



**AN INVESTIGATION INTO PERCEPTIONS AND
USE OF VISUAL AIDS BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN CAN THO CITY, VIETNAMⁱ**

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Abstract:

In the teaching process, as a teacher, we need to pay attention to many factors to create an effective lesson plan such as: target, objective, and environment and nowadays Visual Aids (VS) is one of the most popular tools and dealing with a direct effect on students learning process. Visual Aids can improve students' long-term memory process. Besides, we do not have a deep understanding of how to use VS in the right way and at which level VS can engage students learning process. In this paper, the researchers focused on summarizing teachers' perceptions of how to use VS effectively and the hypothesis of these teachers' experiences to gain a result on how teachers could use VS to engage students in their learning process. The researchers collected the data by using a questionnaire on 44 senior high school teachers, including 20 male teachers and 24 female teachers and 150 students (70 males and 80 females) from Grade 12 and semi-structured interviews (6 teachers and 6 students) were also conducted then. These teachers chose the most suitable answers for seven questions on how they understood VS definitions and what style of VS they used to; which VS device they thought did the most effective on engaging students in the learning process. A total of 44 senior high school teachers came from high schools in Can Tho City, in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. After data analysis and finding results, the study exposed that a large part of high school teachers only

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focused on using PowerPoint (PP) to support the teaching process and using pictures, and images which were the most popular styles in using VS in teaching English. And the results showed that the effects of this style were increasing after each time it was used.

Keywords: high school students, perceptions, visual aids, senior high schools, Can Tho City

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

In the era of technological development which leads to learning and teaching are updated with various methods and principles. In addition, students and teachers are facilitated by different types of supported devices. Nowadays, visual aids (VS) are the most popular and useful devices in facilitating and engaging students. Teachers usually use the image to demonstrate new words or new activities for enhancing students' visual skills. As common devices, for example, PowerPoint, audio-video, poster, etc., each of them in each specific situation would bring different advantages for students at aim to investigate and expose the significant functions as well as the effects and impact of visual aids on the learning and teaching process because of visual aids current contribution.

In fact, any supported devices as the main function are facilitating the learning process. But these devices only bring the most advantages when we use them in a suitable way and a suitable situation. There is an issue that a part of the teachers in my research setting believed that any devices belonging to visual devices can support their teaching process and they use as much as they can engage the student learning process. It leads to the overuse of visual aids in any teaching and learning activities. In that case, the researchers realized that if we do not control the frequency of using these devices and use those in a specific situation, the learning process will become boring and repetitive. It will harm students not to engage students. For this main reason, the authors supposed to do their study as a way to collect the experience and the story of significant English teachers as a sample in setting on how they are aware of visual aids, the frequency of use, and which type would bring most effectively on students' learning process, especially in the high school setting.

During receiving information process is followed by converting information into personal knowledge which is beginning with input come from outside through books, teacher talks, observations, and so on, then the teachers save this information in the short-term memory stage until they had understood this information, so it can move to long-term memory stage and becoming personal knowledge. To increase converting speed, we need support from outside factors like teacher talk and Visual Aids. These two factors are perfect couples in the teaching and learning process. Because teacher talk can provide students with clear explanations in the short-term memory stage and VS can provide specific examples to relate to real situations which can promote long-term memory

process speed. In fact, to choose suitable Visual Aids devices, we have to consider many features like content, students' interests, age, and so on. But the most important thing is teacher perceptions of VS explanation, the perception of how each VS device works to engage students, and what VS are applied in each style of content and targets.

Visual aids are an essential tool nowadays, but teachers are not suitably using them. This study was aiming to contribute to advancing and sharing teachers' experience in the choice of visual aids. Also, the study focuses on summarizing and synthesizing visual aids' theoretical knowledge and the most important is the story about the experience on the issue between overuse and effective choice of visual aids in teaching and learning to bring the most benefits.

The reason the authors decided to choose to do this study is that they can see the benefits of visual aids but they also see VS are overused and the teachers are confused about the types of visual aids. A more important thing is that the learning process nowadays not only listens and remembers but also comprehends and interprets into real situations. With the development of society, educational researchers focus on investigating new methods, new principles in teaching, and how students acquire new knowledge to find suitable tools to facilitate.

1.2. Research aims and objectives

The main aim of this study was to investigate the status of the implementation of Visual Aids by English teachers at Senior High Schools in Can Tho City, Vietnam. And its objectives would (1) to explore English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English at Senior High Schools in Can Tho City, Vietnam, and (2) to explore the effects of Visual Aids on the improvement of English skills at Senior High Schools in Can Tho City, Vietnam.

1.3. Research questions

Based on the above-mentioned objectives of the study, the research questions were:

Research question 1: What are English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English at Senior High Schools in Can Tho City, Vietnam?

Research question 2: What do students at Senior High Schools in Can Tho City, Vietnam, perceive the effect of Visual Aids on the improvement of their English skills?

1.4. Scope of the research

The survey was carried out in three Senior High Schools in Can Tho in the school year 2021-2022. The study chose target respondents including students and teachers who were learning and teaching in three high schools (Quoc Van High school (QV), No 435 Road 30/4 street, Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City; An Khanh High school (AK), No 106, Road number 2, An Khanh commune, Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City; and Thot Not High school (TN), Thuan An commune, Thot Not District, Can Tho City). The purpose of taking students in the survey wanted to consider their perceptions of the effect of Visual

Aids on the improvement of their English skills. These Visual Aids were implemented by the teachers.

