Exploring Readers' Perceptions of VVISOR: A Multimodal Educational Graphic Novel for English Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Educational graphic novels offer opportunities to encounter language through integrated text, images, narrative dialogue, and audio. This study examined readers' perceptions of VVISOR, an original mini educational graphic novel in which vocabulary, expressions, and figurative language are embedded in a fictional story. The resource combines character-based storytelling, sequential illustrations, chapter-specific terminology notes, and a voice-acted audiobook. A descriptive quantitative, cross-sectional approach was adopted involving 45 respondents recruited through convenience sampling. Participants evaluated the prologue/prototype of VVISOR using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Available item-level distributions addressed narrative clarity, dialogue, visual appeal, character relatability, and enjoyment; additional charts addressed perceived vocabulary accessibility, exposure to new expressions, and enjoyment of language use. The findings indicated favourable reader evaluations. For storyline clarity, 24 respondents (53.3%) strongly agreed and 13 (28.9%) agreed that the narrative was easy to follow (37/45; 82.2% combined). For dialogue, 25 respondents (55.6%) strongly agreed and 12 (26.7%) agreed that it was clear and engaging (37/45; 82.2% combined). Positive agreement was also recorded for artwork and colour (39/45; 86.7%), illustrations (37/45; 82.2%), story enjoyment (36/45; 80.0%), and character appeal (35/45; 77.8%). The original charts likewise suggested predominantly positive perceptions of vocabulary accessibility and exposure, although the source does not provide verified tabulated distributions for those items. As participants evaluated the multimodal features of the digital VVISOR prologue/prototype, the findings provide preliminary evidence of reader acceptance rather than demonstrated improvements in English-language proficiency. VVISOR therefore represents a promising multimodal design for supplementary English-language reading, but claims about its instructional effectiveness require subsequent controlled assessment. The study contributes preliminary evidence about reader perceptions and identifies priorities for evaluating educational graphic novels more rigorously.

Keywords: Educational graphic novel, VVISOR, reader perceptions, multimodal learning, English vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

English-language learning materials can combine written language, sequential imagery, and recorded speech to offer contextual encounters with words and expressions. In a graphic novel, linguistic meaning develops through dialogue, visual action, and narrative progression rather than isolated vocabulary lists. Such integration may be attractive to readers, but positive impressions should not be confused with demonstrated learning outcomes.

VVISOR is an original mini educational graphic novel whose protagonist activates abilities through words and their meanings. Its name combines the project-related "V" with "visor"; the double V also evokes "Wisor,"

resembling “wiser” and symbolising knowledge development. The resource incorporates character interactions, illustrated panels, contextual expressions, chapter-specific terminology explanations, and a voice-acted audiobook. These are design features intended to support engagement and access to language in context, not established causal mechanisms.

Although previous studies have examined the educational potential of graphic novels and multimodal reading materials, relatively limited attention has been given to readers' initial perceptions of original educational graphic novels that integrate vocabulary-based fictional storytelling, visual narratives, terminology support, and audio features within a single resource. This study addresses this gap by examining readers' perceptions of the VVISOR prologue/prototype. Specifically, it explores narrative clarity, vocabulary accessibility, visual appeal, and reading enjoyment. The study is guided by the following research question: How do surveyed readers evaluate the accessibility and appeal of VVISOR as a language-oriented reading resource?

Unlike studies that primarily examine the instructional outcomes of graphic novels or digital comics, the present study focuses on readers' initial perceptions of an original multimodal educational graphic novel. By examining narrative accessibility, visual appeal, vocabulary accessibility, and reading enjoyment, the study provides preliminary insights into the acceptability of VVISOR as a supplementary English-language reading resource.

The specific contribution is a feature-integrated, prototype-stage reader-perception account. Unlike research centred on classroom interventions, this study documents how readers initially evaluate a single original resource combining word-driven fictional events, sequential art, terminology explanations, and voice-acted narration. This narrower gap concerns early acceptability and perceived accessibility of the integrated design.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

This section reviews relevant literature on contextual vocabulary learning, visual storytelling, and multimodal approaches to English-language reading. It draws on perspectives from extensive reading, second-language acquisition, and visual narrative studies to establish a conceptual foundation for examining readers' perceptions of VVISOR. Particular attention is given to narrative clarity, vocabulary accessibility, visual appeal, and reading enjoyment as key dimensions of the reading experience.

