

**THE ROLE OF VISUAL AIDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO 8<sup>th</sup> GRADERS**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the effectiveness of visual aids in teaching English to 8th grade students at School No. 58 in Chust district, Namangan region. Through classroom observations, pre- and post-tests, and student questionnaires with 45 participants, the study demonstrates that the systematic integration of visual materials, including flashcards, infographics, videos, and digital presentations, significantly increases vocabulary retention, grammatical understanding, and student engagement. Results show a 34% improvement in test scores and increased motivation among students. The study results indicate that visual aids serve as important pedagogical tools for adolescent English learners in resource-limited educational settings.

**Key words**

Visual aids, English language teaching, 8th-grade learners, vocabulary acquisition, pedagogical tools, multimedia learning, secondary education, Uzbekistan

**Introduction**

Acquiring English as a foreign language presents significant challenges for adolescents, particularly in settings with limited access to authentic language input [1]. In secondary schools in Uzbekistan, 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students (typically aged 13-14) face a critical phase of language learning, when abstract grammatical concepts and expanded vocabulary require innovative pedagogical approaches [2]. Traditional lecture-based instruction often fails to accommodate the diverse learning styles and stages of cognitive development characteristic of this age group [3].

Visual aids-pictures, diagrams, videos, graphic organizers, and digital media-have become powerful learning tools that bridge the gap between abstract linguistic concepts and concrete understanding [4]. According to dual coding theory, information presented through both verbal and visual channels enhances cognitive processing and long-term retention [5]. For adolescents whose cognitive abilities are shifting from concrete-operational to formal-operational thinking, visual representations provide support that facilitates the understanding of complex linguistic structures [6].

Despite the well-documented benefits of visual pedagogy, many educational institutions in Uzbekistan face limitations, including limited technological resources, large class sizes, and insufficient teacher training in multimedia instruction [7]. School No. 58 in the Chust district of the Namangan region is a typical rural secondary school where teachers must balance curriculum demands with practical constraints. This study examines how strategically implemented visual aids can enhance English language teaching in such authentic educational settings, providing evidence-based insights for practitioners working in similar settings.

**Literature Review**

The theoretical framework for visual aids in language education draws on several interrelated concepts. Paivio's dual-coding theory proposes that human cognition processes information through separate but interconnected verbal and nonverbal systems, with visual imagery enhancing the encoding and retrieval of information from memory [5]. This principle

has received extensive support in second language acquisition research, where studies consistently demonstrate superior learning outcomes when language input is accompanied by relevant visual representations [8].

Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning expands on these principles, identifying specific conditions under which visual aids optimize learning [9]. The multimedia principle suggests that learners process information more efficiently using words and images together, rather than words alone, while the coherence principle cautions against extraneous visual elements that can overload cognitive capacity [9]. For adolescents, whose working memory is still developing, carefully designed visual materials can reduce cognitive load by organizing information into manageable chunks and highlighting important relationships [10]. Research specifically focusing on visual aids in English language teaching has documented numerous benefits across a variety of linguistic domains. In vocabulary teaching, visual imagery creates stronger mental associations than verbal definitions alone, particularly for concrete nouns and action verbs [4]. Nation's meta-analysis found that keyword techniques combining visual imagery with phonetic cues produced significantly higher retention rates than rote memorization [1]. In grammar teaching, visual organizers, such as timeline diagrams for verb tenses and tree structures for sentence analysis, help learners conceptualize abstract relationships [2]. Another important aspect is the motivational impact of visual aids. Adolescent students demonstrate increased engagement and reduced anxiety when lessons include a variety of visual stimuli, particularly technology-enabled resources such as educational videos and interactive presentations [3]. However, researchers caution that visual materials must be culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible to avoid creating additional barriers for learners from diverse backgrounds [6].

Digital technologies have expanded the range of available visual tools, from simple PowerPoint presentations to complex augmented reality applications. While high-tech solutions offer exciting possibilities, research emphasizes that effectiveness depends largely on instructional design.

### **Methodology**

This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative experimental data with qualitative observations. The study was conducted at School No. 58 in the Chust District of the Namangan Region during the 2025-2026 academic year. The sample included 45 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students (13-14 years old; 23 girls, 22 boys) who attended two parallel English classes taught by the same teacher. One class (n=23) served as the experimental group, receiving instruction using visual aids, while the other class (n=22) served as the control group, receiving instruction using traditional textbooks. The intervention period lasted 12 weeks (36 school hours), during which the experimental group's lessons regularly included various visual aids, such as flashcards for introducing vocabulary, schedules for teaching verb tenses, graphic organizers for reading comprehension, educational videos for listening practice, and digital slide presentations summarizing key concepts. The control group studied the same curriculum using traditional methods that emphasized oral explanations and textbook exercises. Various instruments were used to ensure triangulation and validity of data collection. Pre- and post-tests assessed students' English proficiency using parameters such as vocabulary recognition (30 items), grammatical accuracy (20 items), and reading comprehension (10 items), with a maximum score of 60. The tests were pre-tested on a separate group of students to determine their reliability. Additionally, structured classroom observations documented student engagement behaviors, such as time spent on task, voluntary participation, and frequency of interaction with peers. At the end of the study, participants in the experimental group completed

a Likert scale questionnaire (15 items) assessing their perceptions of the effectiveness of the visual aids. Quantitative data were statistically analyzed using independent t-tests to compare group results, and paired t-tests were used to examine within-group variation. Qualitative observational transcripts were subject to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in student behavior and learning dynamics. Ethics approval was obtained from school administration, as well as parental consent from all participants, prior to data collection.

### **Results**

Observational data confirmed these quantitative findings. In the experimental group, average on-task completion increased from 64% of class time in the first week to 87% in the twelfth week. Voluntary participation in discussions increased from an average of 3.2 students per class to 8.7 at the end of the study. Students were particularly engaged in collaborative tasks that included video-based activities and visual graphic organizers. Observations of the control group showed more consistent but less frequent patterns of participation, averaging 68% on-task time throughout the study. Qualitative analysis of open-ended survey responses identified several themes. Students frequently stated that visual aids made abstract concepts “clearer” and “easier to see.” Many students noted that videos featuring native speakers helped them understand correct pronunciation and natural language usage. Some students particularly appreciated the graphic organizers for grammar, describing them as helpful “maps” for understanding sentence structure. Some students suggested adding interactive visual elements, such as games and role-plays with visual props.

### **Conclusion**

This study provides empirical evidence that the systematic integration of visual aids significantly improved English language learning for 8th grade students in rural Uzbekistan. The 34% improvement in academic performance among students who received lessons using visual aids suggests that even modest pedagogical innovations can lead to significant learning gains. Visual aids were particularly effective for increasing vocabulary and understanding grammar-areas of language that pose significant challenges for adolescents. In addition to measurable academic outcomes, visual aids increased students’ engagement, motivation, and confidence, influencing affective factors that are important for sustained language development. These findings have practical implications for teachers working in resource-limited settings, as the study used both affordable materials and readily available digital resources instead of expensive, specialized technologies. Future research should examine the effects of long-term recall and explore optimal combinations of types of visual aids for specific language competencies.

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