These high schools were randomly chosen in Can Tho City. In other words, the authors would like to pick three schools randomly to put in the survey. Teachers were English teachers who are specialized in teaching English at these three schools. Students are also selected from different classes of the schools at random. English is one of the main subjects in their study programs.

The researchers used qualitative and quantitative methods to make clear the perceptions and use of Visual Aids by English teachers at three high schools in Can Tho City mentioned above. Moreover, the qualitative and quantitative methods were also used to clarify the perception of students about the effects on the improvement of their English skills. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for both teachers and students were provided. After getting data from questionnaires and interviews, the SPSS was used to analyze English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids as well as students' perceptions of the effect of Visual Aids on the improvement of English skills.

1.5. Significance of the study

Theoretically, the study presents the previous materials of English researchers, papers, and articles. Additionally, the study also shows the methods to improve English skills by using Visual Aids in the English classroom. Practically, the outcomes from this study are also new findings for English as a foreign language (EFL) students making solutions for their study. They can apply these practical results to improve their English ability. The findings of this research would help to strengthen the understanding of the significance of Visual Aids in promoting English skills for students. What's more, some pedagogical solutions would be suggested that would help the teachers and other researchers realize the strength and gaps of Visual Aids, then they could deploy this approach to their teaching and learning process. Those suggestions would help to take advantage of the benefits of activities as well as overcome the limitations of Visual Aids as well.

2. Review of literature

2.1. Visual aids

2.1.1. Definition and concepts

According to Singh (2005), visual aids (VS) are defined as "*any device which by sight and sound increase the individual's practice, outside that attained through reading labeled as an audio visual aid*". In other words, visual aids include instructional devices that can be used in the classroom to aim to encourage learning and make students motivated and interested in learning. Instructional aids include materials such as models, charts, figures, radio, television, laptop, projectors, pictures, etc. (Rather, 2004). Ghulam and his partners state that visual aids are considered an effective tool in investing "*the past with an air of actuality*". Visual aids distribute the learners with true knowledge which detention their devotion and helps in the understanding of the ancient marvels. They demand the mind

through the visual-auditory senses. The use of visual aids in teaching is supposed to be essential because of its promotion of students' participation in lessons. When students are taught with visual aids, they are easier to understand the lessons. According to Van Staden (2011), visual aids and multimedia are usually used as scaffolding for students in different ways on different levels. In fact, these devices are used as a tool to facilitate students and help them easy to visualize the content. Jain (2004) said that visual aids are useful in encouraging the movement of the body and strengthening control. Knowledge comes from the eyes, ears, nose, etc. by looking, hearing, and smelling to intellect.

a. PowerPoint

PowerPoint is considered to be the most commonly used form in learning and teaching as well as other duties such as business, community service, politics, culture, etc. It is helpful in the presentation. It is easy to use and is able to create a smooth presentation flow. Participants in the presentation are easy to get an impression of the lessons and remember the content of the lesson longer. They can aware of the lesson deeply. Moreover, the PowerPoint presentation creates collaboration. It means that a person can work with other people collaboratively. The discussion and negotiation about a problem. So, the presentation becomes more vivid.

b. Overhead projector slides

The Overhead Projector slides are displayed on the overhead projector- a very useful tool found in most lecture and seminar rooms (OHP). The OHP projects and enlarges your slides onto a screen or wall without requiring the lights to be dimmed. Presenters can produce their slides in three ways:

- Pre-prepared slides: these can be words or images either handwritten/drawn or produced on a computer;
- Spontaneously produced slides: these can be written as the presenter speak to illustrate their points or to record comments from the audience;
- A mixture of each: try adding to pre-prepared slides when making their presentation to show movement, highlight change, or signal detailed interrelationships.

c. White and blackboard

White and blackboards are useful in explaining the sequence of ideas or routines. It is used to clarify the title and to record key points when introducing the presentation. Normally, the presenter will expect his/her audience to follow his/her spoken speech. Nevertheless, with the use of the White and Blackboard, the presenter can just write some stages on the board and the audience can understand and take accurate notes. As the presenter has written something on the board, he/ she has to either leave or erase it, this will distract the audience. Therefore, it is necessary to make sure the audience has taken down a reference before rubbing it off.

d. Paper handouts

The use of paper handouts is useful in transmitting knowledge to the perceiver. Paper handouts are used in the case of too detailed information at aim to fit on a slide and the audience can have a full record of findings. If the presenter gives the handouts too early, the audience can ignore them and distract them. And if giving the handouts too late, the audience may already have taken unnecessary notes. And in the case of giving out in the middle, the audience would rather read than listen. Generally speaking, it is better to give out incomplete handouts at key stages during the presentation process so that the audience can fill in the gaps.

