

Teacher Media in Supporting English Language Learning: An Ethnographic Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received : 15/04/2026

Revised : 17/06/2026

Accepted : 30/06/2026

Keywords:

Teacher

Media

Learning

English

Ethnography

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe, analyze, and interpret the media used by teachers to support the English language learning approach at Al-Wildan International Islamic School Junior High School. This study uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods. The focus of the study is on the media used by teachers to support the English language learning approach at Al-Wildan International Islamic School Junior High School. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation review. Data analysis was carried out based on Spradley's analysis model using domain analysis, taxonomy, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. The results of the study on the media used by teachers to support the English language learning approach in the classroom are very diverse and in accordance with the class materials provided. The findings show that the use of media and learning facilities applied by English teachers at this school shows a high level of variation, including learning media related to listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The use of various media is in line with the learning objectives and methods applied.

I. Introduction

Learning English is not only an essential skill for communication but also a means of accessing knowledge and participating in global developments. According to [1], English serves as a primary medium for scientific research, academic publication, and access to international information resources. To facilitate effective English language learning, the use of appropriate teaching media has become increasingly important in English Language Teaching (ELT). Teaching media can enhance students' motivation, improve comprehension, and provide meaningful learning experiences through exposure to authentic language use. Various types of teaching media are commonly employed in ELT, including visual media such as pictures, flashcards, posters, and infographics; audio media such as recordings, podcasts, and songs; audiovisual media such as videos and films; and digital media such as learning applications, online platforms, and interactive multimedia resources. Furthermore, effective utilization of teaching media contributes to the development of language skills that are highly valued in the global workforce. According to [2], English proficiency is a determining factor in a country's success in the global economy, and individuals with strong English skills possess a competitive advantage in international employment markets. Although previous studies have extensively documented the use of various teaching media in ELT, limited attention has been given to how these media are integrated within the broader school culture to support English language learning. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature by examining not only the types of teaching media used but also their role within the school culture of SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School in

fostering students' English language development.

Previous research on English Language Teaching (ELT) has highlighted the significant role of teaching media in facilitating language learning and improving students' engagement. According to [3], the effective use of teaching media can create meaningful learning experiences by supporting students' understanding of language concepts and encouraging active participation in classroom activities. Researchers have investigated various types of teaching media, including visual media such as pictures and flashcards, audio media such as recordings and songs, audiovisual media such as videos and films, as well as digital media and online learning platforms. These studies generally indicate that teaching media contribute positively to the development of students' language skills, motivation, and learning outcomes. Furthermore, research has shown that the successful implementation of teaching media depends not only on the media itself but also on the learning environment and classroom culture in which it is used. As stated by [4], effective classroom interaction and collaboration between teachers and students are important factors in creating an inclusive learning environment that maximizes the benefits of instructional media. Although previous studies have extensively examined the effectiveness of different types of teaching media in ELT, limited attention has been given to how these media are integrated within the broader school culture to support English language learning. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the use of teaching media within the school culture of SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School.

In addition to its achievements in English, Al-Wildan International Islamic School also excels in its comprehensive and representative educational facilities and infrastructure. These facilities include a library, laboratory space, debate and dialogue rooms, a wall magazine, a basketball court, a swimming pool, and a radio broadcast room. Furthermore, modern learning media such as audiovisual equipment, projectors, and LCD screens are available, supported by the school's multi-story, spacious, and magnificent mosque. These facilities are designed to support learning activities both inside and outside the classroom, particularly in foreign language learning such as English and Arabic. Theoretically, educational facilities and infrastructure play a crucial role in creating an effective and conducive learning environment. Research published in the Indonesian Journal of Educational Research indicates that adequate learning facilities positively impact student achievement and encourage active engagement in the learning process [5]. Furthermore, another study published in the Journal of Teacher Education explains that the availability of resources such as books, LCDs, and technology-based learning media can increase learning motivation and create a more interactive and engaging learning environment for students [6]. The availability of basketball courts, swimming pools, and other facilities provides opportunities for students' physical and social growth. Participation in sports and extracurricular activities incorporating English or Arabic strengthens their practical skills. Furthermore, the magnificent buildings and nearby mosques foster an environment that supports students' academic and spiritual development, as well as their motivation to learn. As [7] stated, good learning facilities and environments will increase students' motivation to learn. When learning a foreign language, understanding the culture and values associated with that language is crucial.

The formal learning process in schools aims to produce targeted changes in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This process involves interactions between various learning components, such as students, teachers, learning materials (books, modules, magazines, internet access, and audio and video media), as well as learning resources and supporting facilities (such as projectors, audio-visual equipment, computers, libraries, and laboratories). These interactions constitute an interconnected system that determines the success of learning. According to [5] learning is essentially a communication process, with teachers acting as message senders (communicators) and students as message recipients (communicants). The messages conveyed are learning materials packaged through certain symbols, both verbal and nonverbal. Similarly, Hidayah. [8] states that the success of the learning process is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students and the appropriate use of media and learning resources. The formal learning process in schools aims to produce targeted differences in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Interactions in learning are influenced by various elements, including students, teachers, learning materials (such as books, modules, brochures, magazines, internet access, video or audio recordings, etc.), and various learning

resources and facilities (such as overhead projectors, audio and video recording equipment, radio, television, computers, libraries, laboratories, learning resource centers, etc.). The teacher acts as the sender of the message, expressing the message in specific symbols, while the students, as the recipients, interpret these symbols to understand the message. This process is at the heart of effective learning in schools.

