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## Good Practices in using Instructional Images to Enhance Young Children's Linguistic Skills from the Viewpoint of Language Education Experts

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**Abstract.** The increasing emphasis on improving early childhood language education necessitates a deeper exploration of effective pedagogical tools, particularly visual aids. This study aims to examine the perspectives of language education specialists regarding best practices for employing images to enhance language development in early childhood settings. A targeted sample of 33 experts in language teaching, all working in early childhood education institutions in northern Jordan, was selected for the study. Qualitative research methodology was adopted, utilizing semi-structured interviews and

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grounded theory for data analysis. The findings identified a series of best practices for the use of instructional images to foster language development in young learners. Key practices included avoiding overly explicit interpretations of images by teachers, cultivating teachers' confidence in children's ability to interpret and engage with images independently, providing immediate feedback after children view images, allowing ample opportunities for children to articulate their interpretations of image content, ensuring clear and visible image presentation, selecting images that resonate with children's real-life experiences, and accommodating individual differences among children. Based on these results, the study put forth several recommendations aimed at enhancing language acquisition through the strategic use of visual aids. The research highlights the critical role of creating a learning environment that effectively integrates images as a tool for promoting language skills in early childhood, encouraging a more interactive and engaging approach to language education.

**Keywords:** language; linguistic development; linguistic skills; children's learning; images

## 1. Introduction

Child development is deeply connected to language progression, which functions not only as a tool for effective communication but also plays a crucial role in enhancing a child's ability to express and understand emotions (Al-Hassan et al., 2022). Additionally, language development is a key contributor to cognitive growth, supporting the formation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Alqy & Mukminatus, 2022; Chen et al., 2023).

As children embark on their educational journey, language development plays a pivotal role in acquiring essential reading and writing skills (Fraihat et al., 2022; Pribadi et al., 2024). Language proficiency is indispensable across various educational domains, enabling children to participate actively in classroom activities, build relationships with peers and educators, and navigate the complexities of academic life (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023a). Beyond formal education, language skills are critically important as individuals transition into adulthood. The cultivation of strong language abilities serves as a foundational pillar for children's social integration and lifelong academic success. Consequently, language development is a key factor influencing a child's overall growth and achievements across multiple life domains (Al-Hassan et al., 2012; Dulaj, 2023). As Ramnath (2021) emphasizes, language proficiency is fundamental to multiple aspects of children's development. It lays the groundwork for learning in other domains, including literacy, while also enhancing communication skills, fostering social connections, building confidence and self-esteem, supporting emotional and behavioral development, and helping children comprehend the world around them.

Understanding that children learn through experiences underscores the importance of incorporating sensory tools to effectively enhance their language abilities (Bani Irshid et al., 2023). Specifically designed tools that engage multiple senses are essential in helping children comprehend and express themselves more creatively. Teachers emphasize the significance of incorporating visuals,

such as pictures, to captivate children's attention and enhance their language development (Al Harbi, 2015). Among these resources, photos are particularly influential as they provide vivid and concrete portrayals of the real world, leading to a significant boost in children's vocabulary and understanding of language concepts. The vividness of these visuals enhances the effectiveness of language learning interactions (Bani Irshid et al., 2023; Pribadi et al., 2024).

Theories concerning language acquisition emphasize the role of educational visuals in supporting language development. Using images to illustrate ideas helps children link words to their meanings in an effective and engaging manner (Pribadi et al., 2024). Research by Al-Barakat et al. (2023) has demonstrated that educational images not only aid the immediate understanding of language but also enhance long-term memory retention. By connecting visual stimuli with written information, the combined use of visuals and text can significantly improve memory retention (Al Hilah, 2020; Pribadi et al., 2024).

Renowned language experts, such as Chomsky, have highlighted the positive effects of using visual aids in teaching language skills to students. When educational visuals are presented in a manner that captures children's attention and sustains their engagement, they can foster active involvement. Educators can further enhance this engagement by customizing images to suit individual learning preferences. Additionally, the integration of visuals with other sensory elements, such as touch and sound, can improve both understanding and memory retention (Rüschhoff & Sudhoff, 2018; Fraihat et al., 2022; Pribadi et al., 2024). These images also play a crucial role in promoting critical thinking by providing real-life examples of complex ideas in a manner that young students can easily grasp. This type of interaction encourages active learning and deepens children's understanding of language concepts, creating a lasting educational impact (Beck et al., 2013).

In summary, using visuals in language teaching is an effective method for enhancing children's language abilities. Images facilitate understanding and engagement, support sensory and conceptual learning, and lay a solid foundation for early language development. Studies indicate that incorporating visual aids, such as photos, can make language learning more enjoyable and productive (Al-Barakat et al., 2022; Fraihat et al., 2022; Pribadi et al., 2024). Engaging children in conversations and interactive projects with pictures supports language growth and improves their linguistic competence (Furnham, 2017). Teachers emphasize the importance of including photos in children's learning environments to stimulate visual perception and foster communication (Kreitler, 2018). This approach not only enhances language learning but also significantly boosts children's language abilities (Rüschhoff et al., 2019).

Numerous studies by Mahasneh & Abdelal (2022) highlight the importance of using visual images in language learning to help children better understand language concepts and retain them effectively in the long term. Teachers frequently emphasize how rich educational materials contribute to the development of children's perceptual skills and enhance their ability to retain educational experiences and knowledge over time.

