



The Role of Visual and Interactive Media in Teaching English to Elementary School Students: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of visual and interactive media in teaching English to elementary school students through a systematic literature review. Employing a qualitative approach, the study analyzes relevant scholarly publications from the past ten years. The findings reveal that visual and interactive media significantly contribute to enhancing students' learning motivation, vocabulary acquisition, active participation, communication skills, and the development of meaningful learning environments. Visual media—such as images, flashcards, and videos—facilitate students' comprehension of language concepts by presenting them in concrete and contextualized forms. Meanwhile, interactive media—including digital games and multimedia applications—encourage active engagement and collaborative learning experiences. Furthermore, the integration of these media reduces language anxiety and fosters an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. As a result, students demonstrate greater confidence in using English and increased involvement in learning activities. Therefore, the incorporation of visual and interactive media is essential for promoting effective, engaging, and meaningful English language instruction at the elementary school level.

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INTRODUCTION

English functions as a global lingua franca utilized across various domains, including education, technology, business, and international communication. Consequently, introducing English at an early age—particularly at the elementary school level—constitutes a strategic effort to gradually develop students' linguistic competence. Early exposure to foreign language learning is widely recognized as beneficial for fostering pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary development, and communicative confidence.

English instruction for elementary school students must align with their developmental characteristics. Young learners tend to prefer visually stimulating materials, colorful illustrations, interactive tasks, and hands-on activities. Conventional and teacher-centered instructional approaches often result in boredom, limited engagement, and reduced motivation to learn a foreign language (Nasution et al., 2025). Therefore, pedagogical strategies must be adapted to accommodate students' cognitive and affective needs.

Several studies indicate that low learning motivation among elementary school students frequently stems from the use of monotonous teaching methods and insufficient instructional media. The implementation of interactive learning media has been identified as an effective strategy to enhance student engagement, sustain interest, and improve conceptual understanding. Interactive media enables learners



to participate actively in the instructional process, thereby creating a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Ningsi & Hartono, 2025).

Empirical evidence further supports the effectiveness of visual media in English vocabulary instruction. A study examining the use of image-based media in elementary schools found that students initially experienced difficulties in vocabulary mastery due to limited exposure and ineffective instructional strategies. After integrating image media into classroom instruction, students' vocabulary achievement improved significantly. The average pretest score of 65.83 increased to 95.00 in the posttest, demonstrating the substantial impact of visual media on vocabulary acquisition (Jamal et al., 2025).

Similarly, Nafis, Maulidar, and Indrawan (2025) reported improvements in learning outcomes following the implementation of interactive digital media. Prior to the intervention, only 32% of students achieved the minimum passing grade, with a class average of 65.2. After incorporating interactive digital media into instruction, 92% of students met the passing criteria, and the class average increased to 84.6. These findings indicate that visual and interactive media enhance conceptual understanding, increase student participation, and contribute to more meaningful learning experiences.

In the digital era, technological advancements provide substantial opportunities for pedagogical innovation, particularly in English language instruction at the elementary level. Visual media—such as images, videos, animations, and cartoons—alongside interactive tools such as educational games and multimedia applications, have been empirically shown to enhance students' interest, motivation, and academic achievement. Wasito et al. (2022) demonstrated that visual media significantly increased student participation and facilitated clearer and more efficient concept comprehension.

Moreover, visual and interactive media have proven effective in strengthening language skills, particularly vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Parede et al. (2022) reported that the integration of images and cartoons into language instruction significantly improved students' vocabulary test scores. These findings suggest that visual media not only capture learners' attention but also produce measurable improvements in language proficiency.

Despite the growing body of research on visual and interactive media, most previous studies have examined these media types independently. Comprehensive syntheses that comparatively analyze their respective and combined contributions in elementary English instruction remain limited. Therefore, this literature review seeks to provide a conceptual synthesis and comparative analysis of the role of visual and interactive media in enhancing the quality of English language learning at the elementary school level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a literature review design to systematically examine the role of visual and interactive media in elementary English instruction. The literature review method enables researchers to analyze, synthesize, and interpret findings from previous studies in order to develop



a comprehensive and structured understanding of the research topic (Febrianto et al., 2024).

Data Sources

The data for this study were derived from national and international scientific journal articles indexed in SINTA, Google Scholar, and Scopus, as well as relevant conference proceedings. The literature search was conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar and national journal portals. The keywords applied in the search process included *visual media*, *interactive media*, *English learning*, *young learners*, and *elementary school students*. These keywords were selected to ensure alignment with the focus and objectives of the study.

Inclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected literature, the following inclusion criteria were established:

- a. Articles published within the last ten years (2015–2025);
- b. Studies focusing on the use of visual media and/or interactive media in instructional contexts;
- c. Research involving elementary school students or young English language learners as participants; and
- d. Articles published in peer-reviewed journals or reputable conference proceedings with academic credibility and open accessibility.

Research Procedure

The research process was conducted in several systematic stages:

- a. **Literature Identification:** Articles were identified through database searches using predetermined keywords.
- b. **Screening and Selection:** Titles, abstracts, and full texts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the research focus.
- c. **Content Analysis:** Selected articles were analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques to identify major themes and patterns related to the use of visual and interactive media in English language learning.

Data Analysis

The analytical procedure involved:

- a. Grouping articles according to research focus;
- b. Coding key findings and theoretical frameworks;
- c. Identifying recurring patterns and dominant themes; and
- d. Synthesizing findings to formulate conceptual conclusions regarding the contribution of visual and interactive media to students' motivation, vocabulary mastery, active participation, and communication skills.

Through this systematic approach, the study aims to produce a comprehensive theoretical mapping and an integrated understanding of the effectiveness of visual and interactive media in supporting English language instruction at the elementary school level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of visual and interactive media in English language learning at the elementary school level, this study systematically analyzed a range of relevant empirical studies. The analysis aimed to map recurring patterns concerning the contribution of visual and interactive media to students' learning motivation, vocabulary mastery, active participation, communication skills, and the creation of meaningful learning environments.

The findings of the reviewed studies are summarized in Table 1 to facilitate thematic identification and comparative analysis. The tabular presentation provides a concise overview of the researchers, types of media implemented, principal findings, and their pedagogical impact on English language learning outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of Empirical Studies on Visual and Interactive Media in Elementary English Learning

No	Researcher & Year	Type of Media	Key Findings	Pedagogical Impact
1	Jamal et al. (2025)	Image-based visual media	Mean pretest score increased from 65.83 to 95.00 in the posttest	Improved vocabulary mastery
2	Nafis, Maulidar, & Indrawan (2025)	Interactive digital media	Learning completeness increased from 32% to 92%	Enhanced conceptual understanding and learning outcomes
3	Parede et al. (2022)	Visual media (pictures and cartoons)	Significant improvement in vocabulary scores	Facilitated concrete vocabulary comprehension
4	Wasito et al. (2022)	Visual media	Increased participation and comprehension	Strengthened engagement and learning interest
5	Setiawan & Putra (2024)	Kahoot (interactive quiz)	Approximately 90% of students achieved above-average scores	Increased participation and motivation
6	Monigir & Wakari (2024)	Wordwall (digital quiz)	Increased active student engagement	Promoted student-centered learning
7	Ramadhani et al. (2024)	Interactive multimedia	Improved student communication abilities	Strengthened communication skills
8	Nasution et al. (2025)	English visual media	Learning became more enjoyable and engaging	Increased interest in learning English
9	Pambudi et al. (2024)	Flashcards	Improved vocabulary retention through visualization	Strengthened vocabulary memory
10	Prayoga et al. (2025)	Interactive digital media	Significantly increased motivation and engagement	Created meaningful learning environments

Increased Motivation and Learning Interest

Learning motivation constitutes a fundamental determinant of successful English language acquisition at the elementary level. Young learners require concrete stimuli and enjoyable learning experiences aligned with their developmental characteristics. Monotonous instruction and excessive emphasis on rote memorization frequently result in diminished attention and disengagement.

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that both visual and interactive media positively influence students' intrinsic motivation. Visual media—such as images, animations, and videos—capture attention and enhance curiosity by presenting abstract language concepts in concrete forms (Fatimah et al., 2025; Imeldasari et al., 2025). Similarly, game-based interactive media encourage enthusiasm and voluntary participation (Andika et al., 2025).

From a psychological perspective, the integration of visual and interactive media contributes to reducing foreign language anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986, as cited



in Rasyida & Kusuma, 2023) conceptualize foreign language anxiety as emotional tension arising from the complexity of language learning processes. By fostering a relaxed and enjoyable classroom climate, interactive media enable students to experiment with language production without fear of negative evaluation. This supportive atmosphere strengthens learners' willingness to communicate—an essential prerequisite for speaking skill development.

