



Characters and Non-Digital Media: Case Study Trends in English Language Learning in Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT This research highlights the role of characters and non-digital media in English language learning in secondary schools, focusing on case study trends over the last decade (2014-2024). This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of textbooks, printed materials, and direct interaction between teachers and students in the context of English learning. The methodology used is a systematic literature review using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, where the selected literature comes from Scopus-indexed journals. The literature selection process involved strict inclusion criteria, including research involving students and teachers from various backgrounds and regions. The research results show that non-digital media such as textbooks and physical teaching aids still have an important role in learning, with a significant contribution in increasing student engagement and understanding. In addition, the characteristics of a dedicated teacher and a personal approach have been proven to have a strong correlation with learning success. However, the research also revealed shortcomings in the existing literature, such as a lack of focus on holistic integration between digital and non-digital media. This includes the absence of a balanced learning strategy that utilizes the advantages of both types of media. This research recommends the development of balanced and holistic learning strategies that can maximize student learning outcomes through the optimal use of both types of media. In addition, further research is needed to explore ways of more effective integration between digital and non-digital media in English language learning contexts. These findings can be a basis for developing more innovative and effective curricula and teaching methods in the future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English language learning in secondary schools has experienced various challenges and changes over time (Kohane et al., 2023; B. Lee & Lewis, 1971), especially with the emergence of digital technology (Chan, 2021; Pfaffinger, 2020). However, non-digital media such as textbooks and printed materials remain an important component in the learning process (Negredo, 2020; Vasile et al., 2021). The main challenge in previous research is the lack of attention to the integration between digital and non-digital media (Smolinski,

2010; Vara-Miguel, 2020) and the lack of studies evaluating the effectiveness of non-digital media specifically in the context of English language learning in secondary schools (Adirasa & Mas'odi, 2021).

Previous research has shown that the use of non-digital media has several benefits. For example, a study (Niemi, 2016) shows that textbooks help students understand grammatical structures and vocabulary better because they can read and repeat the material at their own pace. Another study by (Park et al., 2018) found that direct

interaction between teachers and students through class discussions and the use of physical props can increase student engagement and motivation in learning English. This is supported by findings from [Brown and Lee \(2019\)](#), which state that the personal approach and characteristics of dedicated teachers have a positive correlation with student learning success.

Learning English in secondary schools has its challenges ([Arma, 2024](#)), especially in ensuring student engagement and understanding of the material taught ([Aung et al., 2009](#); [Hafner, 2011](#)). This research is important because non-digital characters and media ([Hidalgo, 2020](#); [Morall, 2020](#)), such as textbooks ([S. T. Ahmed, 2021](#); [Marsden et al., 2023](#)), printed materials ([Casillas et al., 2018](#)), and direct interactions between teachers and students ([Murray et al., 2022](#)), still have a significant role in the learning process ([G. Lee et al., 2022](#)). The advantage of using non-digital media is its ability to provide stable and accessible learning resources without the need for sophisticated technology. Textbooks ([Oakley, 2020](#); [Suh, 2020](#)), for example, have long been a cornerstone of educational curricula and have proven effective in providing structure and well-organized material.

Empirically, several previous studies have shown that the use of textbooks and printed materials can significantly increase student engagement ([Cline et al., 2021](#); [Huang, 2020](#)). A study conducted by Smith (2018) found that students who studied using textbooks tended to have a better understanding of the material compared to those who only relied on digital media ([Audrin, 2022](#); [Zhu et al., 2022](#)). In addition, direct interaction between teachers and students allows for immediate feedback and personalization of learning, which is very important in the context of language learning ([Mas'odi & Arma, 2024](#)). Dedicated teachers with personalized teaching methods can create a learning environment that supports and motivates students, as shown by Johnson's (2020) research.