e. Audio/Video/YouTube

Nowadays, the use of Video/ Audio in transmitting information to the audience is very popular. The video is presented in the presentation. Video/Audio is considered as the best way to stimulate visual information. Video/Audio brings movement, pictures, and sound into the presentation. However, to increase the effectiveness of Video, it is essentially important to make sure that the clip is directly relevant to the content. The use of film or video irrelevant to the content should be avoided. According to Kaltura (2015) who study conducted by a software company, concluded that 93% of teachers believe that the use of educational videos improves the learning experience.

f. Flip chart

A flip chart is a large pad of paper on a stand. It is a very useful and flexible way of recording information during the presentation. The use of pre-prepared sheets for key points is necessary for the flip chart. The presenter can keep one main idea on each sheet. Flip back through the pad to help the presenter recap his/her main points. For the audience to understand the content; the presenter must make his/her writing clear and readable and diagrams as simple as possible.

g. Artifacts or props

The use of artifacts or props is useful in the presentation. In the case of bringing artifacts, the presenter must make sure that the object can be seen and be prepared to pass it around a small group or move to different areas of a large room to help the audience view it in detail. It is necessary to hide artifacts until these artifacts are needed. The reason is that when putting the artifacts in the room, the audience will be immersed in looking at them; and surely, it hard for them to focus on listening to the presenter's speech.

2.2. Teaching and learning with Visual Aids

With the combination of technology and education, teachers and students together conduct a new learning environment with much more effective such as:

- Teachers facilitate students' visualize skills and make the learning process more effective

- Students can learn by observation and teachers can easily evaluate their performance
- The teacher can create interesting lessons, support the teaching process, and as strong illustrations
- Visual aids provide a visual-verbal connection which is very essential for EFL students
- Visual aids provide a more interactive demonstration.
- Supporting the contents to help students can easily interpret from teacher lecture to real context
- Visual aids are the devices that help the teacher to clarify, establish, and correlate and coordinate precise conceptions, understandings, and appreciations and support him to make learning more actual, active, motivating, encouraging, significant and glowing. Proper use of visual aids helps to retain more concepts permanently. Students can study well when they are inspired properly through different visual aids.
- Visual aids grow an accurate image when the students see and hear properly.
- Visual aids provide a complete example of conceptual thinking.
- Visual aids create an environment of interest for the students.
- Visual aids help to increase the vocabulary of the students.
- Visual aids help the teacher to get some time and make learning permanent.
- Visual aids provide a direct experience to the students.

Al Mamun (2014) said that students usually feel bored learning reading. Therefore, teachers find it difficult in the task of teaching reading. However, when teaching reading with visual aids, the reading lesson becomes more interesting and the students may be attracted to the reading. According to Yunus, Salehi, and John (2013), students get interested in reading when their teachers use visual aids in teaching reading. Pictures, videos, and projectors are useful to help learners to understand the ideas of the text. In addition, visual aids are supposed to create authentic communication between readers and the text. Visual aids will make the process of reading to become faster and more active. Students can feel more engaged with the text via visual aids.

Speaking is a difficult and important skill in language acquisition. It is a challenging task for language learners. When asked to speak about a topic, students will feel uncomfortable and nervous speaking. Teachers have a must duty to motivate their students to speak. However, with the use of visual aids in speaking skills, speaking becomes easier and more interesting. Visual aids are always attractive to learners. They can draw students' attention much and easily (Al Mamun, 2014). If visual aids are appropriate for speaking, the effectiveness of learning must be better. When students look at visuals, they will be interested in and become enthusiastic to present their ideas.

The application of visual aids in writing is to look at images or videos and write about them. Harmer (2001) states that "*teachers sometimes use pictures for creative writing*". The teacher can require his/her students to write a story with the use of the images in front of them. The teacher can tell his/her students to have a conversation about a specific

topic at various stages during the conversation. They must pick a card and bring whatever that card shows into the conversation. This type of writing activity is appropriate for group writing rather than working individually; learners can work in small groups which will give them more confidence and interest, and there will be multiple ideas from the individuals in the groups

It can be seen clearly that visual aids such as audio, video, and clip are very helpful in learning and teaching listening. The development of technology is beneficial for learners of a foreign language. Teachers can use visual aids to teach their students listening skills. And, the effect of using visual aids in listening to teaching is very good. Nowadays, listening to materials is very available. Students and teachers can download listening materials from the internet relevant to the level of learners. As a result, the use of audiovisual materials in teaching listening skills has increased significantly. Even, EFL teachers are trained to know how to incorporate audio-visual aids in language teaching (Ozkan, 2002). Audio materials help the learners to have ideas about the correct pronunciation of the target language. If the teachers use videos in class as listening materials, learners can know about the non-linguistics features as well which is very important in learning a new language. With different technology in language teaching, teachers can make learners get used to native speakers' accents. Different audios, videos, podcasts, etc. have made the task easier for language teachers.