Teachers not only need to be skilled in using available tools but also be able to develop their own learning media when these tools are not available [9]. To achieve this, teachers must have a deep understanding of educational media, including aspects such as the use of media as a communication tool that enhances learning effectiveness, the role of media in achieving educational goals, the relationship between teaching methods and instructional media, the value of instructional media in the classroom, the selection and use of instructional media, various media teaching tools and techniques in each classroom, and innovative media education initiatives. Understanding and mastering these elements will enable teachers to be more flexible in supporting student learning, especially when resources are limited[10].

According [11], the use of media in the classroom has several specific reasons that support language learning. First, media serves as a motivator for language learning and can increase student interest. Second, audiovisual media can help students better understand the material. Third, instructional media helps students connect the language learned in class with the real world. Fourth, learning media can be tailored to students' visual or auditory preferences, according to their individual learning styles. Fifth, the use of media can reduce students' reliance on teacher explanations. Sixth, media is effective in conveying material because it is easier to remember and understand. Seventh, learning media helps teachers manage learning time more efficiently. By utilizing media, teachers can create more engaging and beneficial learning experiences for students.

Based on the previous description, media plays a crucial role in the learning process. Media is not only a tool needed to support learning but also a means of communication and interaction between teachers and students during the learning process. Furthermore, media serves to help students reach their highest potential in the learning process and fosters student creativity. By utilizing media effectively, learning can be more comfortable, effective, and engaging for students, and help achieve better learning outcomes.

II. Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using ethnographic methods to investigate the cultural dimensions of English language teaching media at SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School. Ethnography was selected because it enables researchers to examine cultural practices, beliefs, interactions, and meanings that emerge naturally within a particular educational setting [12]. According to [13], ethnography involves an in-depth investigation of a social group within a specific spatial and temporal context in order to understand cultural phenomena from the participants' perspectives.

The study was conducted over a period of eighteen months, from January 2023 to June 2024. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in English language learning activities and their knowledge of the school culture. The participants consisted of three English teachers, twelve Grade IX students, and one school principal. The inclusion criteria included English teachers actively teaching English courses, students who regularly participated in English learning activities and school English programs, and the principal who was responsible for educational policies and school culture development.

Data were collected through prolonged classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted during English lessons as well as extracurricular activities related to English language learning. Particular attention was given to the use of teaching media, teacher-student interactions, students' responses to instructional media, and cultural practices that supported English learning. Field notes were recorded systematically throughout the observation period to provide thick descriptions of classroom practices and the learning environment. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with all participants, including the three English teachers, twelve students, and the school principal, to explore their

perceptions of teaching media and the cultural values underlying English language learning. Documentary evidence, including school programs, learning materials, photographs, achievement records, and institutional documents, was also collected to support data interpretation.

Data analysis followed the ethnographic procedures proposed by Spradley, consisting of domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. Domain analysis was used to identify cultural categories emerging from the data. Taxonomic analysis organized these categories into systematic relationships, while componential analysis identified distinctive cultural characteristics within each category. Finally, cultural theme analysis was employed to reveal overarching themes that explained how teaching media were embedded within the school culture and contributed to English language learning.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from teachers, students, and the principal. Methodological triangulation involved comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documents. Member checking was conducted by returning interview summaries and preliminary interpretations to participants for verification. These procedures enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. Ethical considerations were addressed through formal approval from the school administration, voluntary participation, informed consent, and the protection of participants' confidentiality throughout the research process.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, the primary instrument is the researcher themselves. Researchers collect data through various methods, such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. The following are some commonly used qualitative research instruments: To obtain research data that aligns with the research objectives, methods, and focus, the author conducted the research following qualitative data collection procedures, specifically the ethnographic method. According to [12], there are four types of data collection techniques in qualitative research: observation, interviews, document review, and participant observation. Ethnographic research generally involves several data collection methods, such as interviews, observation, and examination of documents, artifacts, and visual materials, as stated by [14]. Similarly, [15] explains that the data collection techniques used in this study included observation, interviews, and field notes. By using these various data collection techniques, the author sought to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data, consistent with an ethnographic approach, enabling a deeper understanding of the culture and phenomena being studied.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis in ethnographic research follows the method proposed by [16] and generally involves four important stages. First, domain analysis, in which researchers identify and categorize various concepts and terms that appear in the data to understand the domain or area of focus of the research. Second, taxonomic analysis, which involves creating a hierarchy or taxonomic structure to classify data based on the hierarchical relationships between concepts found within the domain. Third, component analysis, in which researchers investigate the attributes or components associated with the identified concepts. Fourth, cultural theme analysis, which involves developing an understanding of the cultural themes that emerge from the data. Through these four stages, ethnographic data analysis allows researchers to explore and describe the cultural structures contained in the data, as well as identify patterns and meanings that emerge within the cultural context being studied. This helps in understanding ongoing sociocultural phenomena in depth and comprehensively.