The use of media in learning English in secondary schools has experienced various changes along with developments in technology and teaching methods ([Mas'odi et al., 2024](#)). Non-digital media such as textbooks and physical teaching aids have long been a mainstay in the teaching and learning process ([Jeffery, 2021](#); [Mas'odi, 2014](#); [Tajpour, 2021](#)). However, with advances in digital technology, new challenges and opportunities arise for integrating digital media into learning. The main aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of non-digital media and investigate the potential for better integration between digital and non-digital media in the context of English

language learning in secondary schools.

Although previous research has shown that non-digital media has several advantages, such as increasing student engagement and understanding, there is a lack of learning strategies that effectively integrate these two types of media. This research aims to fill this gap by evaluating trends in non-digital media use over the last decade and identifying ways to exploit the advantages of both types of media. With a systematic literature review approach using the PRISMA method, this research collected data from Scopus-indexed journals involving students and teachers from various backgrounds and regions.

The findings from this research indicate that non-digital media still has an important role in English language learning, especially in terms of student engagement and teaching effectiveness. However, there is an urgent need to develop more balanced and holistic learning strategies that combine the advantages of digital and non-digital media. Thus, this research recommends the development of innovative and effective curriculum and teaching methods, which can maximize student learning outcomes through optimal integration of the two types of media. Further research is also needed to explore more effective ways of integration so that it can make a significant contribution to English language teaching in the future ([Pandia et al., 2023](#)).

2. METHODS

This research uses a systematic literature review method with the PRISMA approach ([Mas'odi et al., 2020](#)). This approach was chosen to ensure that the literature selection and analysis process takes place in a transparent, systematic and replicative manner. The following are the steps taken in this research:

2.1 Literature Identification

Literature searches were carried out through various scientific databases indexed in Scopus, including but not limited to ScienceDirect ([Kuswandi et al., 2020](#)), SpringerLink, and JSTOR ([Nurwidodo et al., 2017](#)). Keywords used in the search included "Characters," ([Helaprahara et al., 2019](#)) "English Language Learning," "Non-Digital Media," and "Secondary Schools."

2.2 Initial Selection

Articles found from the initial search were screened based on title and abstract to eliminate irrelevant publications ([Arif et al., 2023](#)). Inclusion criteria included research published between 2014 and 2024 ([Abidin et al., 2023](#)), written in English, and involving students and teachers from various backgrounds and regions.

2.3 Quality Evaluation

Each article that passes the initial selection is then evaluated for its methodological quality using standard assessment tools such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) (Allen, 1984). Articles that did not meet methodological quality standards were excluded from further analysis.

2.4 Data Extraction

Data were extracted from articles that passed the quality evaluation ass. Extracted information includes research methods (da Silva Santiago et al., 2023), sample, type of non-digital media used, main results, and researcher recommendations.

Data were also recorded in tables containing detailed information about each included study.

2.5 Data Analysis

The extracted data were analyzed using a meta-analysis approach to identify general trends and main findings (Rahman, 2023). Qualitative analysis was also carried out to explore deeper insights regarding the role of characters and non-digital media in English language learning.

Empirical evidence from previous research shows that the use of non-digital media such as textbooks and physical teaching aids can increase student engagement and understanding of learning concepts (Nasiha et al., 2023). For example, a study by Brown et al. (2017) found that direct interactions between teachers and students, facilitated by non-digital media, resulted in deeper understanding and higher engagement compared to the use of digital media alone.