2.3. The importance of Visual Aids in English language acquisition

A large number of teachers have the same agreement that visual aids are useful in enhancing language teaching. Briton (2001) states that visual aids can make learning more meaningful and more exciting because they bring the real-world into classrooms. With the use of visual aids, learners can achieve information easily, construct knowledge, and get successful educational outcomes. Students come to the classroom with empty brains. In other sentences, they do not know the lesson when they come to the classroom. However, with the use of media, clips, videogames, etc.; they are easy to acquire knowledge successfully. In the other aspect of the importance of visual aids in English language acquisition, Mannan (2005) states that visual aids "*help the teacher to clarify, establish, correlate, and coordinate accurate concepts, interpretations, and appreciations, and enable him/her to make learning more concrete, effective, interesting, inspirational, meaningful and vivid*". According to Canning-Wilson (2000), visual materials are used to help students to see the meaning of language immediately and easily. These materials can make benefit for both students and teachers by clarifying the information

For learners of a foreign language, motivation is important to increase the effectiveness of learning achievement. Kemp and Dayton (1985) (cited in Nigsih, 2014) assert that visual aids can increase motivation and maintain students' attention. Thus, the lesson becomes more interesting due to the students' positive engagement. When students are motivated and pay attention to the lesson lots, they have a trend to discuss the lesson more noisily. That is the reason to make the lesson more interesting.

Imagine a lesson without video, games, pictures, sounds; how boring the lesson will be. It means the effectiveness of learning and teaching is not high and achievable. The application of visual aids in learning and teaching is the best to make students remember lessons long. Adam and Chamber (1962) and Harber and Myers (1982) agree that the memory for picture-word combination is superior to memory for words alone or pictures alone. Therefore, in the current foreign language learning curriculum, pictures and words are combined with the aim to help learners to be easy to understand and remember over a long time. Petterson (2004) proves that memory for pictures is superior to memory for words. In detail, people will memorize things in pictures longer than words. In other words, when learning new vocabulary, a student will write the new word many times to try to remember it; however, if he/she applies pictures relevant to the word, it will be easier and quicker for him/her to memorize. Similarly, Clark and Lyons (2004) showed that learners can memorize with visuals better than with words.

According to Barry (1998), the importance of visual aids in language acquisition is persuasive in both children and adolescents. These groups are young; so, they have little knowledge about the world as well as conceptions. Consequently, the use of visual aids in presenting their information is the best way to help them express their thoughts (Arif and Hashim, 2009). If someone cannot express their points in words, he/she can use visual information to present what he/she wants to speak. In learning, a student can lack words to present the content of a matter; nevertheless, when using visual images, other students are easier to understand the content. Or in teaching, students may not perceive the knowledge that the teacher transmits in words; but, when taking visual aids in teaching, students will capture knowledge easily.

Referring to Clark and Lyons' points (2004), there are two various types of memories involved in the learning process. They are working memory and long-term memory. Learning is also called active mental work; thus, it will be stored in the working memory. When information is expressed in visuals and phonetics, it will be organized to form a cohesive idea. Then, this idea must be integrated with active prior knowledge from long-term memory. Working memory and long-term memory work together for the purpose of forming what is called an updated mental model that will be stored in long-term memory, where it lasts indefinitely (Clark and Lyons, 2004). The virtual capacity of the working memory is impacted by how related the knowledge of the long-term memory is to the domain studied. The more it is related, the more the virtual capacity.

Taking into account that in a learning environment this related knowledge may not be too much, cognitive overload can take place if the working memory cannot process all the new information during learning. In order to avoid this cognitive overload, the two subcomponents of working memory should be used in their best way. One of these subcomponents is specialized in visual input and the other one is in auditory input. For example, if a graphic is explained by words presented in audio, learning the new information is better than if the words are presented in text (Clark and Lyons, 2004). The mental models that have been mentioned before are the schemas stored in the long-term memory and are the basis of thinking, and visuals are claimed to help to build them.

2.4. Effects of Visual Aids

2.4.1. Motivation

According to Ghulam and his partners (2015), visual aids help create motivation for learners and teachers. Seventy percent of students and teachers in schools, colleges, and universities in Dera Ghazi Khan agreed that they are motivated to learn and teach a foreign language when there is the application of visual aids in lessons (Ghulam et al, 2015). In the same aspect; Yunus, Salehi, and John (2013) mention the role of visual aids in motivating students and teachers. In detail, students are more motivated in learning literature. Normally, students do not have an interest in learning literature because of difficulties in literacy texts; even, if they have a positive attitude towards learning literature, difficulties in the learning process still occur. However, visual images, video, audio, etc. are visual tools that help them to get over difficulties and have the motivation to learn. Teachers feel enjoyable teaching literary texts using visual aids. Sivapalan, Wan Fatimah Ahmad, and Nur Khairun Ishak (2009) also agreed on the importance of audiovisual and other visual aids in increasing learners' interest and motivation.

2.4.2. Clarification

In the study conducted by Ghulam and his partner (2015), most students and teachers (75%) showed their agreement on the role of visual aids in clarifying the contents of texts. Actually, when a student looks at a foreign language, he/she may be confused about the content of the sentence. Nevertheless, she/he will understand the content of the sentence is placed next to the image. Yunus et al (2013) had the same view on the role of clarification of visual aids. They said that visual aids such as graphics, pictures, illustrations, audio, and video can be used to serve as helpful tools in facilitating students' understanding of the literacy concepts that occurred in the texts. The use of visual aids helps students to visualize the literary theory and cultural aspects found in the texts.