Overall, visual media function as attention catalysts, whereas interactive media reinforce engagement through participation and competition. Their complementary roles significantly enhance motivation and create a conducive learning atmosphere.

Improved Vocabulary and Conceptual Understanding

Vocabulary mastery represents a foundational component of early English learning. Elementary students typically acquire basic lexical items related to everyday objects and activities; therefore, instructional strategies must promote contextual and meaningful comprehension rather than isolated memorization.

The literature review reveals consistent evidence regarding the effectiveness of visual media in vocabulary acquisition (Pambudi et al., 2024; Parede et al., 2022). Image-based resources, flashcards, cartoons, and animations facilitate dual representation of lexical items—verbal and visual—thereby strengthening semantic associations.

These findings align with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which posits that information is processed through two interconnected systems: a verbal system (text and sound) and a nonverbal system (visual imagery) (Listiyani et al., 2025). When vocabulary instruction integrates images with written or spoken forms, learners activate both systems, resulting in stronger memory retention and deeper conceptual understanding.

Furthermore, animated videos and song-based instructional media (Hamdani et al., 2025) support contextual usage of vocabulary in simple sentence structures. Consequently, visual media not only enhance lexical recognition but also contribute to early syntactic awareness.

Increased Engagement and Active Participation

Effective language instruction should prioritize communicative competence. The reviewed studies highlight the substantial role of interactive digital media—such as Kahoot, Wordwall, and multimedia-based applications—in promoting active student engagement.

Monigir and Wakari (2024) reported that Wordwall-based quizzes significantly increased student participation, transforming learners from passive recipients into active contributors. Similarly, Setiawan and Putra (2024) observed that approximately 90% of students achieved above-average scores following Kahoot-based instruction. Students expressed positive attitudes, noting that interactive quizzes made learning enjoyable, competitive, and memorable.

These outcomes reflect the principles of student-centered learning, wherein learners actively construct knowledge through participation, collaboration, and reflection (Indayani & Hartini, 2024). Teachers function as facilitators who guide practice and provide constructive feedback.

Active engagement also enhances cognitive processing. Participation in interactive tasks increases concentration, supports repetition, and strengthens long-



term memory formation. Additionally, communicative practice in supportive environments reinforces learners' self-confidence.

Strengthening Communication Skills

Visual and interactive media contribute substantially to the development of students' communication skills across the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Visual aids assist learners in associating vocabulary with contextual meaning, thereby supporting both oral and written expression (Habib & Fahriany, 2025). Interactive multimedia—including animated videos and educational applications—further enhances comprehension and speaking practice by simulating real-life communicative situations (Prayoga et al., 2025).

Moreover, Ramadhani et al. (2024) demonstrated that interactive multimedia promotes digital literacy, indirectly supporting communication competence in contemporary learning environments. Hambandima and Seseli (2025) emphasized that meaningful teacher-student interaction facilitated by visual media strengthens communicative exchanges.

Collectively, these findings suggest that visual and interactive media extend beyond content delivery functions; they actively shape communicative competence and learner confidence.

Creating a Meaningful Learning Environment

A meaningful learning environment enables students to connect new knowledge with prior experiences in relevant and contextualized ways. Visual media increase engagement and facilitate concrete understanding (Wasito et al., 2022), while literacy-based visual strategies support idea generation and organization (Ningsi & Hartono, 2025).

Interactive media enhance this environment by fostering participation, collaboration, and experiential learning (Parede et al., 2022). When English instruction integrates visual and interactive elements, learning resembles play-based exploration, which aligns with the developmental profile of young learners (Nasution et al., 2025). Thus, visual media primarily stimulate interest through sensory engagement, whereas interactive media deepen motivation through active involvement. Together, they construct a holistic and meaningful instructional ecology.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this literature review demonstrate that visual and interactive media play a significant role in enhancing the quality of English language learning at the elementary level. Visual media—such as images, videos, flashcards, and animations—facilitate concrete conceptualization aligned with young learners' cognitive characteristics. Interactive media—including digital games, multimedia applications, and online quizzes—promote active engagement and participatory learning.

Empirical evidence consistently indicates improvements in learning motivation, vocabulary mastery, student participation, communication skills, and the establishment of meaningful learning environments. Importantly, these media encourage not only knowledge retention but also practical language use in communicative contexts.



Therefore, the strategic integration of visual and interactive media is strongly recommended for effective English instruction in elementary schools. Educators should thoughtfully select and implement pedagogical technologies to ensure active, communicative, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that address the demands of the digital era.

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