conclude that students with higher levels of motivation will be

those who are either directly interested in the task at hand, or who see the task as an important step in terms of working towards their long term goals.

The problem encountered at Hasan Kalyoncu University is that students who take reading courses complain about the lack of visual elements in reading texts, which can sometimes cause students to have negative feelings towards reading. Students may not be able to easily comprehend texts without illustrations, and so may not be able to form a mental image of what they are reading. Accordingly, their level of comprehension may not develop. This is the problem that led me to study this topic.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that graphic novels have been newly introduced to the field of education. Moreover, it is the first study, as far as the researcher is concerned, to be conducted in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Turkey.

For this reason, the study may be highly significant in many respects. The use of graphic novels can help teachers, as it broadens their awareness of their students' intelligences and strengths to provide them with suitable activities that help improve their performance. In addition, when teachers design their annual curriculum, it provides them with the possibility of enriching the curriculum with a variety of activities and reading texts reflecting students' interest. In addition, this study may help students to identify the intelligences they are good at in order to draw plans for their future.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

Krashen (2004) states that the simple sentence structure found in graphic novels can be beneficial, because graphic novels help students learn to think about visual images and interpret them. In other words, Kelley (2007) postulates that graphic novels do not foster a dependence on images. In fact, metacognitive awareness is necessary for successful reading of texts which require readers to synthesize (bridge) connections between word and image (p.9). So graphic novels will effect students' attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension. The purpose of the study is

1. To discover what students understood and experienced from their reading of the selected graphic novel.

2. To examine changes in students' attitudes towards reading by implementing this graphic novel.

It is my hypothesis that the students who experience graphic novels will improve their reading comprehension, rather than the ones who only experienced short stories, and thereby develop positive attitudes towards reading through graphic novels.

1.5. Limitations

The size of the sample is relatively small and may not be representative of the total population. To make a reasonable generalization, the research should be conducted over a longer period. The reliability and validity of the study would be improved by increasing the number of participants and the duration of the study.

The number of the books used in this study was also a limiting factor. The duration of the study limited the number of books that could be read, so one book for each assessment was used. A great number of graphic novels and their traditional novel counterparts are needed. Reading more books in a variety of genres could provide more significant results.

1.6. Research Questions

Related to the purpose of the study, the specific research questions are:

1. How does the use of graphic novels differ from the use of text based readings with regard to reading comprehension?

2. How do students' attitudes toward reading change when reading graphic novels compared to text based readings?

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study investigated the effect of a selected graphic novel on students' reading comprehension and the effect on changing their attitudes toward reading. In this chapter, the history of graphic novels, visual features of graphic novels, the importance of visuals, the benefits of graphic novels, graphic novels in educational context and reluctance and concerns about graphic novels are presented.

2.1. The History of Graphic Novels

What exactly is a graphic novel? Many teachers are not familiar with the format. It is fairly new, but it has received much popular attention as a teaching tool in reading classrooms in the last decade. In 1978, Will Eisner published his lengthy comic book, *Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories* and himself coined the phrase 'graphic novel.' Since then, he has been considered the father of the graphic novels, originally defined as comics with sequential art (Emery, 2011, p.2). Sequential art (Eisner, 1985) features a series of panels that convey a single story. (Kelley, 2007). Eisner coined the term, but McCloud (1993) defined it as "Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" (p.9).

Cary (2004) describes the graphic novel as the longer cousin of the comic book. As Callahan (2009) says, that from this perspective, the term graphic novel has been used to describe longer, book-like comics. Brenner (2006) responds to the question What is the difference between a comic book and a graphic novel? He says that:

> A comic and a graphic novel are told via the same format, officially called sequential art; the combination of text, panels, and images. Comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels are in this sense all the same thing, but comic books stretch a story out to about thirthy pages, whereas graphic novels can be as long as six hundred pages (p.1).

Samet (2010) supports what Brenner says with these words "trying to split these two styles apart is often like splitting hairs since they share many important characteristics and influence each other" (p.12). Whatever the preferred definition, graphic novels are becoming more popular as teaching tools, because they include

fiction as well as nonfiction text with pictures-"comics" in book format, which is necessary aspect for students (Schwarz, 2002). After Will Eisner's lengthy comic book, graphic novels became increasingly popular. Kannenberg (2008) says it was 1986 when graphic novels hit the media spotlight, with the almost simultaneous release of three graphic novels, each of which has stood the test of time. The first one is *The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller and the second one is *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbonson. Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale,* which was written about Spiegelman's father, and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992, and captured the attention of readers who would never, ever considered reading "a comic book" (Kannenberg, 2008, p.8). Hoover (2012) says that since 1986, graphic novels have grown considerably, both in sophistication and popularity, to the point where they deserve attention in higher education.

The content of graphic novels is very diverse and includes comedy, fantasy, historical fiction, horror, mystery, realistic fiction, romance, and science fiction. It can be said that the content of graphic novels can include almost all topics which are covered by traditional texts. In addition, many classics, for example; *Macbeth* by Shakespeare*, Crime and Punishment* by Dostoyevski, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, have been rewritten in a graphic novel form which enhances the educational value of such graphic novels. Teachers may benefit from using graphic novels in every field of English teaching. As Krashen (2004) asserts, graphic novels serve as a "conduit" to traditional text reading.

2.2. Visual Features of Graphic novels

"What is the use of a book." thought Alice, "without pictures or conventions?" (Carroll, 1988, p.2)

It is important to know graphic novel conventions in addition to its dictionary definition. It may not be sufficient to know only the meaning of a graphic novel for its readers, especially if they have just started to examine a graphic novel. Sharing these visual conventions with the readers can give a deep understanding of graphic novels and their formats. Knowing this format in detail may help readers to understand and interpret graphic novels easily, therefore to be able to use graphic novels activel

involved in a graphic novel with its all domains plays a crucial role in examining their effectiveness in educational merits. In this aspect, in order to use graphic novels as authentic materials in classrooms and school curriculums effectively, it is crucial to know graphic novels in all their aspects. Here are the conventions of a graphic novel:

1- **Splash Page:** This two-page spread is the attention grabber. The intention of using splash pages is to get the students' attention by using large, dominant visuals and bold print. This vivid and powerful spread is the entryway into the rest of the novel.

2- **Pages:** The individual pages offer students opportunities to see how the author chooses to align the narrative and the images within each page. Pages can be analyzed as a whole or broken apart to see how each individual page is designed and organized.

3- **Frames/Panels:** The visuals are created in story frames and panels that move the reader from scene to scene in the story. The panels are the boxes that contain each of the scenes. Students will learn that some panels are arranged neatly on the page in a linear fashion, while others move into one anothe in more of a chaotic flow. As students analyze the panels, they will begin to see how the choice of panels, including their size and placement, can influence the way the reader perceives both the images and the narrative.

4- **Font Sizes, Colors, and Styles:** The narrative text, captions and text within word balloons, speech bubbles, and thought bubbles can be written in a variety of text, fonts, sizes, colors, and styles. Students can analyze how reading the same words in a different font, differents size, different color, or a different style can impact and influence what the reader takes away from the text.

5- **Gutters:** The space between the panels is called the gutter. As readers move from panel to panel, they have to make inferences and draw conclusions as to what happens in the gutter – in that tiny space between each scene. The authors use the gutters to move along the action in scenes, to show the passage of time, or to make changes in locations.

6- **Bold images:** Powerful images add to the complexity and richness of a graphic novel.

7- **Colors:** The use of color or lack of color in an image can draw the reader's eyes to the images and can provide subtle (or not so subtle!) cues to the reader.

8- **Ambient Sounds:** Authors can use words to display sounds and emphasize the action taking place in the story.

9- **Pictures/Documents:** The reader can view snippets of documents that add information to the narrative text and the storyline.

10- **Word Balloons/Speech Bubbles/Thought Bubbles:** These can be in different shapes and sizes throughout the novel. They help deepen the reader's understanding of the characters as we get to see what the characters do (images and text), think (thought bubbles), and say (speech bubbles/word balloons) (Calo, 2010, cited in Graphic Novels Program Guide, p.4)

2.3. The Importance of Visuals

The importance of visual elements on learners' reading comprehension has been recognized in education all over the world. As Liu (2004) asserts, the use of reading materials accompanied by visuals such as pictures, cartoons, graphic novels, or comic strips make reading more enjoyable and comprehensible (p.225). It is acknowledged that reading in a different language is a problem for many students. Liu continues to say that textbook designers and material developers often use visuals to provide context, which helps engage students in reading. Visual elements in text facilitate readers' comprehension and memory. According to Dual Coding Theory, "the probability and the ease of image arousal plays and important role in the representation of text meaning" (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.158). In other words, if information is stored mentally in two codes, verbal and non-verbal, that information is better remembered and comprehended. In order to make students more active in reading classes, teachers should understand the importance of the use of visuals.

Researchers (e.g., Levie & Lentz, 1982; Levin, Anglin, & Carney, 1987) have outlined five major functions of visual elements in reading:

- **Representation:** Visuals repeat the text's content or substantially overlap with the text.
- **Organization:** Visuals enhance the text's coherence.

- **Interpretation:** Visuals provide the reader with more concrete information.
- **Transformation:** Visuals target critical information in the text and recode it in a more memorable form.
- **Decoration:** Visuals are used for their aesthetic properties or to spark readers' interest in the text (cited in Liu, 2004, p.226).

Hadley (2001) also notes that the visuals may help improve comprehension because they provide "additional contextual information" (p.150). Among visual genres, graphic novels, which are defined in this study as a sequential art, have received much popular attention in the last decade because they are communicative, accessible, popular, easily readable and have aesthetic features that readers want to see in a reading text. In addition to an increase in popularity of graphic novels in educational contexts, many educators suggest graphic novels should be used in classrooms on many different levels. By looking at the text and the images together, students are able to monitor their comprehension, an obstacle when dense text may overwhelm readers with excessive cognitive load (Kelley, 2007, p.10). According to Schwertner (2008), these visual scaffolds provide reluctant readers with an appealing format conducive to an enjoyable reading experience, because the main objective of structuring a visual composition in graphic novels is to turn many single pictures into a meaningful whole picture series (Sinatra, 1979). The use of right visuals in appropriate contexts will have a positive effect on the learning process.

2.4. Benefits of Graphic Novels

In Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences (MI), he proposes a means to understanding the many ways in which human beings are intelligent; that is, how we process, learn, and remember information (cited in Maftoon & Sarem, 2012). Gardner identifies eight categories of individual intelligences that people have: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic.

When we take these types of intelligences into consideration, we can assume that educational techniques and methods should be created or adjusted more flexibly according to the students different intelligence capacities. One of these intelligences is Spatial/Visual Intelligence. These learners can easily achieve a bridge of meaning

between a picture and text, which graphic novels have. According to Glenn (1996), the pictures can be drawn to produce a particular emotional response in combination with the words, and he continues that details may also be deliberately left out of pictures to allow the readers to use their imagination. This type of ability to comprehend and manipulate visual figures in a text is what graphic novels can achieve. So readers who enjoy graphic novels have this type of intelligence. Furthermore, graphic novels are important for students incapable of visualization as well as for those who are visually dependent (Hammond, 2009).