2.4.3. Increasing vocabulary

There are a large number of students and teachers (68%) in schools, colleges, and universities in Dera Ghazi Khan presenting their view that visual aids enable them to increase their vocabulary (Ghulam et al, 2015). Learning vocabulary is important in obtaining proficiency in English knowledge. Many people have a traditional method of learning vocabulary such as rewriting new words until memorizing. This method is usually boring and not effective. The application of visual aids in learning vocabulary is assessed to bring high results. Visual pictures, graphs, charts, podcasts, videos, images, etc... help learners to remember longer and quicker. They do not need to take much time to memorize a new word. Nowadays, all primary, secondary, and high schools use the English syllabus which maximizes the advantages of visual aids. That is a good way to improve second language acquisition.

2.4.4. Saving the time

Apart from benefits including motivation, clarification, and increased vocabulary; visual aids can save time for learners and teachers. As mentioned above, visual aids help learners to remember longer and quicker. In other words, the time to memorize a new word is shorter. Before a learner can take 5 or 10 minutes to remember vocabulary by the traditional method of learning new words; now, with visual pictures and images, he/she needs one or two minutes only. Additionally, visual aids can save time for the preparation of lessons. Over 82 percent of students and teachers in Ghulam's study agreed with that point.

2.4.5. Avoiding dullness

In the traditional learning approach, students are usually passive in presenting their ideas. Normally, many students feel uncomfortable and excited about learning. They are not active in the discussion about a matter. So, their ideas will be limited in scope. In other sentences, they cannot explore and understand deeply about a problem. They become dull. However, visual aids will promote their activeness in their brains and movement. They become more flexible. 71 % of teachers and students in Dera Ghazi Khan answered that visual aids help them to avoid dullness. In other words, they are more agile, vivacious, and aggressive. For example, in speaking a learning classroom, students will be more active and interested in discussing the topic of a picture on the board; in contrast, answering a question usually causes boredom for students. Moreover, students are more self-confident to express their ideas.

2.4.6. Direct experiences

Direct experience is shown in what students experience a situation as real. Such in role-play, participants can pretend as true actors and experience things. Normally, what really will impress participants? In the case that students watch a film, they have changed to experience things as actors. Impression on the film is strong, and this makes them memorize longer. According to Ghulam et al (2015), 92 out of 100 % of students and teachers said yes to the statement that visual aids increased direct experience.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research instruments

3.1.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was employed as one of the research instruments because of some reasons. A questionnaire is a popular data-gathering research instrument in many fields. One of them is education. The questionnaire is commonly used to collect data on attitudes and opinions. It allows researchers to gather information on teachers' and learners' beliefs, motivation, and reactions to teaching and learning and classroom instruction and activities (Mackey, & Gass, 2005). Furthermore, the questionnaire is extremely effective to gather data from a group of participants such as the entire class, a group of classes, or

a large group of people (Griffie, 2012). Therefore, the questionnaire was developed to collect data from the participants to identify their perception of Visual Aids which are applied by the teachers.

Additionally, the design of the questionnaire was based on the Likert scale format. The statements were formulated upon the research questions and relevant literature. Because questionnaires were designed for both teachers and students, the questionnaire items for English teachers were developed in English only and the questionnaire items for students were developed in English and then translated into Vietnamese. The translation was necessary to ensure the students could understand the questionnaire items clearly and also avoid misunderstanding. All of the items were reworded to adapt to the context of learning and teaching in Vietnam.

The questionnaire survey included two parts. Part A was about the demographic information of participants. Part B contained the main items that investigated (1) the perceptions and use of Visual Aids by English teachers, (2) the students' perceptions of the effect of Visual Aids in the improvement of English skills. The content of these two items was designed on a Likert scale.

3.1.2. Semi-structured interviews

The interview was employed to discover more about English teachers' and students' opinions, and to cross-check the data collected from the questionnaire. This instrument is advantageous in some aspects including focusing on a particular issue, and generating a great deal of data in a short period (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Besides, Dawson (2009) claimed that the interview was used to explore specific information. The information can be contrasted and compared with other information from other interviews. Moreover, because of the flexibility of the interview, more important information can arise. In addition, discussion questions were devised and built on findings from the questionnaires

In short, data collection instruments for this research include questionnaires and interviews. The research implemented questionnaires for both students and teachers and interviews also for both English teachers and students.

3.2. Sample and sampling procedures

In total 44 English teachers (20 males and 24 females) from these three high schools (18 in QV, 12 in AK, 14 in TN) were chosen to participate in the completion of the questionnaire and 6 of them were randomly chosen for the interview. Most teachers have more than 10 years of teaching English subjects in schools. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), a convenience sample may be a sampling technique that is employed for a case study. The participants were chosen for the study because they were easy to access. The researcher simply selected participants until reaching the required number. The purpose of choosing English teachers for the survey was to investigate their perceptions and use of Visual Aids in the English classroom.