III. Results and Discussion

The findings revealed that English teachers at SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School employed a variety of instructional media according to the learning objectives and language skills being developed. Classroom observations indicated that media selection was closely aligned with the characteristics of each language skill. In reading activities, teachers predominantly used presentation slides containing pictures and visual illustrations to activate students' prior knowledge and facilitate comprehension. During one observed reading lesson, students were shown a series of images related

to the topic before reading the text. This strategy encouraged students to predict the content and establish connections between visual information and written texts.

In contrast, listening instruction relied heavily on audiovisual media, particularly videos presented by native speakers. Observation data showed that students were exposed to authentic language input through videos containing different accents, communication styles, and contextual situations. The use of audiovisual media enabled students to practice listening comprehension in more realistic communicative contexts. These findings support the argument of [17], that audiovisual media provide engaging and immersive learning experiences that enhance students' listening skills and language comprehension.

The findings further demonstrated that audiovisual media constituted the most frequently used form of instructional media in English classes. Classroom observations showed that teachers regularly utilized videos, audio recordings, multimedia presentations, and digital learning resources. The dominance of audiovisual media reflected teachers' efforts to address the complexity of language learning, particularly listening skills, which require continuous exposure to authentic spoken English. During several observations, students appeared more attentive and actively engaged when multimedia resources were integrated into classroom instruction. This finding is consistent with the view of [18], who emphasized that audiovisual media strengthen language acquisition by providing authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

Another significant finding concerned the use of realia in speaking instruction. Teachers frequently incorporated real objects and tangible materials to facilitate vocabulary learning and oral communication. Observation notes indicated that students were more willing to participate in speaking activities when they interacted directly with concrete objects rather than relying solely on abstract explanations. The use of realia enabled students to connect vocabulary items with actual objects, thereby enhancing comprehension and retention. These findings support the assertion of [19] that real objects improve vocabulary acquisition by linking language forms with observable and meaningful referents. Similarly, [20] argued that language learning becomes more effective when connected to authentic contexts and real-life situations.

Visual media such as pictures, photographs, and graphical representations were also commonly employed to support vocabulary development and concept understanding. Classroom observations revealed that visual representations helped students interpret unfamiliar vocabulary and contextualize language use. In several learning sessions, teachers used images to stimulate classroom discussions and encourage students to describe objects, events, and situations in English. These findings corroborate the perspective of [21], which emphasizes the role of visual media in strengthening the relationship between meaning and visual representation. Likewise, [22] highlighted that images and visualizations enhance comprehension by presenting information in a more accessible and engaging manner. An important cultural theme emerging from the data was teacher autonomy in media selection. Interviews and observations indicated that teachers were given considerable flexibility to choose instructional media based on lesson objectives, student needs, and classroom conditions. This autonomy encouraged creativity and innovation in instructional practices, allowing teachers to combine various forms of media to create dynamic learning experiences. The integration of multiple media types was observed to increase students' motivation, participation, and engagement during classroom activities. From an ethnographic perspective, this practice reflects a school culture that supports pedagogical innovation and encourages teachers to adapt instructional strategies to learners' needs.

Overall, the findings indicate that the use of instructional media at SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School is not merely a pedagogical tool but also a cultural practice embedded within the school's approach to English language learning. The consistent use of audiovisual media, realia, visual materials, and multimedia resources demonstrates a shared belief among teachers that effective English learning requires authentic, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences. These findings extend previous research by showing how instructional media are integrated into the broader school culture and contribute to the development of English language competence among students.

IV. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that English teachers at SMP Al-Wildan International Islamic School

employ a variety of instructional media, including digital media such as PowerPoint presentations, instructional videos, and interactive applications, as well as traditional media such as textbooks, flashcards, realia, and visual images. The findings indicate that the integration of diverse media contributes to a more engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning environment that supports the development of English language skills and accommodates different learning styles. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the existing literature on English Language Teaching (ELT) by demonstrating that instructional media function not only as pedagogical tools but also as cultural artifacts embedded within the school learning environment. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of instructional media is closely associated with the school culture, teacher autonomy, and the broader educational context in which media are implemented. Practically, the findings imply that schools should provide adequate technological and instructional resources to support the effective integration of diverse learning media. Teachers are encouraged to select and combine media based on instructional objectives, students' needs, and the language skills being developed. Furthermore, school administrators should foster a supportive environment that promotes creativity and innovation in instructional practices. This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single educational institution, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on the use of instructional media in English language learning and did not examine the direct impact of specific media on students' academic achievement. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings.

Future research may investigate the effectiveness of particular instructional media on specific language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, or writing, using larger samples and different educational settings. Comparative studies across schools with different cultural and institutional characteristics would also provide a deeper understanding of how school culture influences the selection and implementation of instructional media in English language learning.

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