The ability to use both pictures and text as amalgam requires readers to think critically, because Mcloud (1993) states that comics employ "invisible art", requiring the reader to fill in the gaps between the panels. This space between the panels or the gutter, "allows the reader to observe the parts but perceive the whole", performing this act of "closure." In this sense, much of the perceived action on a page occurs "off-screen" (Murray, 2006, p.1). Reading between the panels is a good example that shows students' critically reading. Brenner (2006) states that to read a comic requires an active participation in the text that is quite different from reading prose: the reader must make the connections between the images and the text and create the links between each panel and the page as a whole (p.3). So graphic novels build critical reading skills. Since in a graphic novel there are fewer words than a traditional text has, but how these words are designed in graphic novels is an important thing that students need to understand. Students should learn to interpret what is implied in the text. In other words, students understand what is meant without words in a graphic novel, which makes them critical readers. As Marie & Williams (2008) posit, pairing visual images with words is an easy way to help students develop stronger visual literacy because comics or graphic novels offer an opportunity for students to scrutinize how interdependent images and words can create a strong sequential narrative (p.13). Accordingly, this makes students lifelong learners and readers (Botzakis, 2010). Being critical in every field of language learning allows students to become more engaged in the learning process. As Scott McCloud explains, "comics themselves have always been a blank page for each new hand that approaches"(2006, p. 252) (cited in Fay, 2007).

The benefits of visual images in helping readers comprehend meaning are not the only aspect of graphic novels. Some students may be reluctant to read thick

textbooks and they feel fear and also excitement while reading these kind of books. They feel the burden of pressure in order to comprehend what these thick books tell them. McCarter (2005) explains this situation as "one of the most problematic hurdles for many readers, particulary struggling readers, is their tendency to skip over words, sentences, and/or whole paragraphs they do not understand" (p.1). The case in graphic novels is different, since the readers of graphic novels have a sense of accomplisment after they read them. Visual supports lead to this accomplishment, because these images help struggling students understand the story. Harmer (2004) states that "at its basic level, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (p.51). As mentioned above, motivation is a powerful influence on learning. More than that, as Williams and Burden (1997) suggest, "the concept of motivation is composed of many different and overlapping factors such as interest, curiosity or desire to achieve" (p.111). So the images in graphic novels help readers not to be so anxious about their learning; rather, it increases students' interest and motivation. Hidi (2001) says that a person's interest can be triggered by a visual stimulus such as a play object, or viewing a picture, an auditory stimulus such as hearing a conversation, or combination of visual and auditory stimuli like a TV show. Graphic novels' visual details can get students' situational interest. So we may assume that interest and motivation may help student develop their reading comprehension and guide them to have positive attitudes towards reading.

In his book *The Power of Reading*, Stephen Krashen (2004) states that comics and graphic novel readers read more overall; read more books, and have more positive attitudes toward reading. Furthermore, it makes readers more independent because they get in to the habit of reading. When we take into consideration that a growing number of people do not read for pleasure, graphic novels can be a good reading tool for fun. Moreover, graphic novels can enhance students' learner autonomy. They can encourage students to read more on their own and search for more books to read. They also hinder translation, because as Krashen (1989) pointed out, the visual narrative which accompanies the text in comic books "can provide clues that shed light on the meaning of an unfamiliar word or grammatical structure (p.402) (cited in Chun, 2009). Most students translate a reading text into their native language in order deeply to comprehend the text. Thanks to graphic novels' visual details scaffolds, students can

give up their habit of translating every word in a text into their native language. By this means, students can easily understand what a text implies, even if they do not understand every word in the text. They can make inference within the context of graphic novels.

2.5. Graphic Novels in Educational Context

The use of graphic novels in educational settings is fairly recent. So there have been few studies on graphic novels as teaching tools. However, graphic novels have been popular and influential with both adults and young learners for years. Fay (2007) explains the reason for this popularity with these words "students are attracted by the rich interplay of graphics and text and by the quality of the story, a distingushing feature of authentic sources of language" (p.3). Through graphic novels, students have an opportunity to examine different types of reading materials. Additionally, Stephen Weiner (2003), a comics scholar and library director, believed that there are four reasons for their rise in popularity:

a) a number of recent movies were based on graphic novels
b) publishing houses produced a large number of literary graphic novels
c) novelists broke into the industry and used the medium to explore serious literary novels
d) journalists drew attention to the growing field (cited in Marie & Williams, 2008, p.14).

Indirectly, the popularity of graphic novel has influenced school curriculae and syllabi, since, in addition to their visual supports, graphic novels offer active engagement in reading. There have been many studies on the importance of using text accompanied by pictures to engage students in reading. This is particularly due to graphic novels being communicative, popular, accessible and readable. Purnell & Solman (1991) found that when students received text and pictures seperately, they did not do as well in comprehension as those who received both text and visuals simultaneously (cited in Chang, 2011). These two conduits, text and pictures, should be taught to students with an appropriate time duration and using proper graphic novels in order to increase students' comprehension level in any text. Gorman (2003) says when thinking of reading in terms of an exchange between the reader and the text, it is more

clearly seen that the reader must interact actively with the graphics as well as the text in order to comprehend. Cary (2004) states that students "may find clues in the pictures that help demystify the text and increase comprehension" (p.3). Mcloud (1993) suggests that sequential art requires that the reader connects multiple images to multiple words, continously integrating the language and images from one panel to the next to comprehend an entire story. In this sense, graphic novels help to implement the top-down process.

The key point of making students more efficient in the reading process may start with teaching them how to use strategies before, during, and after reading. Within this aim, students should be interactive in each of the phases. They should be encouraged to see "not just the interaction between the reader and the text, but the interaction between the information that the reader obtains by decoding (bottom-up processing), and the information obtained by interpretation (top-down processing)"(Rivas, 1999, p.12). Most readers focus on individual lexical items, but this approach hinders comprehension of the text. McCharty (1999) explains this situation as the language learners report that they understand every word, but cannot grasp the meaning of the sentence (p.2). Top-down process focuses on the general meaning of the text rather than every single unit of the text. The demands of reading can sometimes be frustrating for students as they struggle with language acquisition, therefore this kind of scaffold (top-down process) can be beneficial.

Graphic novels can spark a wide range of students' interest and perhaps motivate them to read more (Schwertner, 2008). They require readers to interpret the connection between the text and the visual images to get the overall meaning of the text. They help struggling readers understand and comprehend the text much better by using the support of illustrations (Dellinger & Hines, n.d.). As Smeanata (2010) states, struggling readers are often unable to visualize what they are reading. The illustrations in graphic novels support the text and allow the reader to focus on meaning in order to comprehend the story. As Rapp & Schwoch (2011) state "in comics, pictures and text support each other; these supports emerge through complementary depictions and descriptions rather than by presenting redundant information" (p.3). In their essay *Comprehending Comics and Graphic Novels: Watchmen as a Case for Cognition,* they assert that comics can

encourage the improvement of critical thinking literacy skills, such as integration of text and visual forms into coherent understanding.

Schwarz (2002) suggests reading graphic novels may require more complex cognitive skills than reading text alone (p.263). This leads readers to draw conclusions and facilitates critical thinking. Understanding graphic novels requires students to strengthen their image-reading skills, which also innately improves their critical thinking skills (Brodsky, n.d). Mcloud (1993) explains the concept of closure as the phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole (p.63). Bridging the gap between the panels is essential in following the narrative structure of a graphic novel. It forces the reader to not only interpret a single image, but also figure out how that image works in conjuction with the bigger picture (Brodsky, n.d). So naturally, critical thinking transforms into critical reading. Kelley (2007) posits that forming connections with characters, events, or scenarious while reading helps students to not only actively read the text, but also critically respond to the text (p.19). With the help of graphic novels, readers can easily create a context which enables them to comprehend the text. As a result, Schwarz (2002) states that "graphic novels can offer well written and exciting stories, unusual information and ideas, new points of view, and stimulating art work"(p.54).

Besides developing reading comprehension, graphic novels may have positive effects on other skills. For instance, in their study, Frey & Fisher (2004) researched the effect of graphic novels on writing composition. The study used graphic novels to cater to the reading interests of the students. It focused on improving students' writing by eliciting students' thoughts and feelings about short graphic novels with topics related to students' background knowledge in reading sessions, followed by vocabulary brainstorming. The study concluded with students writing their own narrative, using images from the short graphic novels. The results indicate that there was a significant improvement in students' writing performance. It can be said that graphic novels scaffold students to develop writing skills. As such, graphic novels deserve a place in the classroom.

2.6. Reluctance and Concerns with Graphic Novels

It is widely known that graphic novels have tremendous effects on readers, whether they struggle with reading or not. They have many benefits as I have previously explained. Nevertheless, there is still some reluctance among educators to use graphic novels. As a graphic novel specialist and teacher educator, Carter (2009) says that he encountered some misinformation concerning the pedagogical potential of graphic novels among teachers when he travelled across the United States in order to share this new literacy with educators. He observed that "some educators believe that graphic novels are too risky to bring into the curriculum, others resist any form of new literacy altogether, and many think that sequential art narratives are only useful for remedial or reluctant readers" (p.68). Additionally, Butcher & Manning (2004) state that "too often educators exclude graphic novels solely because of the format or the erroneous impression that all graphic novels focus on supernatural horror stories or are expressions of the male power fantasy" (p.68).

As a parallel to the first paragraph, teachers were not eager to see graphic novels in classrooms and Wax (2002) says that "students would sneak them under their textbooks and peruse them during math lessons." She continues to say that "once-banned comic books are now a teaching tool." In his article *Graphic Novels 101: FAQ*, Brenner (2006) gives reasonable responses to some common misconceptions about graphic novels. One of these misconceptions is that graphic novels are not real "books." He says that it is true that "graphic novels are not and were never intended to be a replacement for prose." In addition to this statement, Gravett (2005) says that even the idea that they are bridges to real books leaves some concerned, as they feel that graphic novels should be considered as real as any type of reading material (cited in Callahan, 2009), because they are as demanding, compelling and full of story as any book.

In her study about perceptions and the use of graphic novels in the classroom, Callahan (2009) found that teachers are not using graphic novels as educational tools, even if their students may benefit from doing so. She conducted a study of eleven language teachers of students grades 7-12. They were asked 10 open ended, face to face interview questions about the use of graphic novels and how they perceive this genre. Commenting on the results of the study, she said that lack of familiarity with the genre and a lack of resources contributed to the teachers' reluctance to use graphic novels.

Another reason for teachers' reluctance to using graphic novels in classroom is fear of inappropriateness and the perception that graphic novels are not "real" literature (p.43).

Gorman (2003) states that "comic books or graphic novels have long been synonymous with junk literature for children and is most often associated with the simplistic, slapstick, often crudely drawn examples of the medium" (p.1). She makes a reasonable argument for this statement by saying that the primary readers of graphic novels over the years have been "children and teenagers." But graphic novels are not just for kids. As Wilkins (2004) states, comics or graphic novels are written for a varied audience.

As graphic novels are universal and easily accessed, the problems discussed above occur in many countries. What I want to add is that graphic novels have also effects on Turkish people and culture. Graphic novels are one of the best ways promote cultural interaction between Turkey and the rest of the world. Therefore, graphic novels have a big audience in Turkey. Çetin (2010) explains these effects and their outcomes splendidly:

> Despite promotions and efforts the young generations read less books than ever before because of the technological products such as cable and satellite TV, mp3 and mp4 players, PC, Play Stations, and internet which are a part of our modern era. The number of generations who are unaware of their cultural and historical heritage has drastically increased. A number of works which greatly influenced Turkish culture and civilization, while they are not read, do not longer stay in our memories and therefore are easily forgotten and replaced by heroes of the cyber world. Still, there is no need to be pessimistic; if we take the common characteristics of the modern products above into consideration, we soon realize that they all share visuality. Furthermore, considerable research on learning and teaching styles has indicated that most learners are visual indeed (p.193).