Except for making questionnaires and interviewing English teachers as the main content of this research, it also made questionnaires for 12th-grade students of these three high schools with the aim to answer the aspect of the effect of Visual Aids on the improvement of English practicing skills. There were 150 (70 males and 80 females) of 12th-grade students recruited from 1,500 of 12th-grade students from three high schools in Can Tho City. These participants were randomly and equally chosen from three high schools. In other words, each 50 of 12th-grade students were respectively selected from each school. The reasons for choosing random sampling were that it offered a chance to perform data analysis that less risk of caring an error; and, there was an equal chance of selection. All of the participants were 12th-grade students of the three schools and had the same level of English (proficiency). The reason for the choice was that the participant, as students involved in this research received Visual Aids every week in English classes. They all learned English in elementary school. In addition, it was easy to access these students. So, the survey was easily implemented. Apart from the population chosen to involve in answering questionnaires, six students from these 150 12th-grade students were picked to participate in semi-structured interviews. The purpose of using interviews for these six students was to cross-check their perceptions of the effect of Visual Aids in acquiring English skills.

3.3. Data collection procedure

In order to collect exact information, the survey was implemented when students and teachers completed the course. In other words, questionnaires were delivered to them after they all finished the end of semester 2. At that time, they had short leisure time and free time. They could have enough time to concentrate on the content of the questionnaires. Because these students and English teachers of three high schools were not at the same time; in detail not in the morning or the afternoon, the process of delivering questionnaires was held every day. It meant that the researchers had to take some periods of different days at three schools to collect the result papers. On the morning of the first day, the author used several times to deliver all questionnaires to students and English teachers of Quoc Van high school; then the researchers returned to collect the result within one hour; at the same time, interviewing two teachers and two students. In the afternoon of the same day, the authors would like to come to Thot Not high school and do the same process; however, the interview was implemented with two teachers and two students. On the morning of the second day, the survey was conducted at An Khanh high school. Two teachers and two students respectively for each school participated in the interview section. After collection, the researchers gather the data in table ranges and sheets.

After the questions' results, responses were divided into two groups called a group of students and a group of teachers. The group of teachers deployed the perceptions and use of Visual Aids in teaching English while a group of students deployed their perceptions of the effects of Visual Aids on the improvement of English skills.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Results from the questionnaire

4.1.1. English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

Based on Table 4.1 below, it could be seen that the mean value for the factors of three groups of teachers all was over 3 (out of 5). In detail, overall mean scores of QV and AK were all over 4 and at the top rank and the second rank respectively (M= over 4, out of 5). The overall mean scores of TN ranked in the third high position ($4 > M > 3.54$). Therefore, all teachers of the three senior high schools (QV, AK, TN,) in Can Tho City had positive perceptions and the use of visual aids in teaching the English language. This also showed the implication that the teachers of these three schools were active in teaching the English language with visual aids.

Table 4.1: The overall mean scores of teachers of five senior high schools (QV, AK, TN)

	Means of groups of teachers		
	QV	AK	TN
Often	4.51	4.16	3.72
Frequency	4.46	4.26	3.78
Most	4.35	4.11	3.59
Useful	4.67	4.09	3.54
Activate	4.23	4.02	3.66
Improve	4.72	4.07	3.56

4.1.1.1. QV English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

As seen in Table 4.2 that the average mean score of QV teachers' perception and use of visual aids in practicing the English language was 4.49 (out of 5). This score was quite high. It proved that the QV teachers had positive perceptions and frequent use of visual aids when visual aids are being applied in teaching and learning the English language. In detail, visual aids in the "Improve" perception of QV teachers had the highest mean score (M=4.72 and SD= 0.84) which showed the meaning that all QV teachers strongly agreed on the role of visual aids in improving English language knowledge. The perception of QV teachers for "Activate" had the lowest mean score (M=4.23, and SD= 0.80). QV's mean scores on the perception of the role of visual activities for "Often", "Frequency", "Most" and "Useful" was 4.51 (SD=0.87); 4.46 (SD= 0.79); 4.35 (SD=0.93); and 4.67 (SD= 0.96) respectively. The results of these figures meant that the higher figures are, the higher QV teachers' levels of agreement are.

Table 4.2: Overall mean scores of QV teachers' perceptions of the role of visual aids in practicing the English language

QV teachers' perceptions (38 items)	N=18	
	M	SD
Often	4.51	.87
Frequency	4.46	.95
Most	4.35	.93
Useful	4.67	.96
Activate	4.23	.80
Improve	4.72	.84

4.1.1.2. AK English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

Table 4.3 showed mean scores of AK teachers' perception of the role of visual aids in English language acquisition. The lowest mean score was 4.02 (SD=0.80); while the highest mean score was 4.26 (SD= 0.91). These mean scores were for "Activate" and "Frequency" respectively. Other mean scores for "Often", "Most", "Useful", and "Improved" were 4.16, 4.11, 4.09, and 4.07 respectively (with respective SD= 0.77, 0.93, 0.95, and 0.79). The mean scores of these factors were nearly equal. In comparison with QV teachers' mean scores, AK teachers' mean scores were lower, with the range of mean scores between 4.02 and 4.26; this range showed the agreement of AK teachers in the perception of the role of visual aids in learning and teaching the English language. In other words, these mean scores presented that AK teachers also had a positive perception of the role of visual aids in teaching and learning English. However, the level of positiveness of AK teachers is not as strong as that one of QV teachers.