Contextual Reading and Vocabulary Exposure

Day and Bamford (1998) emphasise the role of accessible and engaging texts in extensive reading, while Grabe and Stoller (2011) discuss reading as an integrated process of linguistic and strategic meaning construction. Krashen (1982) highlights comprehensible input within second-language acquisition. Taken together, these perspectives justify examining whether readers regard a narrative as understandable and its language as accessible. They do not, however, establish that exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary produces retention or transfer in the absence of direct assessment.

Recent empirical research has highlighted the relevance of multimodal texts in English-language reading. Yawiloeng (2022), in a study involving 34 EFL undergraduate students, found that participants expressed positive perceptions of visual and multimodal texts used alongside instructional scaffolding. The findings suggest that combining linguistic and visual information may support learners' perceived understanding of reading materials. This perspective is relevant to VVISOR, which integrates vocabulary and expressions within an illustrated narrative. However, the present study examines readers' initial perceptions rather than objectively measured reading comprehension.

Sequential Art and Multimodal Meaning-Making

McCloud (1993) describes the contribution of sequential panels to storytelling, and Cohn (2013) examines the structure and cognition of visual narrative. Albers and Harste (2007) connect visual and arts-based practices

with literacy and multimodal meaning-making. These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for considering readers’ evaluations of panel sequencing, artwork, and characters. A favourable visual rating is evidence of perceived appeal, not proof that visual design improved reading comprehension.

Venetopoulou and Kalasaridou (2024) investigated the use of a graphic novel among seven EFL secondary school students and reported positive responses to visual storytelling, reading strategies, and learner engagement. Their findings highlight the potential of combining textual and visual elements to support meaning-making during reading. Similarly, VVISOR incorporates sequential illustrations, character interactions, and narrative dialogue to create a multimodal reading experience. Nevertheless, the present study focuses on readers' evaluations of these features rather than their effects on language proficiency.

Dialogue, Storytelling and Audio

Dialogue can locate expressions within communicative situations and character relationships (Tannen, 2007; Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Digital storytelling scholarship describes educational opportunities created by combining narrative and media (Robin, 2008; Kervin & Mantei, 2015). VVISOR additionally provides voice acting and chapter-level terminology notes. The survey results cannot distinguish the effects of audio, terminology support, and visual storytelling, so these should be treated as potential educational affordances rather than independently verified contributors to learning.

Wati et al. (2025) explored EFL students' engagement with digital comics and identified behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of reading engagement. Their findings indicated that visual narratives and storylines were important aspects of participants' reading experiences. These observations provide a relevant empirical perspective for examining VVISOR's narrative clarity, dialogue, and visual appeal. However, the present study does not measure sustained reading engagement or isolate the contribution of individual multimodal features, including audio support.

Conceptual Focus of the Present Study

The study focuses on perceived narrative accessibility, enjoyment, visual appeal, and perceived access to vocabulary. These constructs describe initial reader acceptance of a designed resource. They are analytically distinct from vocabulary growth, pronunciation development, and objectively assessed comprehension, none of which was measured in the available evaluation.

Collectively, these studies highlight the relevance of visual storytelling, contextual language exposure, and multimodal features in shaping readers' experiences with English-language materials. However, the present study differs by examining readers' immediate perceptions of an original educational graphic novel that integrates fictional storytelling, vocabulary support, illustrations, and audio. This distinction provides a focused basis for evaluating the perceived accessibility and appeal of VVISOR without assuming measurable language-learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology employed to examine readers' perceptions of VVISOR. The study adopted a descriptive quantitative approach involving 45 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire following participants' exposure to the prologue/prototype of VVISOR. The methodology focuses on evaluating readers' perceptions of narrative clarity, vocabulary accessibility, visual appeal, and reading enjoyment rather than measuring actual language-learning outcomes.

Research Design

This study used a descriptive quantitative, cross-sectional reader-perception design. Questionnaire response distributions were summarised at item level. No intervention comparison, random assignment or pre- and post-test was reported; accordingly, the study does not evaluate causal effects or measured language improvement.

Development of VVISOR

The development of VVISOR involved several stages, including concept planning, story and scriptwriting, character and panel design, illustration, preparation of terminology sections, voice recording and editing,

proofreading, and finalisation. English vocabulary and expressions were integrated into character dialogues and narrative events, with the protagonist's abilities linked to the meanings of specific words. Chapter-specific terminology sections were also incorporated to provide explanations and contextual examples drawn from the storyline. The development process was guided by a Gantt chart outlining an approximately 15-week production schedule.