He says that even though there are some negative effects of visuals, he is highly optimistic because "the young generation acquire reading habits by graphic novels which are visually rich and diverse" (p.1). In short, Schwarz (2002) states that even though some teachers are worried that graphic novels will discourage students from reading other genres of literature, others think that graphic novels are beneficial for

young adults and learners in terms of using cognitive skills more than reading alone. In all cases, the use of graphic novels is dependent on the teachers' point of view about graphic novels. If they like using different authentic materials in their classes, graphic novels will be good companions to them, but if not, using traditional books will be their preferred classroom materials.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological procedures of the study. In the first part the research design is introduced, and in the second part, the participants of the study are described. In the third part, the procedures of the study are explined. In the fourth part, the data collection instrument that has been used is given. The last part of this chapter explains the data analysis procedures used in this study.

3.2. Research Design

This is a Quasi-experimental study which aims at specifying the effect of a selected graphic novel on reading comprehension and accordingly, if students' attitudes toward reading have changed. For this study Within-Subject Design as quantitative research was used in order to measure students' reading comprehension. Charness, Gneezy & Kuhn (2011) describe this design with these words: "in a within subject designed experiment, each individual is exposed to more than one of the treatments being tested, whether it be playing a game with two different parameter values, being treated and untreated, answering multiple questions, or performing tasks under more than one external stimulus"(p.1). The School of Foreign Languages' administration allowed me to study with just one intermediate class. So the relatively small number of students and the strictness of the preparatory school reading syllabi led me to use this research design. According to this design, in this study, all participants were allowed to read both short story and graphic novel every week and were tested on reading comprehension in the seventh week of the study. The same group of people participated in both levels of the treatment with graphic novels and short story, then a paired sample t-test was used to find out whether the mean differences between the two test results were significant. In this respect, the group was measured twice.

In addition, in order to learn students' attitudes towards reading, all participants were given a Reading Attitude Questionnaire as pre-test and post-test. A five-point Likert-type questionnaire was developed. It was adapted from Baker & Wigfield's (1999) study and Student Qestionnaire PISA 2009. The students were asked to answer each item by choosing a number from 1 which matches Strongly Disagree to 5 which

matches Strongly Agree. Additionally, to see the results of the questionnaire, t-test was used in this level. The results are shown in tables. In addition to t-test results, the means of the items will be shown with tables.

At the end of the study, students were interviewed using semi-structured interview questions. Through face-to-face interview, which is a tool of qualitative research design, the aim was to find out whether graphic novel implementation had created any difference in students' reading attitudes at the end of the study. Ospina (2004) posits that "scholars see qualitative research as an inductive approach to develop theories that then must be tested deductively via quantitative models"(p.8). It is best to use a so-called mixed method design in which we use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to look at both the breadth and depth to the outcomes. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative research designs were used in order to interpret this study's outcomes from different perspectives and add rich details.

3.3. Participants

I started my study with 19 students, but one of the student had some family problems and had to leave the school and return to her hometown. Therefore, for the study, 18 adults aged 18-20 studying English (n=18) at the preparatory school of Hasan Kalyoncu University in Gaziantep remained. The participants were placed into B1 (intermediate) level according to the results of their End of Term Exams at Pre-intermediate level. Students were chosen through convenience sampling in order to measure Reading Comprehension and monitor their attitudes toward reading because they were the most suitable students for this study in terms of their availability. Convenience sampling strategy is defined as "a group of individuals who (conveniently) are available for study" (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006, p.100). Ideally, researchers should use random sampling in terms of population validity, but in practice most researchers rely on convenience sampling (Balkin, 2009, p.2). Time limitation and the strict school syllabi at intermediate level did not allow us to use random sampling. Therefore this study was conducted with a college student population. Additionally, when the students participated in this study, they had been studying English for four months at the university preparatory school. The age and gender of the students were not taken as variables in the study as they are not related to the purpose of the research.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

Before launching the study, permission and approval was given by the school management to study with 18 students during regular instruction time. All the participants were volunteers and initially gave their oral consent to participate in the experiment and to be mentioned with their real names in this study. At the beginning of the study, students were clearly informed that the purpose of this study was to discover how well they understand reading short stories and graphic novels. In relation to this, they were informed that they were going to take two exams for each case. Therefore, this study provided data about the difference in students' reading comprehension in both cases and accordingly, whether they changed their reading attitudes after they had graphic novel implementation. The research was not conducted until the second semester. Students had 7 hours of Intensive Reading in a week. They read *Six Ghost Stories* by S.H. Burton at home, as an assignment for Extensive Reading. There were 6 short stories in this book and students were required to read one short story weekly from this book. This short story book is compulsory for students who are in B1 level and studying at Hasan Kalyoncu University for Extensive Reading.

Actually, before starting this study, my aim was to choose another short story for the students instead of *Six Ghost Stories* by S.H. Burton, but when I took into consideration that it would be easy to control students' reading short story and it would be more difficult to ask students to read another short story since they had already agreed to read a graphic novel as well. I decided to use this short story for this study. Moreover, the subjects of the graphic novel and short story were the same. Both of them are about ghosts. To make all conditions equal in both cases, I thought that it would be useful to use this collection of short stories.

As my first research question requires, I wanted to measure students' reading comprehension in both cases in order to compare the results to show in what cases students developed their reading comprehension better; did they understand better by reading a short story or by reading a graphic novel? *Anya's Ghost* by Vera Brosgol was introduced to the students as a new type of reading text in order to see the difference in participants' comprehension level. Thereby students read both a graphic novel and a short story. At the end of the study the group was measured twice as Within Subjects Study requires.

In the second research question, my aim was to show students attitudes toward reading at the beginning and at the end of the study. I had to show whether graphic novel had an effect on changing students' attitudes towards reading. In other words; did graphic novel create any significant change in students' reading attitudes at the end of the study?

Regarding my research questions' requirements, the study started in the first week of February and it lasted seven weeks. In the first week, a Reading Attitude Questionnaire was given to the students. Students were asked to rate their responses to the questionnaire (Appendix 1 and 2) as Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, Strongly Agree according to Likert-type scale. In this questionnaire students were asked to respond to 20 items to learn their points of view about reading. So the survey was designed to measure participants' attitudes toward reading. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish and it was verified by six instructors at Hasan Kalyoncu University.

In the same week the graphic novel implementation started and students were given the selected graphic novel to read. They read 36 pages of the selected graphic novel in class per week and the implementation continued every week until the end of the study. In every week they read 36 pages in row. This selected graphic novel was integrated as a part of students' Intensive Reading. During the 6 weeks, thirty minutes was given to students to read the graphic novel. Conversely, students read their short stories as homework. It was not interfered the students' reading graphic novel process in order to provide the same conditions as with the text reading process. No new vocabulary exercises about graphic novels were given to the students or any questions asked about what they understood after they read the selected graphic novel. So the students read it on their own in class and read their short stories at home. The reason why the graphic novel was implemented in class and short story reading was given as a homework assignment was to reduce carryover effects. If both cases implementations were carried in class at the same time, it could have had a negative effect on students' comprehension performance. For example, students could have been more tired when they read two different texts one after the other. So we can say that a graphic novel treatment could have been different because of short story treatment that occured prior to it. It was that students read their short stories at home, as they were responsible for

reading these short stories as a requirement of the intermediate extensive reading curriculum.

And finally, in the third week of March and in the seventh week of the study, students were given the same Reading Attitude Questionnaire as post-test in order to monitor to some extent how students' attitudes toward reading had changed. As for reading comprehension, students were asked 20 reading comprehension check questions for both graphic novel (Appendix 3 and 4) and short story (Appendix 5 and 6) so as to measure what they understood from their reading. The questions were prepared in Turkish in case students' level of English prevented them from writing proper answers to the questions. It was thought that students may not reflect truly what they understood from the text if their English was not good enough. In order obtain accurate answers, their mother tongue (L1) was used. Six instructors who taught different B1 modules verified that the reading text, graphic novel and reading comprehension check questions were appropriate for the participants' level. Within the aim of the study, the results were compared in order to show which text developed students reading comprehension better.

In the last week of the study, students were interviewed with some questions (Appendix 7) in order to learn whether the graphic novel has changed their attitudes towards reading beside post-test. The aim of the interview was to support the questionnaire results learn their thoughts about reading the graphic novel and identify any points missed in their questionnaire answers about how reading the graphic novel had changed their attitude toward reading in general. In addition, they were observed when they read the graphic novel during the study.

The results were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Reading Attitude Questionnaire (pretest and posttest) and the means of the results of the Reading Comprehension Check Questions were analyzed with paired sample t-test through Statistical Programming for Social Sciences (SPSS) .

The rest of the instrument was analyzed through content analysis. The analysis of the interview was based on qualitative data. The responses of the students were evaluated to see the effect of graphic novel on students' attitudes toward reading and their thoughts about the graphic novel.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

For this study three kinds of instrument were used to collect the data. Reading Attitude Questionnaire was used to reveal students' general attitudes toward reading, and Reading Comprehension Check Questions were used to monitor students' reading comprehension in both short story and graphic novel asesssment. Finally, a face to face interview was held with the students at the end of the study to discuss what they thought about the selected graphic novel. The interview was audio-recorded.

CHAPTER IV

4. RESULTS

The current study focused primarily on the effect of a selected graphic novel on reading comprehension and accordingly whether this graphic novel implementation changed the students' attitude toward reading or not. Overall, the findings did not support the use of the graphic novel with students in terms of their reading comprehension.

In an attempt to provide clarity, the statistical procedures used to obtain the results will now be explained. In order to investigate the strength of any possible relationship between two variables, paired sample t-test was used. This analysis was applied because the data was expressed in terms of quantitative scores for both variables. The t-test results are indicated with a "p", meaning probability. The results appear in each relevant section below.

4.1. Reading Comprehension Check

This section describes the means of the participants' reading comprehension check scores. Table 1 displays the means of the graphic novel and short story assessments.

Table 1. Paired Sample t-test Results for Reading Comprehension Scores

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	18	49,1667	15,04894		
				-2,688	,016
Post-Test	18	62,7500	17,36651		

Note: X= Mean

Table 1 shows paired sample t-test conducted to compare reading comprehension scores between testing after reading a graphic novel and short story. The short story mean score (X=62.7500, SD=17,36) is significantly higher than the graphic

novel mean score (X=49.1667, SD=15,04). In other words, the results are significant for the short story assessment (t= -2.688; p<.05). So it is clearly seen that the results do not conform to the hypothesis.

4.2. Students' Attitudes Toward Reading

This section shows the students' attitudes toward reading at the beginning and the end of the study as pre- and post-test.

Table 2. Reading Attitude Questionnaire Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	18	2,8472	,70429		
				,027	,979
Post-Test	18	2,8417	,34989		

The paired sample t-test was used to compare the means in the pre- and post-test study. The t was .027 which is insignificant at the p<.05 level. There is not a meaningful difference in students responses to the Reading Attitude Questionnaire. It is clearly seen that the selected graphic novel did not have any effect on students' reading attitudes.

Reading comprehension scores (Table 1) indicated that the graphic novel intervention did not result in significant increases in students' comprehension performance for the 18 students who completed the study. Additionally, the questionnaire results (Table 2) showed that the graphic novel had no significant effect on changing students' attitudes toward reading.

4.3. Questionnaire Items

This section gives statistical analysis of the questionnaire grouped items. In order to clarify the students' thoughts about reading, and this graphic novel's effect on their attitude toward reading, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6 give much more detail about this issue.