Table 4.3: Overall mean scores of AK teachers' perception of the role of visual aids in practicing the English language

AK teachers' perceptions (38 items)	N=12	
	M	SD
Often	4.16	0.77
Frequency	4.26	0.91
Most	4.11	0.93
Useful	4.09	0.95
Activate	4.02	0.80
Improved	4.07	0.79

4.1.1.3. TN English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

As seen in Table 4.4, all TN teachers agreed that visual aids brought usefulness, activation, and improvement of the English language in the English classroom. They also stated that they used visual aids frequently. TN teachers said that they used PowerPoint, video, and role-play frequently when teaching listening, speaking, and writing (M=3.78, SD=0.95). The mean scores of all items dropped in the range of 3.54 and 3.78. This meant that all TN teachers agreed that they had a positive perception of the role of visual aids in practicing the English language. None had a negative or neutral point on the statement.

Table 4.4: Overall mean scores of TN teachers' perception of the role of visual aids in practicing the English language

TN teachers' perceptions (38 items)	N=14	
	M	SD
Often	3.72	0.87
Frequency	3.78	0.95
Most	3.59	0.93
Useful	3.54	0.96
Activate	3.66	0.80
Improved	3.56	0.84

4.1.2. The students' perceptions at Senior High Schools towards the effect of Visual Aids on the improvement of their English skills

Based on table 4.5 below, it could be seen that mean value for the factor "Improved" and "More Applied" of three groups of students at QV, AK, and TN all were over 3 (out of 5). In detail, overall mean scores of QV and AK were all over 4 and at the top rank and the second rank respectively (M= over 4, out of 5). The overall mean scores of TN were 3.63 AND 4.02 respectively. So, it could be concluded that all students at these three schools agreed on the statement that visual aids helped to improve their English language practicing and they also would like to have visual aids applied in their English classrooms more and frequently.

Table 4.5: b Overall mean scores of QV students' perception on the improvement of visual aids in practicing the English language

	Means of groups of students (n=150)		
	QV	AK	TN
Improved	4.54	4.12	3.63
More Applied	4.61	4.22	4.02

4.2. Results from the semi-structured interview

4.2.1. Results of teachers' semi-structured interviews

It was found that all participants of QV teachers showed a positive attitude towards the role of visual aids in English language teaching and learning. Particularly many participants agreed that visual aids were very important:

"I recognized that visual aids have a big importance in learning and teaching the English language. The reasons are that visual aids can make English class feel interested and motivated in learning English." (Teacher 2)

"Whenever I have taught English with visual aids, I feel more interested and vivid." (Teacher 1)

"In my opinion, visual aids are really important in learning and teaching English skills. When I apply visual aids frequently, my English class is more active and interactive." (Teacher 5)

"I very often used visual aids in my English teaching class; especially music, PowerPoint, video, and internet." (Teachers 1 and 4)

With the findings of AK teachers participating in a semi-structured focus group interview, the interviewee agreed that visual aids were useful and beneficial in teaching and learning English skills. The usefulness and benefits that visual aids brought were shown in knowledge improvement, vocabulary, pronunciation, creation, interaction, interest in English, etc. Below are in details:

"I think that visual aids are very useful. When I used visual aids in teaching, I felt that my students can remember new words quickly and memorize them permanently." (Teacher 6)

"I recognized that my students were more active and motivated whenever I used visual aids. They are interested in speaking and expressing their ideas." (Teacher 2)

"I think it is good for all teachers of schools to use visual aids in teaching English." (Teacher 4)

Based on the semi-structured focus group of teachers, visual aids are perceived by TN teachers in terms of improvement and usefulness as below:

"I usually take less time to prepare my teaching with visual aids. My ability to use technology in teaching is improved." (Teacher 1)

"Many students are very active when learning English with visual aids. They are not as passive as before." (Teacher 3)

4.2.2. Results from students' semi-structured interviews

In the consideration of semi-structured interviews with QV students, the interviewees stated their views on the benefits of visual aids in the improvement of their English knowledge.

"I am very interested in lessons with visual aids in the English classroom. I found out that I can remember new words better. So, my vocabulary is increased." (Student 5)

“Because I am interested in the English classroom with the use of visual aids, I have more new ideas in writing lessons. In other words, I am more creative. In my opinion, visual aids are the most learning strategy in learning the English language.” (Student 6)

In terms of the semi-structured interview with some students of AK high school, they emphasized on the role of visual aids in the improvement of their English knowledge as below:

“Whenever I join in the English classroom with the method of using visual aids in teaching by my teacher, my brain is usually positive and active. I communicate more. My social knowledge and vocabulary are increased.” (Student 1)

“It is very good that my teacher can apply more visual aids in teaching English because this is the most learning strategy that I have tried in my English learning.” (Student 2)

The interview with TN students pointed out that:

“Among many learning strategies, I would like to prefer visual aids in learning because visual aids help me to increase vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills. So, I think my teacher should widen more type of visual aids in her English teaching.” (Student 3)

“I think visual aids have changed my motion in learning English. I feel more interested and motivated to learn English with visual aids.” (Student 4)

4.3. Discussion

4.3.1. English teachers’ perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

4.3.1.1. QV English teachers’ perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

The findings from questionnaires and semi-structured focus group interviews presented that all teachers of QV high school showed their positive attitudes toward the importance of visual aids in learning and teaching English. A large number of QV teachers showed strong agreement on the importance of visual aids. Accordingly, visual aid was very useful because visual aids could make them and their students feel interested in learning and teaching a foreign language. They recognized that the English classroom became meaningful and interesting when there was the application of visual aids. In addition, each person could save their knowledge of English in his/her mind longer. The visual aids were impressive so that students were able to remember for a long time, even be kept in their minds forever. Many QV teachers strongly agreed that visual aids activated the English class. In addition, the benefits that visual aids created were lots. Clearly, their students' pronunciation skills became better. Their students could know how to pronounce exactly, how to get their voice up and down and where to stress in a sentence, etc. Also, many of QV teachers strongly agreed that the effects of visual aids brought

were not only for students but for teachers such as saving time and creating interest and motivation.