Table 1. Data Extraction

No	Researcher	Year	Method	Sample	Non-Digital Media	Key Results
1	Brown et al.	2017	Experiment	200 students	Textbooks, physical aids	Increased engagement and understanding
2	Smith & Jones	2019	Case study	150 students, 10xx teachers	Textbooks, class discussions	Positive correlation between personal approach and learning success
3	Liu et al.	2021	Survey	300 students	Textbooks, group activities	Significant contribution to speaking and writing skills

This research provides valuable guidance for the development of more innovative and effective curricula and teaching methods (M. A. Ahmed & Kumalasari, 2023), combining the advantages of digital and non-digital media for optimal learning outcomes.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULTS

3.1.1 Gender

The Role of Textbooks in English Language Learning

This research found that textbooks are still one of the main media used in learning English in secondary

schools. Textbooks provide a clear structure and framework for teachers and students and provide standardized content that is accessible to all students. Several previous studies have shown that regular use of textbooks can improve students' understanding of vocabulary and grammar. For example, research by Johnson (2018) revealed that students who used textbooks with high intensity had better scores on English tests compared to those who relied solely on digital media.

The following is a table showing research results from several countries regarding the role of textbooks in English language learning:

Table 2. the role of textbooks in English language learning

Researcher	Year	Country	Key Findings
Johnson	2018	United States of America	Students who use textbooks intensively have improved English test scores.
Lee and Kim	2019	South Korea	Textbooks help students understand sentence structure and grammar better.
Martinez and Gomez	2020	Spanish	Regular use of textbooks improves students' reading and writing skills.

Johnson (2018, United States): This research shows that students who use textbooks with high intensity have an average increase in English test scores of 15% compared to students who use digital media more frequently. Johnson notes that textbooks provide

structured guidance and repetitive exercises, which are important for mastery of vocabulary and grammar.

Lee and Kim (2019, South Korea): In their study, Lee and Kim found that students who utilized textbooks to

learn English had a better understanding of sentence structure and grammar rules. This research involved 500 students from various middle schools in South Korea and showed that textbooks are an effective tool in language learning.

Martinez and Gomez (2020, Spain): This study found that regular use of textbooks helps students improve their reading and writing skills. Students who learn using textbooks show significant improvements in literacy skills compared to those who use digital media as the main tool of learning.

From the results of this research, it is clear that textbooks have an important role in learning English in secondary schools. Textbooks not only provide structured and comprehensive material but also support continuous and consistent learning. Although digital media offers flexibility and accessibility, a balanced integration between textbooks and digital

media can produce more optimal learning outcomes. This research confirms the importance of textbooks in improving students' understanding of vocabulary, grammar and literacy skills, and suggests the development of learning strategies that combine the advantages of both types of media.

3 .1.2 Age groups

a. Use of Physical Props in Learning

Physical aids play an important role in English learning in secondary schools. The use of physical props, such as word cards, pictures and real objects, allows students to be directly and actively involved in the learning process. This method is especially beneficial for students with a kinesthetic learning style, who more easily understand concepts through direct experience and physical manipulation.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Using Physical Props in English Language Learning

Researcher	Country	Research subject	Findings
Williams (2016)	United States of America	Middle School Students	Students who use physical aids demonstrate a deeper understanding of English concepts
Kim (2018)	South Korea	Grade 9 Students	The use of word cards increases student involvement and motivation in vocabulary learning
Martinez (2020)	Spanish	English teacher	Teachers report increased student interaction and participation through the use of real objects in the classroom

Empirical studies show that the use of physical props not only increases student engagement and motivation but also deepens their understanding of the learning material. For example, research by Kim (2018) in South Korea found that the use of word cards in vocabulary learning significantly increased the engagement and motivation of grade 9 students. This was due to a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience, which made it easier for students to remember and understand new words.

Research by Martinez (2020) in Spain also supports these findings. The English teacher who was the subject of the research reported that the use of real objects in the classroom, such as props related to the learning topic, increased student interaction and participation. Teachers feel that physical props help students associate abstract concepts with real objects, thereby making their understanding easier.

In addition, research by Williams (2016) in the United States shows that students who learn with the help of physical teaching aids have a deeper understanding of English concepts compared to those who only learn through text or digital media. This empirical evidence underlines the importance of physical aids in English language learning, especially in contexts where students

need to understand and remember information better.

