



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING VISUALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR PRE-SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Visual materials play a significant role in early childhood education, especially in teaching foreign languages. Pre-school students learn best through concrete images, colors, and attractive objects because their cognitive skills are still developing. This article explores the effectiveness of using visuals—such as flashcards, realia, pictures, storybooks, and digital images—in teaching English to pre-school learners. It highlights the benefits of visual support, describes the most effective visual techniques, and explains how visuals help improve vocabulary retention, pronunciation, comprehension, and motivation. The article also examines teachers' responsibilities in selecting appropriate visual aids for young learners.*

Keywords: *visual aids, pre-school education, English teaching, early childhood, vocabulary learning, motivation, flashcards, storybooks.*

In recent years, early childhood education has increasingly emphasized the use of multisensory and child-centered instructional approaches, particularly in the field of foreign language teaching. As pre-school learners rely heavily on concrete experiences, visual perception, and contextual cues, visuals have become one of the most effective tools for facilitating language acquisition. Visual supports such as pictures, flashcards, storybooks with illustrations, realia, charts, and digital images help young learners form meaningful associations between words and objects, thus accelerating vocabulary development and improving retention.

Teaching English to pre-school students presents unique challenges due to their limited attention span, developing cognitive abilities, and early-stage literacy skills. Research indicates that at this age, children process information better when it is presented in a visually rich and engaging format. Visuals not only attract attention and maintain motivation but also lower learning anxiety by providing clear, comprehensible input. According to theories of early learning and second language acquisition, particularly the dual-coding theory and Krashen's input hypothesis, visual stimuli enhance comprehension by linking linguistic information with nonverbal representations in memory.



The Role of Visuals in Early English Learning


Visual materials have a crucial impact on teaching English to pre-school learners because they transform abstract linguistic input into concrete, understandable concepts. At this developmental stage, children rely heavily on sensory perception, and visuals help bridge the gap between what they hear and what they understand. Each type of visual aid contributes to the learning process in unique and meaningful ways.

First, flashcards play a fundamental role in building early vocabulary. They provide immediate visual representation of words through simple, clear pictures that match basic concepts familiar to children, such as animals, fruits, colors, toys, and household objects. Flashcards support rapid word recognition and help children form strong mental associations. Through repeated exposure and engaging games, such as matching, guessing, and memory challenges, flashcards not only strengthen vocabulary retention but also develop children's attention and concentration. Because they are easy to use and flexible, flashcards remain one of the most effective tools in early English teaching.

Another important type of visual is realia, or the use of real-life objects in the classroom. Young children learn best through direct experiences, and realia allows them to touch, see, and interact with actual items rather than only pictures. When a teacher brings real fruits, toys, clothing items, or classroom objects, children immediately connect the English word with something concrete and familiar. This multisensory experience—seeing, touching, and sometimes smelling the object—deepens memory and makes learning more engaging. Realia also supports meaningful communication, as children naturally begin to describe, compare, and categorize real items, which enhances their early speaking skills.

Storybooks and picture books serve as another powerful visual tool for pre-school learners. The illustrations in storybooks provide contextual clues that help children guess meaning and follow the narrative, even if they cannot read the text themselves. As teachers read stories aloud, the pictures guide children's imagination, support comprehension, and encourage prediction skills. Storybooks introduce vocabulary in meaningful contexts rather than isolated lists, which makes learning more natural and memorable. Moreover, storytelling activities promote emotional involvement, helping children feel connected to characters and events, which increases motivation and encourages active participation.

In addition to traditional visuals, digital visuals such as animations, educational videos, and interactive learning apps have become highly effective in modern pre-school English teaching. Digital visuals combine movement, sound, and color, making them extremely attractive to young children. Animated characters and stories help learners imitate pronunciation more accurately and understand meaning through dynamic actions. Interactive apps allow children to drag, match, sort, and repeat items, turning language practice into an enjoyable game. This type of visual input enhances listening skills, improves pronunciation, and increases children's willingness to participate, especially for those who may struggle with traditional methods.



Finally, classroom posters and wall charts contribute to continuous exposure to English vocabulary. These visuals stay on the walls and provide passive learning opportunities throughout the day. Posters for colors, weather, numbers, the alphabet, and daily routines reinforce language naturally because children see them repeatedly. They also serve as helpful reference tools during speaking activities. For example, when children talk about the weather or identify colors, they can easily refer to the posters, which builds independence and confidence.

In conclusion, each type of visual—flashcards, realia, storybooks, digital visuals, and posters—plays a distinct yet complementary role in teaching English to pre-school children. Flashcards strengthen rapid recognition; realia provides concrete hands-on experience; storybooks build comprehension and imagination; digital visuals increase engagement and interactivity; and posters ensure constant reinforcement. When used together in a balanced way, these visuals create a rich, stimulating, and developmentally appropriate learning environment that maximizes young children’s ability to understand, remember, and use English effectively.

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