Table 3. Student's General Perceptions About Reading (Items 1, 5, 7, 10, 16)

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	5	3,1667	1,07867	-,267	,803
Post-Test	5	3,2000	1,03308		

As it is seen in Table 3, students in this study had a positive attitude toward reading at the beginning of the study (X=3,1667). The mean scores indicate that reading is considered important among the students. There is not a significant difference in students' responds in pre- and post-test. (t= -,267, p< .05). So, the majority of the students enjoy reading.

Table 4. Curiosity (Items 3, 9, 12, 17, 19)

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	5	2,6555	1,23999	-2,299	,083
Post-Test	5	2,8889	1,08583		

Table 4 indicates that there is a slight difference in students' curiosity level in reading. As the table indicates they like to read about new things. They do not read only to get necessary information (t= -2,299, p<.05).

Table 5. Challenge and Work Avoidance (Items 8,11,13,15,20)

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	5	2,2444	,75626		
				-2,903	,044
Post-Test	5	2,5444	,54633		

There is an increase in students responses in this Table 5. Students like books which make them think. (t= -2,903, p<.05).

Table 6. Compliance (Items 2,4,6,14,18)

	N	X	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	5	2,6778	1,01638		
				-,294	,783
Post-Test	5	2,7111	,98555		

Table 6 shows that students are very compliant in doing tasks relevant to reading. They consider reading important. There is not a significant difference in students responsibility of carrying out the reading assignments (t= -,294, p<.05).

In order to confirm the tables shown above, I asked the students in the interview session in what ways the graphic novel had changed their attitude toward reading. According to students answers, except for one student whose name is Zeynep, the others said that graphic novels did not change their attitudes toward reading. Alperen said that "It did not change my atttiude toward reading. I still love reading. I do not have any negative attitude toward reading." Another participant whose name is Hasan shared his thoughts as follows: "Actually, I love reading any kind of text. This graphic novel was the first one in these kinds of reading material that I have read so far, so it did not have any effect on me and my attitude toward reading. If I start to read more graphic novel,

maybe this can change my book preferences. I can prefer graphic novels than traditional ones. But now, it did not change anything in my reading habit." Nebahat said that "This graphic novel is really enjoyable. I loved it but, it did not change my attitude toward reading. Before reading this graphic novel, I loved reading, and after this study, I stil love reading. There is no difference." When we examine Table 2, we see that students had a positive attitude toward reading at the beginning of the study. At the end of the study, the students' attitude toward reading did not significantly change.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are discussed by considering the research questions. After presenting the findings about the effect of a selected graphic novel on students' reading comprehension and its effect on students' attitudes toward reading, the possible reasons behind the results are assessed. This chapter concludes with the implications of the research and suggestions for further studies.

There may be several reasons why, at the end of the study, students scored higher on the short story assesment than the graphic novel, and their attitudes toward reading were unchanged, but I would like to categorize possible reasons under five topics according to my observations of the students in class, their test scores, questionnaire responses and interview responses.

5.2. Schemata Theory and Its Importance

Knowing language elements and constituents are not the only factors needed to make a piece of discourse comprehensible (Haboush, 2010, p.33). Harmer (2001) says that "pre-existing knowledge" of the world is no less important (p.199). He contiues to say that pre-existing knowledge (schemata) is the previous knowledge that readers can use in order to facilitate their comprehension. Considering that all readers have different schemata, this is an important concept in ESL and EFL teaching, and many materials are often designed to build or activate the learner's schemata. This theory is crucial in both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (writing and speaking) skills. Stott (2001) describes schema theory as "the process by which readers combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text to comprehend that text" (p.1). According to this, only identifying words and pictures cannot be sufficient for comprehension. Rapp & Schwoch (2011) state that "readers must rely on their prior knowledge to guide their understanding of what the letters and lines are attempting to convey. The construction of meaning involves integrating what we already know with what information is being provided to us" (p.7).

In order to efficiently achieve and improve students' reading comprehension and use their schemata, three stages of reading instruction should be applied in class time. These stages are:

a- Pre-reading Stage:

In this stage, students should have their their interest and motivation engaged through pictures, the title of the reading, or some key words related to the topics. Students should be allowed to predict content and talk about possible ideas of what the text might be about. The teachers' responsibilities in this stage is to give the students a reason to read and activate their schemata.

b- While-reading stage:

As implied by the name, different reading activities should be integrated into the flow of the actual reading. This stage intensely focuses on developing students' reading skills via asking multi-level comprehension questions, such as general or specific comprehension questions or higher-order thinking questions.

c- Post-reading stage:

In this last stage, teachers implement the activities with the purpose of checking students' understanding of what they have read. In addition, students are asked to relate their personal experience and integrate reading with other language skills. For example, students can be asked to write a paragraph briefly summarizing what they have read.

All these steps are crucial for comprehension of any text. If you skip one of these stages, comprehension will not be fully achieved. So, in relation to the importance of these stages in reading, it may be said that one of the reasons why graphic novels did not change students' attitides to reading is that students were not introduced to graphic novels before starting the study. In these terms, the first stage was omitted.

A possible hypothesis for the students' assessment results was that the students were not instructed ahead of the time how to read graphic novels, nor was background

knowledge accessed prior to reading the graphic novel. In this study, students were asked the question in the interview: What did you know about graphic novels before participating in this study?

Most of the students' responses were about their lack of knowledge about graphic novels before participating in the study. All of the participants, excepting Serra, indicated that they had no idea about graphic novels prior to this study: "I have not known graphic novels until this study" was the common statement to express their ideas. But Serra said that "Actually, I know many things about graphic novels and comics before this study, because I have been reading these types of texts since my childhood. Anyway, I can say that I learned to read thanks to graphic novels." On the other hand, Elif said that "I have not known what graphic novel means before participating this study. I learned what they mean with this study." Another participant, Adem, said that "When I first see Anya's Ghost, I thought that it was full of caricatures, and I know what they mean because almost every day, I read them on facebook, twitter, etc. or share them via social network, so this made me comfortable about reading it. But later on, I figured out that this book was totally different what I expected at first. I realized that I do not know anything about graphic novels." So, it can be concluded that all the students, except one, did not know anything about graphic novels.

According to Vacca (2007) it is important to base new reading skills relative to students' prior knowledge. Moreover, Gately (2008) suggests that by accessing background knowledge, students can connect what they have learned to what they are being taught (cited in Hill, 2011). When we adopt this perspective, it may be posited that the students who have rich schema, or 'reader's mental store' (Stott, 2001), understand the given text better than the ones who have insufficient background knowledge. Hence the teacher should activate the students' background knowledge through pre-reading tasks to make them familiar the topic. Students could have been asked, prior to commencing the study, whether they knew anything about graphic novels, in order to address this issue.

When we consider the importance of the schemata in reading any kind of traditional text, the situation is different. Since participants in this study have been learning English since secondary school, they know how to read a short story and other texts and interpret them. Their prior knowledge about reading short stories or any other

traditional text was highly developed before the study. One of the reasons that students have a well-developed schemata in relation to traditional text books is the emphasis placed on reading such texts in the early stages of learning a foreign language. In the Turkish education system, this suggestion is the first one that our teachers of English make when their students ask for help learning English. I know this feeling very well because when I started to learn English, the first thing that my teacher of English said to me was that "you should read graded level short stories in order to learn English, especially, new vocabulary." Reading short stories is an invaluable tool for acquiring new vocabulary as part of English Language Learning (ELL), but given that such stories have formed the basis of the participants understanding of reading since childhood, many found it initially difficult to relate to a graphic novel. This was the first time that they encountered a different type of reading. It was a difficult but an enjoyable process for the participants. They liked the format of graphic novels as Table 4 shows. The student are curious about reading new things, so this graphic novel was totally new to them, but, they did not know how to cope with the outcomes of this new type of text reading, because they did not have any prior knowledge of graphic novels. At first, it seemed easy for them to read a book which is full of pictures as well as short texts, but as time passed, it became difficult for them to understand the book in a cohesive way.

5.3. How to Read a Graphic Novel

As I mentioned in my literature review section, reading a graphic novel requires different cognitive skills than traditional texts in order to achieve a full comprehension. As Calo (2010) says "through the use of graphic novels, students can make associations between the images and the text to help simplify the reading process and aid comprehension" (p.2). Due to the fact that graphic novels' formats are different from traditional text, educators should teach students how to read a graphic novel. The first thing that should be taught to the students is sequencing, which is an "ability to know in which order certain events happen" (Haboush, 2010, p.30). Students should know how to follow the panels in each row. Kelley (2007) emphasized the importance of sequencing with these words "in sequential art and visual narrative, the pictures conveyed through multiple panels work together with words to tell a story or provide information to a reader" (p.7). The multiplicity of the panels can lead to chaos in the

readers' mind, since they did not know how to make a meaninful connection between the panels.

It is important to notice every detail in a graphic novel to understand and comprehend them. Readers should approach graphic novels with child-like innocence. They must glean underlying meanings in graphic novels through questions. However, it is essential to know how to read them. Lee (2007) asserts that "to more comprehensively interpret a graphic novel, the readers needs to be effectively engaged in the implications of the use of colour and shading, panel organization, point of view and style of lettering"(cited in Schwartz, 2006). In her article, Rudiger (2006) examined three pages of *Daisy Kutter: The Last Train* (Viper Comics) by Kazu Kibuishi to show what is happening on each page. I realized that the most important thing in these pages is the order of the panels. For the first page she says "the page is divided up into three horizontally rectangular sections, two large panels at top and bottom, with six smaller panels in between. The two large panels grab and hold your attention; the smaller panels indicate action and movement" (p.129). (Figure 1)

1			
2		3	
4	5	6	7
8			
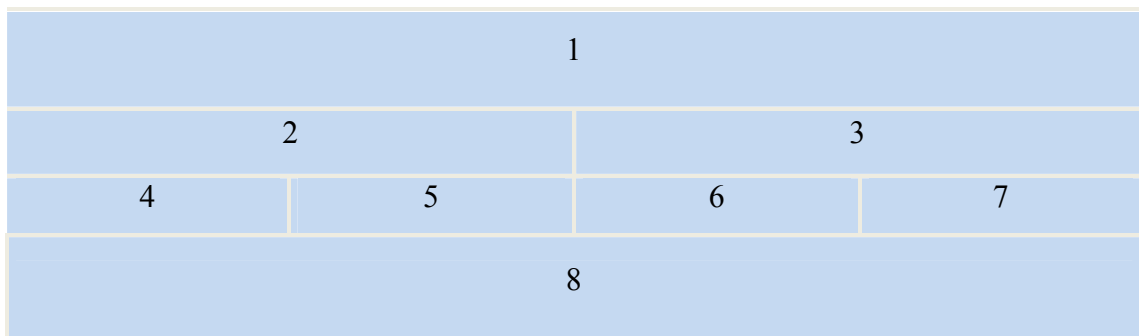
Figure 1. The Outline of The First Page of Daisy Kutter; The Last Train (Rudiger, 2006, p.129)

For the second page she continues to say "on this second page start at the top left, as before. Here the panels are laid out more vertically and staggered rather than marching linearly across the page" (p.131.) (Figure 2)

1	2	
	3	
4	5	
6		
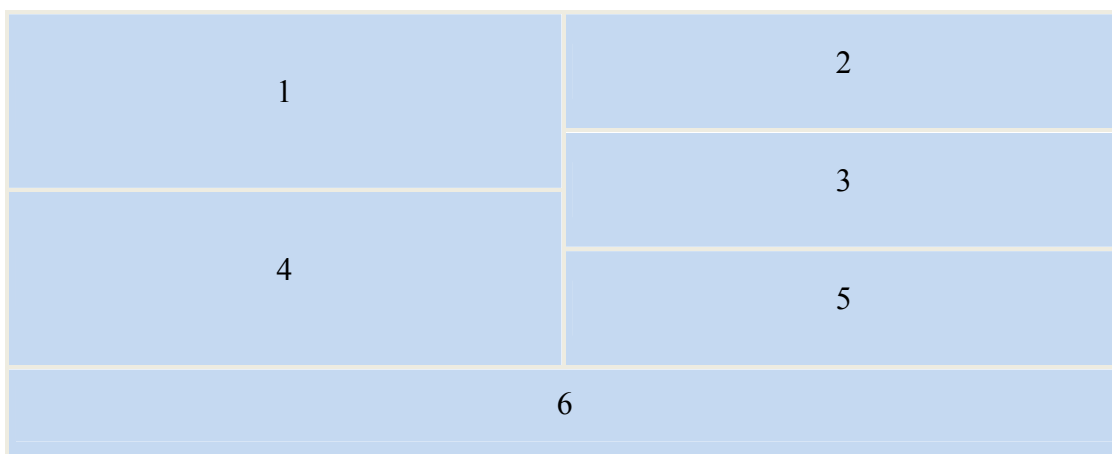
Figure 2. The outline of the Second Page of Daisy Kutter; The Last Train (Rudiger, 2006, p.131).