Overall, empirical evidence from various countries shows that physical aids have a significant contribution to increasing student engagement, motivation and understanding in learning English. Therefore, the integration of physical props in learning strategies can be an effective way to maximize student learning outcomes.

3 .1.3 Direct Interaction between Teachers and Students

Direct interaction between teachers and students plays an important role in the learning process. Teachers who are dedicated and use a personalized approach can adapt teaching methods to suit individual student needs, which in turn improves learning outcomes. Research by Smith (2019) states that students who have good relationships with their teachers show significant improvements in English speaking and listening skills.

Research conducted by Johnson and Johnson (2020) in the United States shows that students who often interact directly with their teachers have a better level of understanding in learning English. The study involved 500 students from various secondary schools and showed that 75% of students who engaged in direct

interactions with teachers achieved higher scores in English tests compared to 50% of students who only used digital media.

The following table shows a comparison of the learning outcomes of students who engage in direct interaction with teachers and students who only use digital media in several countries:

Table 4: the learning outcomes of students who engage in direct interaction

Country	Learning methods	Average English Test Scores
United States of America	Live Interaction	85
United States of America	Digital Media	70
Japan	Live Interaction	90
Japan	Digital Media	75
Indonesia	Live Interaction	80
Indonesia	Digital Media	65

Source: Johnson & Johnson (2020), Tanaka (2018), and Surya (2017)

Tanaka (2018) in his research in Japan found that a personal approach by teachers not only improved students' English skills but also increased their learning motivation. This approach includes providing constructive feedback, using a variety of teaching methods, and creating a positive learning environment. Students who feel supported by their teachers tend to be more confident and motivated to learn.

In Indonesia, Surya (2017) found that direct interaction between teachers and students was a key factor in the success of English language learning in secondary schools. This study shows that students who frequently interact with their teachers are better able to apply the material learned in real contexts, such as everyday

conversations and other communication situations.

Overall, empirical evidence from various studies shows that direct interaction between teachers and students has a significant positive impact on English learning outcomes. Therefore, educational institutions need to maintain and strengthen this interaction as part of a more holistic and balanced learning strategy.

3 .1.4 Limitations of Non-Digital Media

Although non-digital media has many benefits, this research also identifies several limitations that need to be considered in the context of English language learning in secondary schools. One of the main drawbacks is the lack of flexibility in content updates in Figure 1.



Figure 1. the main drawbacks is the lack of flexibility in content updates

In Figure 1, the update sees 2009-2024 Textbooks and other printed materials cannot be easily updated according to the latest developments in the English

language. Additionally, non-digital media are often less interactive than digital media, which can impact student engagement levels.

Table 5: Limitations of Non-Digital Media According to Several Experts

Researcher/Country	Identified Limitations
Smith & Johnson (2018)	Lack of flexibility in updating textbook content.
Wang et al. (2019, China)	Print media is less interactive, reducing student engagement.
Garcia & Fernández (2020, Spain)	Limitations in presenting material visually that is dynamic and interesting.
Kurniawan (2021, Indonesia)	Difficulty in providing equitable access for all students, especially in remote areas.

Research by [Smith and Johnson \(2018\)](#) shows that textbooks have long update cycles, often five to ten years, due to which the material taught can become out of date. This is exacerbated by the rapid development of language and culture which influences contemporary English use. [Wang et al. \(2019\)](#) stated that in China, print media often only presents static information without any interactive elements, which has been proven to reduce student interest and involvement in teaching and learning activities.

A study by [García and Fernández \(2020\)](#) in Spain found that non-digital media found it difficult to present material in a dynamic and engaging visual manner ([Harahap & Uthman, 2024](#)), which is important for keeping students' attention and helping them understand complex concepts. Meanwhile, [Kurniawan's \(2021\)](#) research in Indonesia shows that access to quality print media is often limited in remote areas ([Darmayanti et al., 2023](#)), which makes students in these areas experience gaps in the quality of education they receive.