Participants and Sampling

A total of 45 respondents participated in this study. A convenience sampling technique was employed to recruit participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The study was open to respondents of all age groups and educational backgrounds, without restrictions on age or educational qualifications. Participants evaluated VVISOR, a multimodal educational graphic novel incorporating English vocabulary and expressions through fictional storytelling, illustrations, dialogue, and audio. Their responses were used to examine perceptions of narrative clarity, vocabulary accessibility, visual appeal, and reading enjoyment.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire entitled Reader Preference Survey: A Mini Educational Graphic Novel. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire assessed respondents' perceptions of storyline clarity, dialogue, character appeal, illustrations, visual presentation, and reading enjoyment. Additional items addressed vocabulary accessibility, exposure to unfamiliar words and expressions, and enjoyment of language use. The questionnaire was reviewed by an expert in language education to assess its content relevance, clarity, and appropriateness for evaluating readers' perceptions of VVISOR. This expert review provided preliminary support for the content relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items. The instrument was designed to capture readers' perceptions rather than objectively measure vocabulary acquisition or reading comprehension.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from 45 respondents recruited through convenience sampling. Participants were provided with the digital version of the VVISOR prologue/prototype, incorporating narrative text, sequential illustrations, character dialogue and an accompanying audiobook. Following their engagement with these multimodal features, respondents completed a structured reader-preference questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to assess their perceptions of narrative clarity, dialogue, visual appeal, character relatability, vocabulary accessibility and reading enjoyment. The collected responses were subsequently analysed using descriptive statistics, primarily frequencies and percentages.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, primarily frequencies and percentages, to summarise respondents' perceptions of VVISOR. Responses were categorised according to the five-point Likert scale. The percentages of respondents selecting agree and strongly agree were combined to identify favourable perceptions across the evaluated dimensions. The analysis focused on describing response patterns rather than establishing statistically significant differences or causal relationships. No inferential statistical tests were conducted.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the six fully reported item distributions. Values are presented as reconstructed frequencies (n) and percentages (%) across the five-point response scale, based on 45 respondents.The frequencies in Table 1 were reconstructed from previously reported rounded percentages for N = 45. Each row totals 45, and the displayed percentages are mathematically consistent after rounding.

Table 1. Readers' perceptions of VVISOR (N = 45; n and % reconstructed from reported percentages)

Survey item	1 n (%)	2 n (%)	3 n (%)	4 n (%)	5 n (%)
Story interesting and enjoyable	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	7 (15.6)	18 (40.0)	18 (40.0)
Characters appealing and relatable	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	9 (20.0)	18 (40.0)	17 (37.8)
Illustrations attractive and creative	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	7 (15.6)	17 (37.8)	20 (44.4)
Colour and artwork engaging	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (11.1)	19 (42.2)	20 (44.4)
Storyline easy to follow	0 (0.0)	3 (6.7)	5 (11.1)	13 (28.9)	24 (53.3)
Dialogue clear and engaging	1 (2.2)	2 (4.4)	5 (11.1)	12 (26.7)	25 (55.6)

Note: N = 45. Values are presented as frequency (n) and percentage (%). The five-point Likert scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), where 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral and 4 = Agree. Combined percentages are calculated directly from frequencies; minor differences from sums of rounded item percentages may occur.

Narrative Clarity and Dialogue

For storyline clarity, 24 respondents (53.3%) strongly agreed and 13 respondents (28.9%) agreed that the storyline was easy to follow, representing 37 respondents (82.2%) overall. Regarding dialogue, 25 respondents (55.6%) strongly agreed and 12 respondents (26.7%) agreed that it was clear and engaging, representing 37 respondents (82.2%) overall. These figures reflect respondents' perceptions of readability and dialogue quality rather than objectively tested comprehension.

Visual Appeal and Enjoyment

Illustrations were rated attractive and creative by 37 respondents (82.2%), while 39 respondents (86.7%) positively evaluated colour and artwork. Positive agreement was also recorded for story enjoyment among 36 respondents (80.0%) and character appeal among 35 respondents (77.8%). These figures represent respondents selecting agree or strongly agree and indicate favourable evaluations of the presentation and reading experience.

Perceived Vocabulary Accessibility and Exposure

The survey findings include two pie charts illustrating readers' perceptions of vocabulary accessibility and exposure to new words or phrases, alongside a third chart highlighting their enjoyment of language use. Overall, the charts suggest predominantly positive reader perceptions. These findings reflect readers' perceived vocabulary accessibility, language exposure and enjoyment.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to relevant literature on educational graphic novels, contextual language learning and multimodal reading experiences. The discussion focuses on readers' perceptions of narrative clarity, visual appeal, vocabulary accessibility and reading enjoyment based on their evaluation of the VVISOR prologue/prototype. The findings are interpreted within the context of reader engagement and the potential educational value of multimodal storytelling, rather than as evidence of measurable language-learning improvements.