And for the third page, "on page three, we return to smaller, more numerous panels. Here there is no ambiguously juxtaposed arrangement of the panels; they are entirely linear and move a lot faster than on the page before which is no surprise given the higher number of panels in the same amount of space"(p.133). Her aim is to show the importance of layout in graphic novels, because every page set-up in a graphic novel requires a different way of reading. (Figure 3)

1	2	3
4	5	
6		
7		
8	9	
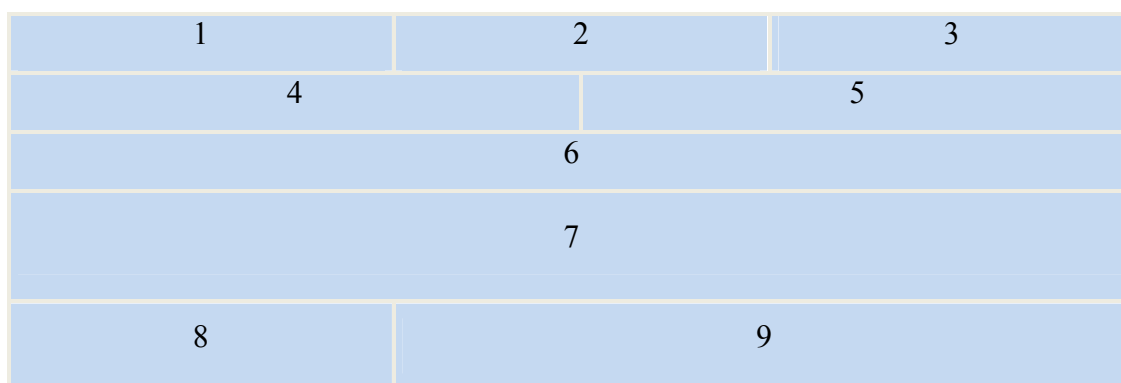
Figure 3. The Outline of the Third Page of Daisy Kutter; The Last Train (Rudiger, 2006, p.133).

The case in my study is that, according to interview responses, some students were confused about how to read the graphic novel that I chose for them. I asked them in the interview: What did you like or not like about reading Anya' Ghost?

They took a deep breath and continued to talk. Some of the participants said that at the beginning of the study they found it difficult to read. They told me that it was not

an easy text to be covered in a short period, given that they were unfamiliar with the format before participating to this study. They got confused about how to follow the panels. They struggled to understand what was happening between panels on the first few pages. They told me that the number of panels on the page made it difficult to know which order to read them panels in. They commented that they tried to understand some pages by reading the panels both vertically and horizontally, since in the selected graphic novel Anya's Ghost, some pages have panels which are laid out vertically, whilst others are horizontally laid out. I continued to ask follow-up questions such as: So according to you, what is the difference between the graphic novel and the short story? Do you see any difference between them?

They started to compare the graphic novel with the short story. The responses were predictable, since, these students were familiar with short stories since childhood. They do not find reading a short story difficult or complicated. They say it is easy to read, because of the familiar convention of reading each line horizontally from left to right. There are no intriguing pictures or parts that can distract their attention. They say they felt more confident when they read the short story rather than the graphic novel. People are generally more successful at tasks they are familiar with. This graphic novel was a material shock that they could not adapt themselves to easily, so it would be unreasonable, in the initial phase of the study, to expect a successful outcome from students while performing such an unfamiliar task. Ferhat gave a good explanation about the difference between the graphic novel and the short story. He said that "I did not have any information about graphic novel, and after having read it, I can say that I did not like it. Anya's Ghost had an easy topic, but difficult format to read. It was a bit complicated for me to comprehend. There were differences between the text and the images. They did not match well each other according to me. This book actually killed my creativity. Because I prefer to draw the images in my mind as I do while reading a short story. What is important for me is to create illustrations in my mind rather than being a dependent on pictures, which are products of the book's author's imaginative. I prefer to draw the pictures on my own. Short story allowed me to draw my pictures in my mind, but this graphic novel did not allow me to do this. So this did not took my attention." Mehmet Ali supported what Ferhat says in some respects. He said that "Reading the short story was more exciting than the graphic novel. Because I like

thinking and describing it in my imaginative while reading. This graphic novel restricted my imaginative. So I had to revived the scenes and the characters in Anya's Ghost according to the pictures given us by the author. This made me bored, so it did not change my attitude toward reading." As proof, Table 5 indicates that there is an increase in students negative responses. This graphic novel created an awareness in students that they like texts which allow them to create their own illustrations in their mind. Students prefer reading when books make them think. This graphic novels did not allow them to think deeply. At first, students were not aware of the importance of drawing pictures in their mind, but after reading the graphic novel, they might have figured out that books should be challenging.

So not teaching students how to read a graphic novel and its conventions can be a possible reason why students were more successful in the short story assessment. Students should be taught the basic graphic novel conventions. In this study, the conventions were not taught to the students because of the time limitation. Considering that it was a seven-week study, it was impossible to have enough time to teach them the conventions, what these conventions mean to a graphic novel reader, and how to interpret them in a given graphic novel.

5.4. Multiple Intelligences and Graphic Novels

One of the educational merits of graphic novels is that they can be easily adapted to the theory of Multiple Intelligences. Multiple Intelligence (MI) is Howard Gardner's (1999) theory which claims that "all people have at least eight different intelligences working unequally"(cited in Haboush, 2010). I have mentioned these intelligence types in my literature review section. However, this does not necessarily mean that eveybody has just one type of intelligence, on the contrary "each person possesses all eight intelligences" (Armstrong, 2009, p.15), but the level of these intelligences differs from person to person.

In an educational context, knowing the conventions of MI can help teachers in their academic lives because "teachers often struggle with reaching every student in the same way in their classrooms. There is usually an array of achievers at varying levels and it can differ from subject to subject" (Hurley & Hurley, 2010, p.6). For instance, someone who has difficulty with learning mathematics may be successful at music.

In my literature review section, I said that graphic novel readers have predominantly visual-spatial intelligence, but, in addition, teachers have an opportunity to encourage their students to participate in the lesson actively and develop better comprehension skills by using different types of activities related to graphic novels. If teachers want to have their students become actively involved into the lesson and get their attention, it would be better to find appropriate activities which appeal to many students who have different types of intelligence. However, it can sometimes be difficult to find activities that address all types of learners, but more than one would be enough to activate students' brain functions. The use of an activity in which students create their own comics or graphic novel and so tap into MI would be very useful to engage both reluctant and curious students. For example:

Verbal/Linguistic: What are some of the things your character says or thinks? There is no limit to what words can do in a comic. On the other hand, some artists have made comics using almost nothing but words.

Visual/Spatial: Cartoon drawings are naturally visual. Placing the characters in sets and backgrounds encourages spatial learning.

Mathematical: Comics have a long history of formalism, which has always involved mathematical arrangement of panels.

Kinetic/Bodily: What is your character doing? Artists across the globe will attest to the physicality of drawing their characters. Students can make the faces their characters make, and mimic them in order to draw them.

Interpersonal: Who are your character's friends? Collaborative games can lead to brainstorming.

Intrapersonal: What are your character's moods? What does he or she think? Comics have a rich history of exploring the Intrapersonal.

Naturalistic: Where is your character placed? Explore his or her natural surroundings.

Musical/Rhythmic: Comics tell stories in rhythmic ways. Repetition of panels, and innovative and abstract stories are fostered in comics. (adapted from A Teacher's Companion, 2006)

Graphic novels encourage readers to explore different parts of their brains. They help people reveal what types of intelligences they posses mainly because according to

Armstrong (2009) "intelligences usually work together in complex way"(p.16). In order to be make a person as a life-long learner, it is essential to find out what types of intelligence people are likely to develop.

The data collected through interview are not systematic and conclusive. In the interview, when I asked the participants: What was more important in *Anya's Ghost*: text, images or combination? The students gave very different answers. These answers can be a sign of what types of intelligence they have. Some of them said the images were more important than the text, others said text was more important than images. Some students found both of them equally important. Yusuf said that "actually, both of them are very important. When I read Anya's Ghost, I always look the text at first, than when I did not understand the text I looked at the picture. Images helped me to understand what the text I read told me." On the other hand, Talip said that "images are more important than texts for me. I feel happy when I see pictures in text, this makes comfortable, in terms of comprehending it. In this book I looked at pictures rather than text. I tried to understand what is happening through pictures. When I did not understand, I looked at text." What Talip said, Vedat echoed "At first I had some prejudices about the book. I started to read Anya's Ghost and found out that there were many unknown words and they were really difficult. It was hard for me to look up the dictionary, because I sometimes forgot to bring it. But I tried to predict what was going to happen in the next page. It was hard for me to understand everything in detail as I did while reading short story. Because I am a traditional book lover. I want to understand on my own every sentence in a book without taking any assistance from visuals. So later I found that I had skipped some parts without understanding." As understood from the participants interview responses, the way of comprehending the graphic novel is different for each participant. While some participants were just looking at the pictures on the page, others were paying attention to the text. The rest of the participants conveyed the importance of the amalgam of pictures and the text on the page.

In the how to read a graphic novel part, two of the students say that they prefer traditional books because the books who have many visuals kill their creativity in terms of interpreting a book. They like the books which enable them to think. Moreover according to my informal Teacher's Notes, I observed that when I gave the graphic novel to them to read in the class, they got help from their dictionaries. They looked up

them for every unknown word in the book instead of looking at the pictures and guessing the meaning of these unknown words. So this gave me an impression that many students do not pay attention to the pictures when they did not understand some words in the graphic novel. They did not see the visuals as an assistance to their reading. They prefer to understand the text on their own. On the contrary to what I expected, students preferred to read the graphic novel in a traditional way as they do in reading short stories. They created their own meaning without reading the pictures. They did not pay attention to the pictures. So it might be assumed that the participants have not predominantly visual spatial intelligence in this study according to their interview responses and my informal teacher's notes.