Based on these findings, it is clear that there is a need to integrate digital media with non-digital media to overcome existing limitations. A balanced and holistic learning strategy must be developed to utilize the advantages of both types of media. Digital media can offer

great flexibility and interactivity, while non-digital media can provide a solid, easily accessible foundation.

Recommendations from this research include curriculum development that combines digital technology with traditional teaching methods, as well as training for teachers to utilize both types of media effectively. In addition, further research is needed to explore more effective and innovative ways of integrating digital and non-digital media in English language learning, to ensure that all students gain maximum benefit from the education they receive.

3 .1.5 Holistic Integration of Digital and Non-Digital Media

This research highlights the importance of holistic integration between digital and non-digital media in English language learning. A balanced approach can take advantage of the advantages of both types of media, such as the interactivity and flexibility of digital media and the structure and stability of non-digital media ([Liu, 2020](#); [Waheed & Chaurasia, 2024](#)). Further research is needed to develop effective strategies for combining these two types of media. A study by [Brown \(2020\)](#) shows that good integration between digital and non-digital media can significantly improve student learning outcomes, especially in reading and writing skills.

Table 6: Advantages of Digital and Non-Digital Media in English Language Learning

Media Type	Profit
Digital Media	High interactivity, fast access to information, and flexibility in learning
Non-Digital Media	Stable structure, directed learning, and availability of physical props

Another study by [Smith and Johnson \(2018\)](#) in the United States found that students who used a combination of physical textbooks and digital learning applications showed greater improvements in reading comprehension and writing skills compared to students who used only one type of media. This research supports the importance of holistic integration in learning strategies.

In Finland, research conducted by [Laakso et al. \(2019\)](#) shows that the use of non-digital media such as textbooks and physical teaching aids in combination with digital learning platforms produces a richer ([Edwards, 2020](#); [Skey, 2021](#))and more comprehensive learning experience for students ([Dolega, 2021](#); [Ebrahimi, 2021](#)). This study found that students who engaged in learning activities that combined both types of media showed deeper understanding and better analytical skills ([Eggeling, 2021](#); [Wei, 2020](#)).

Empirical Evidence from Previous Research by [García and Martínez \(2021\)](#) in Spain also shows similar results. They found that students who were given access to a variety of digital and non-digital resources had higher learning motivation and better engagement in the learning process ([Trisiana, 2020](#); [Wu & Qiu, 2024](#)). In addition, this research

found that a holistic approach can help overcome the limitations that exist in each type of media, such as limited digital access in some areas and limited print materials in updating information.

With existing empirical evidence, it is clear that the holistic integration of digital and non-digital media in English language learning not only improves students' academic skills but also facilitates a more inclusive and adaptive learning approach ([Korzynski, 2020](#); [Thompson, 2020](#)). Therefore, developing learning strategies that utilize these two types of media optimally is highly recommended to improve the quality of English language education in secondary schools ([Bao, 2020](#); [Wu & Qiu, 2024](#)).

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that characters and non-digital media, such as textbooks and physical props, have played an important role in English language learning in secondary schools over the past decade (2014-2024). Through a systematic literature review using the PRISMA method, it was found that direct interaction between teachers and students and the use of printed materials made a significant contribution to increasing student

engagement and understanding. The characteristics of dedicated teachers and a personal approach have also been proven to have a strong correlation with learning success.

However, this research also found several shortcomings in the existing literature, especially related to the lack of focus on holistic integration between digital and non-digital media. Currently, there are not many balanced learning strategies that optimally utilize the advantages of both types of media. Therefore, this research recommends the development of a more balanced and holistic learning strategy, which can improve student learning outcomes by optimizing the use of both types of media.

In addition, further research is needed to explore ways of more effective integration between digital and non-digital media in English language learning. The findings from this research can be the basis for developing more innovative and effective curricula and teaching methods, to improve the quality of English language learning in secondary schools in the future.

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