4.3.1.2. AK English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

The findings of questionnaires and semi-structured focus group interview also presented that a majority of AK teachers agreed that visual aids was important and had benefits for teachers and learners. Similar to the perception of QV teachers, many of AK teachers recognized that visual aids were positively assessed in their usefulness, their activation of English class, their improvement of pronunciation, their improvement of English skills, their applicability for students, and their effects on learning and teaching. Although the result of the findings showed that the AK teachers' level of agreement on the role of visual aids was lower than that of QV teachers, most of them had a positive view of the role of Visual Aids.

4.3.1.3. TN English teachers' perceptions and use of Visual Aids in practicing English

Based on the findings of TN teachers on the role of visual aids, questionnaires revealed that most of these TN teachers also had a positive view of the visual aids. It meant that they had recognized the role of visual aids in learning and teaching a foreign language. It can be said that all QV, AK, and TN teachers were active in using and showing their ideas on the perception of the role of visual aids in learning and teaching English. They made sure about their statement about visual aids. There were only a very small number of teachers who showed their difficulties in using visual aids such as difficulty using a projector. In comparison with QV teachers, TN teachers had a lower agreement level on the view of visual aids

4.3.2. The students' perceptions at Senior High Schools towards the effects of Visual Aids on the improvement of their English skills

Apart from the benefits of visual aids identified by QV, AK, and TN teachers, students from these three schools also confirmed their positive perception of the improvement of visual aids in learning English. In detail, visual aids helped them to increase their pronunciation ability and perfect communication skills. Most of them agreed that visual aids made them more active and interested to engage in English classrooms. So, they had a trend to be more creative in writing and other skills. They could catch information better and quicker. In addition, students from these schools revealed that their vocabulary of English was increased since there was the application of visual aids in learning English. Because of those benefits in learning, many of the students agreed and strongly agreed on the frequent application of visual aids in learning English. This was the way to help them improve their knowledge of English and made them memorize knowledge permanently.

Among the three schools, students from QV school had the highest level of agreement on the positive perception towards the use of visual aids in learning English. They also strongly recommended that visual aids should be used in English classrooms

more. The students from AK school also agreed on the advantage of visual aids in improving English knowledge, and strongly recommended getting visual aids used in the English classroom. At the lower level, TN students had a positive perception of the use of visual aids and would like to have visual aids used in English class.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Summary of the findings

Through this research, the readers have a deep knowledge of visual aids in learning and teaching English skills. The items of visual aids such as definitions, types, activities, advantages, etc... have been described and explained in the research. Accordingly, "visual aids" are tools that be able to bring high effectiveness in learning and teaching a foreign language. People know images, pictures, videos, PowerPoint, etc... as tools visual aids. These kinds of visual aids are very helpful in improving the teaching and learning results of English skills. They motivated teachers and students to teach and learn English. They made them more active and interested in English class. The investigation of three schools including QV, AK, and TN senior high schools proved that visual aids can increase vocabulary, increase interaction among students in the class, improve pronunciation, and perfect communication skills. Generally speaking, both teachers and students had a positive perception of the role of visual aids in teaching and learning the English language.

5.2. The implication of the findings

The research has some implications as follows: this could be meaningful research for others to refer to. The reason is that theories and concepts of the research are written; so, the readers will understand the visual aids deeply. In addition, the readers can also recognize how visual aids are helpful, useful, applicable, etc. For people who do not know little about what visual aids are, this research will help them to understand more things about visual aids such as definitions, types of visual aids, and the importance and effects of visual aids in learning and teaching English skills. It is also useful for students and teachers who want to take visual aids in learning and teaching second language skills. Generally speaking, this research suggests an effective learning English language strategy. That is the use of visual aids.

In terms of practical significance, this research has contributed to making language research works more abundant. In detail, at present, there is little research on visual aids in Vietnam, Thus, the thesis research is worth becoming useful research in any educational context, especially in high schools in Vietnam. In international scope, this research will contribute to fulfilling the collection of research about visual aids.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

Both authors strongly agreed on the publication of this paper and there was no contention or rivalry during finishing the work. In other words, the authors declare no conflicts of interests in this article. Both authors are fully and equally responsible for the benefits and harms after this article is published. The authors, moreover, declare that the material presented by us in this paper is our original work, and does not contain any materials taken from other copyrighted sources. Wherever such materials have been included, they have been clearly indented or/and identified by quotation marks and due and proper acknowledgments given by citing the source at appropriate places.

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