When the participants got the graphic novel and started to read it, the parts in the book that they focused on for comprehension differed from participant to participant. One of the biggest omissions in this study was to start without knowing what types of a learner the participants are, not setting up a substructure for graphic novels and not to teach how to read a graphic novel. The main aim in not teaching graphic novels before starting the study was to create consistency between graphic novel and short-story without interfering in the participants' reading of either text. They read both of them week by week without getting any assistance from me. However, I did not account for the huge variance in prior knowledge between short stories and graphic novels. Short stories can be easily read by almost all types of learners. It can be said that the students were already conditioned to reading short stories because they had read short stories throughout the pre-intermediate level. In addition, participants had already been taught how to analyze and interpret a traditonal text in their Intensive Reading courses. They were taught to develop traditional reading skills.

Prior to the study, students had only been educated in, and developed, reading skills and strategies in relation to traditional texts. Because the students were not taught graphic novel conventions and did not have their schemata activated in relation to graphic novels, the results of the study are the opposite of my hypothesis. In my study, another possible reason why students were successful in the short story assessment might be not to know what types of intelligences the students have during the graphic novel implementation process. In order to address this issue, a Multiple Intelligence

survey should have been conducted before starting the study, and the results used to develop strategies and activities appropriate to the MI of the participants.

5.5. The Time Effect on Students' Developing Reading Comprehension

Reading graphic novels involves complex reading skills that can help learners develop critical thinking skills. Chun (2009) says that "using graphic novels in the classroom can help explain how language works both for and against people and enable students to acquire an appreciation for critical literacy" (p.144). To build critical literacy, making the learners think critically about what they read is crucial in terms of developing their cognitive skills. Therefore, in order to make the learners understand what is meant between the panels, they should be taught how to interpret visual images in graphic novels separate from reading the text in order to foster critical thinking skills.

Reading graphic novels is like solving puzzles. Many parts should be gathered to notice the full size of a picture. The elements of graphic novels are so mingled that it requires deep critical thinking and consciouness to comprehend them because readers must search for ideas by internalising these mingled parts. Just looking at graphic novels' visual images does not necessarily mean comprehending them. To read and interpret graphic novels, learners should take into consideration the usual literary elements such as character, plot and dialogue, and in addition to these elements, they also need to pay attention to visual elements such as color, shading, panel layout, perspective and even the lettering style (Schwarz, 2006). As Ahmadi, Gilakjani & Ismail (2011) assert "learning is not only a visual-cognitive activity but also a physical one particularly as it requires the interplay among multiple sensory modalities and representations" (p.1325). Like learning, reading graphic novels requires multiple ways of thinking. Thinking is like brain fireworks and should be triggered by questioning. Hassett & Schieble (2007) propose that "the text-image relationship requires an active reader to make meaning using his or her sociocultural knowledge and background to make the images come alive in relation to the print" (p.65).

Graphic novels can be used to develop inference skills. These skills are a higher level of thinking in Bloom's taxonomy (Heaney, 2007). Bloom separated critical thinking skills into six levels, but this taxonomy was revised by Krathwohl (2002) with new terms. It is illustrated in Table 7. by Krathwol (2002).

Table 7. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

The Original Taxonomy	The Revised Taxonomy
Knowledge	Remember
Comprehension	Understand
Application	Apply
Analysis	Analyze
Synthesis	Evaluate
Evaluation	Create

These thinking skills can develop deductive reasoning abilities. In this respect, graphic novels are good authentic materials that can be used for developing critical thinking and reading skills.

> According to Blooms' hierarcy of skills (1984), interpretation or synthesis raises the bar of ability to a higher order of thinking skills. As the reader synthesizes how a visual representation cooperates with what is read in the text, new connections extend comprehension. Through this process, readers can attach new information on top of pre-existing schema or create a new schema to fit the situation. As the readers view visuals, they confirm or disconfirm how the new information fits into existing schema and a wider knowledge base is formed for future reference. Using visual literacy with visual representation helps to develop better spatial concepts so readers are not forced to imagine details or descriptions in the text such as size, color, or distance. Comic images enhance and extends the text communication. They attract the attention of the reader and create understanding of unknown factors in the text's language. (cited in McVicker, 2007, p.85).

It is clearly seen that visual literacy skills foster critical literacy and comprehension. In Emery's (2011) case study, she wanted to find out whether graphic novels could be a tool to encourage ESL students to display higher-level critical thinking responses, both in writing and in oral discussion. She implemented her study on four classes of ESL

students? This group of students was chosen because of their advanced-intermediate level of language proficiency. Through data analysis, she found that students who read a graphic novel were able to produce more higher-level critical thinking responses than their classmates who read a text-only novel. In this case study, students were allowed to engage with graphic novels through different tasks, which is crucial for develoing critical thinking skills.

An omission in my study is that, according to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, the first stage should be 'remembering.' In order to complete this stage, the participants' schemata about graphic novels should have been activated, however before the study, students were not informed about graphic novels. To develop critical thinking skills in learners, these all steps should be followed in the correct order. If one step is omitted, there could be problems in developing critical thinking skills. The first step was omitted in this study and participants were expected to start from the second step, which is understanding.

The big handicap in this study was time limitation. All the steps in Revised Bloom's Taxonomy require more time successfully to be achieved. Six weeks are not enough to develop critical thinking and reading skills. Each step in the taxonomy requires repetition. In order to pass all these levels successfully, learners should practice each level more than once. So, in addition to skipping the first level, the second level was not consolidated with different graphic novels. So it was seen that one book was not enough for developing reading comprehension. In the short story case, the situation was quite different. In terms of consolidating the prior knowledge about short stories, participants already knew many things about reading a short story. Their schemata about short stories had already been activated many times with different materials before participating in the study. Since they started to learn English, they have been exposed to short stories with many different topics. As a result, they are quite familiar with this type of reading.

In the interview sessions, most of the participants found it hard to understand and interpret graphic novels because of the time limitation. They stated that the time was too short completely to understand the graphic novel. They said that there were many unknown words, but they found them useful for their vocabulary repertory, however, it took a great deal of time to look up the meaning of these unknown words.

They needed time to internalise the meaning of these unknown words with the pictures in the book. They spent more time looking at the pictures and interpreting what these pictures told them. They required more time in order to make a connection between what they had in their minds and what is meant in each panel. In the interview I asked about the importance of the time because I thought that the length of the study could have impacted on the results. Safa said that "I did not give enough importance to the graphic novel, you gave to us because of the weekly progress tests, reading and writing portfolios, listening-speaking projects and assignments. These consumed all of the time. I gave priority to these assignments because of the marks that we are going to take. So I did not care so much sufficiently to read and interpret this graphic novel. But I read short stories because of the exams." Consequently, the length of this study was not sufficient to impact upon students' reading comprehension for graphic novels.

5.6. Interest and Graphic Novels

People become successful at tasks in which they have a sustainable interest. It is widely accepted that interest has a positive impact on reading and its conventions. The use of different authentic materials in courses may also engage students' attention and interest. Peköz (2009) suggests that "high interest materials should contribute to text learning, are found more enjoyable and result in harder work, participation and a positive learning outcome" (p.53). In addition to what he says, Kendall (2000) says that "people will read if and when they are interested" (p.334).

In this study, graphic novels were introduced to the participants as a new type of reading material. According to Snowball (2005) it is important to make students active in the reading process, so finding elusive materials can stimulate readers' interest. Botzakis (2009) believes that if educators increase the variety of texts available for use in the classrooms, they can spark students interest in reading and learning (p.50). Tonegato (2012) conducted a study on the interests of 5th grade students in reading graphic novels. The aim was to see whether graphic novels are just for boys. The study was conducted in a 5th grade classroom with 26 participants and the partcipants' interests and attitudes toward reading were evaluated with two 10-question Likert-type scale surveys. By the end of the study, 21 of the participants had greater interest in, and a more positive attitude toward, graphic novels. It was seen that both boys and girls

found graphic novels engaging and of value (p.60). The students learned more quickly when they were interested in the text, regardless of gender.

At first, the participants loved the format of the graphic novel, but as time passed, they began to get bored of it. In class sessions, I observed that although students perused the first pages of the graphic novel with great interest, toward the end of the study, they got bored. It was natural that the students were engaged by the novelty value of a graphic novel. Once the novelty wore off, however, they became bored. The reasons for getting bored should be investigated. The participants of both studies responded in the same way and got bored. Table 4 showed an increase in students' responses to the questionnaire. Students enjoy reading about new topics that interest them. This group of questions, made the students aware that they were happy to engage with different kinds of reading material, but the topic of the selected graphic novel did not encourage them to read more and students' interest was not sustained, even by graphic novels with different topics. Students may read more about the new things that they are interested in. The increase in the responses may create an awareness in students. They may have understood the importance of interest and it effects on their reading habits.

One of the possible reason for students getting bored while reading the chosen graphic novel is the color palette of the book. *Anya' Ghost* is completely in black and white. In the interview sessions, students claimed that they could not clearly see the images in some pages because of the quality of the photocopy. Vedat explained this issue in detail: *"I liked Anya's Ghost, so I want to thank you for giving a chance to us to read this book, at first, I did not get accustomed to read this book, because it was a copy, not the original one. Sometimes I pushed myself to understand the images in order to convey the whole story. When I did not see the images clearly, I looked at my friends' book who is sitting near me."*

The book was copied for the 18 participants due to cost issues. It would not have been appropriate to ask students to buy the original book for this study as it was not required reading for the Reading course. Another reason is the topic of the book. Before starting to the study, in order to make all conditions equal with the short story reading, I tried to choose a graphic novel with a similar topic to the short story, because I wanted to eliminate the interest variable. My aim was to compare participants' comprehension

skills in both cases and the change in their attitudes toward reading, not the effect of interest on students' perceptions of graphic novels.

It can be said that the intervention of graphic novels may produce different outcomes in different studies. While some studies demonstrate the positive impact of graphic novels, others may produce the opposite result. In my study, the effect of the graphic novel was negative. I have tried to explain the five possible reasons for the negative effect the graphic novel had on students' reading performance and their attitude toward reading, but there may be another possible reason that can justify the results. Students had different courses in addition to the intensive reading course, so they had to prioritize the other courses in order to pass the B1 level. As a result, they may have considered this study and reading the least important subject. When we take into consideration the reading required in preparation for exams, portfolios, chapters in other course books to be covered, and assignments to be done, it is inevitable that students prioritised these ahead of this study. Of the skills the students study, Writing can be the most salient one. I gave students half an hour to read the allocated pages of the graphic novel every week, but in some weeks, I observed that some students started to work on their Writing Portfolios, as soon as they finished their reading of the graphic novel in class. Besides, half an hour may not be sufficient for students to develop their comprehension skills, however it is sufficient to make a good start.

Environmental factors and their anxieties about their exams and assignments could be some of the possible reasons for the poor results in graphic novel assessment. This can justify why students were succesful in the short story assessment. As part of extensive reading, the short story was their assignment to read at home, because the weekly progress tests included questions about the relevant chapter in the short story collection. Therefore the students may have been more motivated to study the short stories than the graphic novel. Students pay more attention to the tasks for which they take exams and get marks. This makes students focus on these tasks. In other words, students do not pay attention to other interactive tasks although they may learn a lot from them.