Narrative Accessibility and Reader Engagement

The positive ratings for story clarity and dialogue suggest that respondents found the narrative approachable. This is compatible with the emphasis on accessible texts in extensive-reading perspectives (Day & Bamford, 1998) and with accounts of reading as active meaning construction (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). However, the evaluation concerned immediate impressions of a specific resource, not sustained extensive reading, change in reading motivation or tested comprehension. The results therefore provide an early indication of acceptability rather than evidence of instructional effectiveness.

The findings are also broadly consistent with Wati et al. (2025), who highlighted the relevance of visual narratives and storylines to EFL students' reading engagement. Similarly, the positive evaluations of VVISOR's storyline and dialogue suggest that respondents appreciated its narrative presentation. However, unlike studies examining broader dimensions of reading engagement, the present study was limited to immediate reader perceptions of a digital prologue/prototype.

Visual Storytelling and Multimodal Reading Experience

Favourable ratings for illustrations, colour and character appeal are consistent with the importance of sequential visual organisation in accounts of comics and visual narrative (McCloud, 1993; Cohn, 2013). The present findings extend this design rationale by documenting readers' responses to a particular educational graphic novel. Nevertheless, respondents evaluated the integrated product; the analysis cannot determine which visual or narrative feature accounted for favourable impressions. These findings also share similarities with Venetopoulou and Kalasaridou (2024), who reported favourable responses to visual storytelling among EFL learners using a graphic novel. The positive evaluations of VVISOR's illustrations, artwork and characters further highlight the perceived appeal of integrating visual and textual elements in educational reading materials. Nevertheless, the present findings reflect readers' subjective evaluations rather than measurable improvements in language proficiency.

Vocabulary Accessibility and Contextual Language

The source charts suggest that readers perceived the vocabulary as understandable and encountered unfamiliar words or phrases. This observation aligns conceptually with comprehensible-input and contextual-reading perspectives (Krashen, 1982; Day & Bamford, 1998), but no objective vocabulary recognition, retention or use task was administered. Moreover, without verified item-level values, the strength of the vocabulary-related findings should not be overstated. The design embeds words in character interactions and offers terminology explanations; the extent to which these elements support learning remains a question for subsequent research.

Educational Significance and Interpretation

VVISOR integrates narrative text, sequential illustrations, character dialogue, contextual vocabulary and voice-acted audio within a multimodal educational resource. The favourable reader evaluations highlight its potential as a supplementary English-language reading material. Nevertheless, further empirical investigation is necessary to determine how its individual features contribute to language-learning outcomes.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Teachers could explore VVISOR as supplementary material for guided reading, contextual vocabulary discussion, interpretation of figurative expressions and discussion of character dialogue. Terminology notes could inform short follow-up activities, while audio recordings could provide optional listening and pronunciation practice. Such uses should be aligned with learners' proficiency levels and accompanied by explicit objectives and direct assessment.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling involving 45 respondents limits the generalisability of the findings. Second, the evaluation focused solely on the digital prologue/prototype of VVISOR rather than the completed graphic novel. Although participants experienced its integrated textual,

visual and auditory features, the individual contributions of these components were not examined. Furthermore, reliance on self-reported questionnaire responses may introduce response bias, as participants' perceptions may not accurately reflect their actual reading experiences or language proficiency. The absence of objective language assessments and a comparison group also prevents conclusions regarding improvements in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension or pronunciation. Future research should involve larger and more representative samples, evaluate the completed VVISOR graphic novel and further establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Original survey data should also be systematically verified to ensure the accuracy of reported frequencies and percentages, while participant characteristics and recruitment procedures should be documented more comprehensively. Additionally, future studies could employ pre- and post-tests, comparison groups and objective language assessments to examine potential improvements in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and pronunciation. Qualitative interviews could further enrich understanding of readers' experiences with VVISOR. Importantly, future investigations should distinguish between readers' perceptions of the resource and objectively measured language-learning outcomes to provide more robust evidence of its educational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study examined readers' perceptions of VVISOR, a multimodal educational graphic novel designed to integrate English vocabulary and expressions through fictional storytelling. The findings revealed generally favourable perceptions of narrative clarity, dialogue, visual appeal and reading enjoyment. These results provide preliminary insights into the acceptance of VVISOR as a supplementary English-language reading resource. However, as the study relied on self-reported perceptions of a digital prologue/prototype, its findings do not establish measurable improvements in language proficiency. Future research should evaluate the completed graphic novel using objective language assessments and more representative samples to further investigate its educational potential.

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