The choice of time in some studies may have tremendous effects on the studies' outcomes. This study was deliberately conducted early in the mornings between 10:00 am for only 30 minutes, in order to minimize possible factors like weariness that could

impact upon the results of the study. The most suitable time for this reading session was Monday mornings after students' weekly progress tests in order not to interrupt Intensive Reading. Students had a progress test exams on Monday in the first two hours and right after that they had an Intensive Reading course. However, the choice of the time had a negative effect on students' reading performance. At first I was optimistic that their attention could be drawn by using graphic novels because after the tests, students' attention was still in their exam and its answers. Mostly, it was impossible to motivate them for the reading course right after an exam. So I thought that graphic novels might draw their attention to the reading course, but this choice may have affected the outcomes of the study, because their weekly progress tests, which are held every Monday, created anxiety which may have hindered students from efficiently engaging with new tasks.

Another reason why students responded poorly to graphic novels might be that the participants were really self-confident, because they were the most successful students in the School of Foreign Languages. Maybe they thought that they could easily manipulate these graphic novels without making an effort, but in the end, they admitted that these novels were really different from other genres in terms of their cognitive loads. Therefore the level of the students is salient in these kinds of research. This study did not include higher level students, but maybe, it could have been beneficial for lower level students. The participants may have wanted to please me, even though they were told to be very honest with their answers, because the relationship between me and my participants was really good.

The vocabulary of the graphic novels could be difficult for the participants. Some of the participants expressed that they found some chunks, idioms, and phrases hard to understand. One of the participants Ayşe, expressed her ideas about the vocabulary of Anya's Ghost: "When I first saw the cover and the first page of the book, I thought that it was going to be an easy and enjoyable book. Yes, it is an enjoyable book, but it is not an easy book. There were many unknown words in the book, so while I was reading, I looked up for the meaning of the book. I spend much more effort to read this graphic novel than the short story. My English was not good enough to understand the book. This led me to ask help from the picture." In additon to what Ayşe said, Zafer continued to say that: "It was sometimes difficult to find some unknown

words' meaning in the dictionary. I could not understand the meaning of the sentences in the book. So in some pictures, it still remained unclear to me."

The last question of the interview was: 'Would you be more interested in reading graphic novels after this study?' Once more, the students answers greatly varied. Mehmet Ali said that "If the content of the book is about science-fiction or fantasy, I would like to read those kinds of book, but if not, it would be impossible." Adem said "I did not like this book and also its format. I do not think so, I will read this book from now on. Traditional novels are always my first preference." Zeynep, the only participant whose attitude toward reading changed after reading the graphic novel, was very anxious to share her feelings about graphic novels: "I am fond of writing in English. I do not like reading a book much. I read Six Ghost Stories because we were responsible for it in our weekly progress exams, so I had to read it. But graphic novels changed my attitude toward reading. for example, tomorrow I am planning to go to book store to get a notebook for writing, and if I encountered any graphic novel, I will definitely buy it. I loved graphic novels." In contrast to what Zeynep said, Murat said that: "I liked graphic novels, but I do not go to a bookstore to buy especially graphic novels. Haşim said that "I can buy graphic novels but not for me, for my brother." Serra is accustomed to graphic novels since her childhood, said that "I already read graphic novels, so I have a lot of them, so it is not new for me to buy graphic novels. My mother buys me whenever she goes to a bookshop."

There is a great deal of prior research on using graphic novels in classrooms. In each study, different outcomes were found. Liu (2004) found that "when the text and illustrations were well integrated (the visuals matched the wording), L2 (second language) students were able to comprehend the text through matching and mapping among factors such as word recognition, syntax and background knowledge" (p.236). Nevertheless, Liu showed that high-level students did not get greater benefit from the comic strips presented with the high-level text than their counterparts. This was probably because the illustrations were very simple or did not match the text. Graphic novels which include a more complex storyline and characters could possibly elicit more of a response and develop reading comprehension for high-level students.

The influence of graphic novels extends into different fields of research. Hill (2011) examined the effects of graphic novels on the reading comprehension scores of

students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). In her study, she explored whether the use of graphic novels would increase the reading comprehension scores of two students on the Autism Spectrum. The students in the study read four novels, two of them were non-graphic and the other two were graphic novels. First, they were introduced to two graphic novels in row and after they read each quarter of the graphic novels, they were assessed with a set of questions. Then they were introduced to the two non-graphic novels and as in the graphic novel assessment, they were assessed after they read each quarter of the book. At the end of the study, the students' reading comprehension scores of the non-graphic novels were compared to their reading comprehension scores of the graphic novels. The results of the study did not support the hypothesis that graphic novels increase the reading comprehension scores of students with ASD. So students' scores did not reflect an increased comprehension level (p.1).

In another study, Lamanno (2007) explored the use of graphic novels in the classroom. She wanted to find whether exposure to non-traditional texts increase the reading comprehension skills and motivation of low-functioning adolescent readers. The findings did not support the use of graphic novels with students who have severe reading difficulties such as those associated with learning disabilities. In Mallia's (2007) study, he conducted experiments to determine whether "comics could be a cognitive tool as effective as text and illustrated text" by making three different version of the same story: a version with only text, and one with a few illustrations to complement the text, and one in a panelled comics style. Thirty students read all versions and at the end of the study they were asked a series of questions to test their recall, retention, and comprehension of the story. The data showed that there was no significant difference in the test scores and the comic version was just as effective in conveying the story as the two more traditional versions.

It is understood from previous studies that the use of graphic novels does not always give positive outcomes. I conducted this study because I wanted to find out the effect of a selected graphic novel on students' reading comprehension performance and to see the difference in their attitudes toward reading at the beginning and the end of the study after the participants read this selected graphic novel. Through my data collection and analysis, I found that students were more successful in reading a short story than a graphic novel. I also found that graphic novels did not create any difference in students'

attitudes toward reading. The results of both the pre- and post-test reading attitude surveys showed that their attitude did not change from pre-test to the post-test. At the beginning of the study, through students' pre-test responses, it appeared that the participants already had a positive attitude toward reading, so this selected graphic novel did not change their attitudes toward reading at the end of the study.

Graphic novels were not something of interest to the students, so once they started reading one, they did not become intrigued, and want to learn more about them. So many participants in this study did not find the selected graphic novel engaging and of value after they were exposed to it, but, they were pleased to see a different reading resource rather than a traditonal one. They were able to compare their previous reading materials with a different reading material.

Most students did not acquire stronger feelings toward graphic novels. Many students were not aware of what graphic novels were at the beginning of the study, so they did not enjoy reading the selected graphic novel for this study. These findings suggest that it may be beneficial for English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers to incorporate graphic novels or other graphically-enhanced texts into their reading curriculum with appropriate methods that take into account student differences, in order to engage their students' interest in graphic novels.

5.7. Implications

The research presented in this section leads to several implications for teachers. One of the major findings of the study is that students liked the graphic novel but were not interested in reading different graphic novels. This result demonstrates that graphic novels may not be relevant to students' interest. In addition, the format of graphic novels may not appeal to the students' interest. Because students show individual differences, these differences should be taken into account while implementing graphic novel. Many of the reading preferences of students are closely connected to their interest differences. According to my recorded interviews, many students in this study are in favor of reading traditional books rather than graphic novels. Therefore graphic novel implementation on these students might not be effective in terms of developing reading comprehension. Recognizing the reading preferences of students is a key factor in guiding instruction. Educators must comprehend the varied interests and preferences

of their students. Understanding students' varied reading interest will enable teachers to provide the most engaging and relevant texts to their students.

Another implication of the study is that there are some factors that hinder students' giving more importance to the graphic novel, like teachers' giving a lot of homework, the number of the exams students take in a term, and students' being the most successful in the School of Foreign Languages. Teachers may not be aware of these factors. If these factors are taken into account while designing graphic novel activities, students' perceptions may change.

5.8. Suggestions for further studies

There are several ways that future research can build on the results of this study. First of all, it is very important to supply accurate background knowledge to the participants before starting a study. In this way, they will be more likely to attach new information to existing knowledge. Also, further studies should include instruction of how to read graphic novels, since graphic novels use different formats than non-graphic novels. Therefore students need to understand how to read graphic novels in order to comprehend what they are reading. As Dermody & Speaker (1999) assert "whenever teachers are faced with the problem of students who have good decoding skills but inadequate comprehension skills, they need to be able to train those students to use metacognitive strategies; otherwise, these students will continue to read texts emphasizing only words and not meaning" (cited in Ahmad, Choo & Eng, 2011). So for further studies, a plenary speech about how to read a graphic novel might be given to students before the studies begin. Students should learn how to handle the cognitive load of graphic novels. The conventions of graphic novels and the importance of the use of their functions while reading a graphic novel would be taught with a presentation. This is particularly important in terms of activating students' prior knowledge. Another important issue which needs to be taken into consideration is MI. Graphic novels are beneficial for visual learners, but other learners who have different types of intelligences may have difficulty reading graphic novels. Lack of knowledge about what types of intelligences participants have in this study might have contributed significantly to the unexpected results. It was not established that participants were visual learners. There might be different types of learners in the class. Therefore it would not be logical to expect students to succeed in a graphic novel task without

knowing their interests and what kinds of a learner they are. Maybe I was dealing with a group of people with a wide ranging set of multiple intelligence issues or a very narrow set of multiple intelligence based abilities. It was essential to answer the question "What if most of my subjects are primarily musically inclined or what if they are emotional learners, musical learners?" Before launching the study, a MI questionnaire or a pre-task that can give ideas about students' intelligences should be applied. Thus defining what types of a participant the students are would shape the outcomes of the study. For instance; the choice of graphic novels, the way of presenting them and what is targeted to be taught would differ according to their intelligences. So this would enable students to improve their comprehension skills. Armstrong (2009) emphasized that if teachers convey the importance of the intelligence and vary their teaching materials, students would find some tasks that appeal to their intelligences, and this would make students actively involved in learning (p.73).

Another suggestion would be to choose novels that the students have a particular interest in. An idea would be give each student involved in the study an interest survey prior to choosing the novels. If the novels chosen are about subjects of interest to the students, the students will be more likely to invest in the reading of the novels. The comprehension of the novels would implicitly occur. The interest survey would been added to the attitude questionnaire. As Mooney (2005) asserts, graphic novels present students with illustrations and images, and also may introduce students to new subjects. This leads them to seek out other similarly themed non-picture books on the same topic.

For further study of graphic novels, it is recommended that researchers conduct their study for a longer period of time. This study was limited by time constraints, and a greater wealth of data could be obtained through the use of a longer study. It is also recommended that future studies take more time to provide students with exposure to graphic novels. This would be achieved by using Literature Circle using graphic novels. In their study, Dellinger & Hines (n.d.) underlined the importance of literary discussion rather than independent reading. Overall, there was no significant change in the independent reading practices for both the 5th and 7th grade groups (p.20). So through literature circles, students can interact with each other by questioning the main domain of critical thinking. Group discussion sessions would be done for both short story and graphic novel to increase the level of comprehension. Additionally, sufficient time is

crucial in order to develop critical thinking and reading skills. Students need a longer period of time to develop metacognitive aspects, since graphic novels require critical thinking attributes. So these attributes' level can be enhanced with enough time. In a shorter period, this would not be possible.

An additional suggestion for further studies would be to increase the number of graphic novels read by the students. The students in this study only read one short story and one graphic novel, which were insufficient for developing reading comprension, so the data gathered through the study was limited. By using more graphic novels, more data could be collected. For futher studies, it would be important to choose non-graphic novels which do not contain illustrations. Since the graphic novels contain graphics, images, pictures, the non-graphic novels should not. If the non-graphic novels do not contain illustrations, it will be easier to determine if the inclusion of graphics affects reading comprehension. The number of is important when conducting a study. A larger number of students should have been included in this study, since this study involved only 18 participants. By increasing the number of the students in this study, the reliability of the study will increase.

My final suggestion is to present graphic novels to the participants within the format of Action Research. Schwertner (2008) conducted an Action Research to motivate reluctant readers through graphic novels. Through action research inquiry, he introduced graphic novels to 5th grade students by infusing book discussion within Literature Circles. Student journals were used as a means of data collection. As a result, the graphic novels increased reading motivation by stimulating visual reading and increasing confidence in struggling readers.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Appendix 1: Reading Attitude Questionnaire

Dear Students,

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements by using the

letter from this scale:

Strongly Agree   1

Agree   2

Not sure   3

Disagree   4

Strongly Disagree   5

1. I enjoy reading.   **1 2 3 4 5**

2. I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading.   **1 2 3 4 5**

3. I cannot sit still and read for more than a few minutes.   **1 2 3 4 5**

4. I make pictures in my mind when I read a book.   **1 2 3 4 5**

5. I would rather do other activities than reading.   **1 2 3 4 5**

6.   I do not like it when there are too many people in the story.   **1 2 3 4 5**

7. I do not enjoy reading.   **1 2 3 4 5**

8. I like hard and challenging books.   **1 2 3 4 5**

9. I read only if I have to do.   **1 2 3 4 5**

10. Reading is OK for me. I sometimes read.   **1 2 3 4 5**

11. I like reading when books make me think.   **1 2 3 4 5**

12. I like to read about new things.   **1 2 3 4 5**

13. If a book is interesting, I do not care how hard it is to read.   **1 2 3 4 5**

14. It is very important for me to finish every reading assignment. **1 2 3 4 5**

15. I do not like reading something when the words are too difficult.　**1　2　3　4　5**

16. I read because my teacher wants me to read.　**1　2　3　4　5**

17. I read only to get information that I need.　**1　2　3　4　5**

18. I always try to finish my reading on time.　**1　2　3　4　5**

19. I read to learn new information about new topics that interest me.　**1　2　3　4　5**

20. I do not like reading complicated stories.　**1　2　3　4　5**

7.2. Appendix 2: Okuma Tutumu Anketi

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Lütfen bu ölçekteki numaraları kullanarak her bir ifade için, o ifadeye katılma ve

katılmama durumunuzu belirtiniz.

Kesinlikle katılıyorum	1
Katılıyorum	2
Emin değilim	3
Katılmıyorum	4
Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	5

1- Okumaktan zevk alırım.   1 2 3 4 5

2- Okuma dersi ödevlerimi mümkün olduğunca az yaparım.   1 2 3 4 5

3- Birkaç dakikadan fazla sabit oturup okuyamam.   1 2 3 4 5

4- Bir kitabı okuduğum zaman kendi aklımda resimler oluştururum. 1 2 3 4 5

5- Okumaktansa diğer aktiviteleri yapmayı tercih ederim.   1 2 3 4 5

6- Bir hikayede çok fazla insan olduğunda o hikayeyi

okumayı sevmem.   1 2 3 4 5

7- Okumaktan zevk almam.   1 2 3 4 5

8- Zor ve uğraştırıcı kitapları severim.   1 2 3 4 5

9- Eğer okumak zorundaysam okurum.   1 2 3 4 5

10- Okuma benim için sorun değildir. Ara sıra okurum.   1 2 3 4 5

11- Kitaplar beni düşünmeye sevk ettiğinde okumayı severim.   1 2 3 4 5

12- Yeni şeyler hakkında okumayı severim.   1 2 3 4 5

13- Eğer bir kitap ilginçse, okunmasının ne kadar zor olduğunu

umursamam.   1 2 3 4 5

14- Benim için her bir okuma ödevini bitirmek çok önemlidir.   1 2 3 4 5

15- Kelimeleri çok zorsa, bir şeyler okumayı sevmem.   1 2 3 4 5

16- Öğretmenim benden okumamı istediği için okurum.   1 2 3 4 5

17- Sadece ihtiyacım olan bilgiyi almak için okurum.   1 2 3 4 5

18- Okumamı her zaman zamanında bitirmeye çalışırım.   1 2 3 4 5

19- İlgimi çeken yeni konular hakkında yeni bilgiler

öğrenmek için okurum.   1 2 3 4 5

20- Karışık hikayeleri okumayı sevmem.   1 2 3 4 5

7.3. Appendix 3: Reading Comprehension Check Questions for the Graphic Novel "Anya's Ghost."

Please answer the question below which are about the graphic novel "Anya's Ghost."

1- Who is Anya and where is she from?
2- Who is Emily and how does Anya know her?
3- How did Emily help Anya in her Biology exam?
4- What has happened to Anya in Bleep Test?
5- What is Anya's mother studying for?
6- How did Emily wind up in the well?
7- What did Anya decide to do first after hearing Emily's story?
8- Why did not Anya go to the church on Sunday?
9- Why did Anya get cross with her best friend Siobhan?
10- Who is the boy that Anya falls in love?
11- Whose party did Anya go?
12- What happened in the party? Why did Anya leave the party early?
13- Why did Anya go to the Public Library?
14- How did Dıma help Anya when she went to Public Library?
15- What did Anya learn about Emily on the internet about her?
16- What did Emily do when she figured out that Anya has learnt the truth?
17- Why did Anya's mother go to the hospital?
18- Who found Emily's bone which she has hidden?
19- What did Anya do with the bone?
20- What happened at the end of the story?

7.4. Appendix 4: Anya'nın Hayaleti adlı Çizgi Romanı için Okuduğunu Anlama

Soruları

Lütfen aşağıdaki "Anya'nın Hayaleti" adlı çizgi romanı ile ilgili soruları cevaplayınız.

1- Anya kimdir ve nerelidir?
2- Emily kimdir ve Anya, Emily'i nerden tanıyor?
3- Emily, Anya'ya Biyoloji sınavında nasıl yardımcı oldu?
4- Beden Eğitimi dersinde Anya'ya ne oldu?
5- Anya'nın annesi ne için ders çalışıyor?
6- Emily kuyudan nasıl çıktı?
7- Anya, Emily'nin hikayesini duyunca ilk ne yapmaya karar verdi?
8- Pazar günü Anya neden kiliseye gitmedi?
9- Anya neden en yakın arkadaşı Siobhan'la küstü?
10- Anya'nın aşık olduğu kişinin adı nedir?
11- Anya kimin partisine gitti?
12- Parti de ne oldu? Anya partiyi neden erken terk etti?
13- Anya neden Halk Kütüphanesine gitti?
14- Anya Halk Kütüphanesine gittiğinde Dima ona nasıl yardımcı oldu?
15- Anya, Emily hakkında internetten ne öğrendi?
16- Emily, Anya'nın gerçeği öğrendiğini fark ettikten sonra ne yaptı?
17- Anya'nın annesi neden hastaneye gitti?
18- Emily'nin sakladığı kemiği kim buldu?
19- Anya bu kemiği ne yaptı?
20- Hikayenin sonunda ne oldu?

7.5. Appendix 5: Reading Comprehension Check Questions for the short story "Six Ghost Stories"

Please answer the questions below which are about the short stody "Six Ghost Stories"

1- While Mr. Saunders was sleeping in Room 7, what did he see?
2- What truth did Mr. Saunders learn about the picture on the wall when he went to pay his bill to the hotel office?
3- Why did Bill go to Porchester and where did he stay?
4- Why did Annie and Jack decide not to talk to Mrs. Wood anymore?
5- After Bill got back home, the postman delivered his holiday photographs and why was he shocked by the photo of Mrs. Woods' house?
6- Why did Henry and Joan decide to move to the Samways' house in the country?
7- In November 30th Henry and Joan saw an old man knocking on the window and how did they feel?
8- What did Henry and Joan learn from the Father Barnes (priest) about this old man?
9- What did they do for this old man after they learnt the truth?
10- Where does the voice in Roger Wingate's car come from? And what does the voice in the car always say?
11- Who did Roger tell about the voice first?
12- What happened to Kathleen Henson while she was waiting for her boy friend?
13- Why did Kathleen order Roger to drive to Monmouth Road?
14- What did Susan Blake want her friend Cecily Frobisher?
15- Who was Cecily having a dream when Frederic Frobisher went to the train station to take Isobel?
16- Why couldn't Frederick Frobisher work in the library?
17- Which truth was revealed when the police officer and doctor came to the Frobishers' house to unlock the door of the library?
18- What was Mrs. Rogers waiting for from his son in America?
19- Why did the postman decide to buy a birthday card and signed his name?

20- What did the postman learn about Mrs. Rogers from Mrs. Sparson when he came to bring the birthday card?

7.6 Appendix 6: Altı Hayalet Hikayesi adlı Hikaye Kitabi İçin Okuduğunu

Anlama Soruları

Lütfen aşağıdaki "Altı Hayalet Hikayesi" adlı kitap ile ilgili soruları cevaplayınız.

1- Bay Saunders 7 nolu odada uyurken ne gördü?

2- Bay Saunders, otel resepsiyonuna para ödemeye gittiğinde duvardaki fotoğrafla ilgili hangi gerçeği öğrendi?

3- Bill neden Porchester'a gitti ve nerede kaldı?

4- Neden Annie ve Jack Bayan Wood'la artık konuşmama kararı aldılar?

5- Bill evine döndüğünde, postacı ona tatil fotoğraflarını yolladı. Neden Bayan Wood'un evinin fotoğrafını görünce şok oldu?

6- Henry ve Joan neden Samways'lerin kırsaldaki evlerine taşınmaya karar verdiler?

7- 30 Kasım'da Henry ve Joan pencereye vuran yaşlı bir adam gördüklerinde ne hissettiler?

8- Henry ve Joan bu yaşlı adam hakkında Aziz Barnes (rahip)'ten ne öğrendiler?

9- Gerçeği öğrendikten sonra bu yaşlı adam için ne yaptılar?

10- Roger Wingate'in arabasındaki ses nereden geliyordu ve bu ses daima ne söylüyordu?

11- Roger bu sesten ilk olarak kime bahsetti?

12- Erkek arkadaşını beklerken Kathleen Henson'a ne oldu?

13- Neden Katleen Roger'a Monmouth Sokağına sürmesi için emretti?

14- Susan Blake, arkadaşı Cecily Frobisher'den ne istedi?

15- Frederic Frobisher tren istasyonuna İsobel'i almaya gittiğinde, Cecily evde kimi rüyasında gördü?

16- Neden Frederick Frobisher kütüphanede çalışamıyordu?

17- Polis memuru ve doktor Frobisher'ların evinin kütüphanesinin kilitli kapısını açmaya geldiklerinde hangi gerçek su yüzüne çıktı?

18- Bayan Rogers Amerika'daki oğlundan ne bekliyordu?

19- Postacı neden doğumgünü kartı almaya ve adını yazmaya karar verdi?

20- Postacı kartı vermeye geldiğinde Bayan Sparson'dan, Bayan Rogers ile ilgili neyi öğrendi?

7.7. Appendix 7: Interview Questions

1. What did you know about graphic novels before participating in this study?
2. Now, what do you think of this selected graphic novel?
3. What did you like or not like about reading *Anya's Ghost*?
4. What was more important in Anya's Ghost: text, images or combination?
5. How was reading the graphic interpretation different than reading the text? In what ways was it similar?
6. In what ways did graphic novel change your attitude toward reading?
7. Would you be interested in reading more graphic novels?

8. CURRICULUM VITAE

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Educational Background

2011 – 2013   (MA)   Çağ University

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2006 – 2010   (BA)   Gaziantep University

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