Numerous researchers have emphasized the critical role of incorporating photographic images in enhancing children's language development. This significance arises from the ability of images to strengthen sensory perception, provide a tangible foundation for abstract concepts, and promote structured scientific thinking through problem-solving activities. Additionally, images encourage children to actively engage in constructive criticism, thereby honing their observation and analytical skills (Fraihat et al., 2022; Moshkov et al., 2024; Pribadi et al., 2024).

To integrate images effectively into language development, many educators and linguists stress the importance of establishing optimal conditions for their use in language learning environments. Linguistic experts such as Rüschoff & Sudhoff (2018) emphasize the need for employing high-quality, clear images that stimulate visual engagement, foster creative thinking, and enrich language acquisition. They further advocate the use of diverse images to broaden children's vocabulary. Dulaj (2023) elaborates on this by highlighting that best practices in using images to enhance children's language skills involve selecting images that are both inspiring and convey meaningful messages or narratives. These images should stimulate children's imagination and creative thought processes. Equally important is the emphasis on the clarity and resolution of the images, ensuring that they are of high quality to allow children to discern fine details and better comprehend the context. This, in turn, enhances their ability to connect visual stimuli with language content (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2024; Rusu, 2019). By incorporating well-chosen, high-resolution images, early childhood educators can create a more effective and engaging language learning environment that supports both cognitive and linguistic development.

The importance of using visual aids in language learning for children is widely recognized in educational research. According to Al Alaymat (2020), it is crucial to ask thought-provoking questions while presenting images to engage children effectively in conversations. This approach underscores how pictures stimulate children's language skills by prompting them to express their thoughts and opinions.

Building on this idea, Zoulikha (2020) highlights the significance of linking educational resources with children's daily surroundings. By using photographs that are recognizable and meaningful to a child's life experiences, educators can enhance understanding and communication skills. This connection helps children grasp concepts more deeply and encourages valuable engagement, which plays a vital role in facilitating successful learning experiences.

Pribadi and colleagues (2024) emphasize the importance of organizing conversations around visuals to encourage cognition and enhance language abilities in children. They suggest that involving children in image-related activities aids in honing their verbal expression skills. Additionally, the scholars stress the importance of cultivating linguistic thinking and contextual comprehension by critically evaluating visuals. This strategy, coupled with consistent feedback, is designed to continually enhance children's language proficiency.

The inclusion of visual aids in educational materials plays a crucial role in improving learning outcomes, as noted by Moshkov et al. (2024). The researchers emphasize that visuals help clarify concepts and enhance cognitive growth by effectively complementing text content, as Pribadi et al. (2024) also observed. Combining ideas with images provides clarity and depth to the learning process, facilitating better understanding and memory retention, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience.

However, creating effective images poses its own challenges. Chen et al. (2022) found that poorly designed images can hinder children's learning by featuring unclear visuals, overlooking individual differences, and including irrelevant depictions, all of which act as significant obstacles to effective learning outcomes.

The impact of teaching images on children's minds is another topic worth exploring. Alqy & Mukminatus (2022) discuss how these images can shape a child's personality by helping them navigate life's challenges and prepare for adulthood. By depicting scenarios and role models, these images aid children in understanding complex emotions and situations more effectively.

Furthermore, images in educational materials address common difficulties faced by children, such as feelings of anger, frustration, or dealing with changes in their lives. Alqu & Mukminatus (2022) point out that illustrating these situations through visuals offers valuable support to children, enabling them to better understand and manage their emotions.

AlAli & Al-Barakat (2023b) emphasize the importance of using images to structure information effectively and enhance comprehension for learners. These visual aids help students make connections between concepts and organize their understanding of ideas. Such instructional images are regarded as essential elements in children's cognitive development.

Numerous studies underscore the significance of incorporating visuals to enhance language skills and improve children's linguistic capabilities (Bani Irshid et al., 2023; Kasmaienezhadfar et al., 2015). Within this framework, the primary goal of this research is to explore the utilization of images in language education during childhood for various purposes. It is widely recognized that young children, who primarily learn through visual means, can greatly benefit from the integration of instructional images into their educational journey. Visual aids like pictures provide real-life examples that help children better understand and retain words and ideas.

The importance of using visual aids is increasingly acknowledged; however, there has been insufficient systematic research to fully understand how these images are effectively utilized in supporting language learning at a young age. This research aims to address this gap by examining the effective methods employed by language education experts and seeks to offer insights into how pictures in teaching materials can be optimally used to enhance language skills in young children. Bridging this gap in understanding and knowledge exchange between researchers and educators in the field of children's language learning is not only an academic endeavor, but it also provides valuable insights for

practical teaching methodologies that can effectively promote linguistic development in young students.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Incorporating instructional images into early childhood education presents a significant challenge within the global landscape of language learning and teaching. This challenge underscores the critical need for professional development, both for individual educators and collaborative groups, to effectively integrate visual aids into language instruction (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023a & 2023b). In Jordan, recent reforms in language learning materials emphasize the necessity for specialized training to equip early childhood educators with the skills required to meet image-based teaching standards.

Observations indicate that early childhood educators often struggle to use images effectively in their teaching practices. These practices frequently fall short of established pedagogical standards, with educators focusing more on procedural elements than on fostering deeper retention of linguistic concepts. Furthermore, a lack of awareness regarding curriculum design and language teaching strategies exacerbates these challenges, contributing to student weaknesses and low levels of achievement.

Despite the widespread use of visual aids in early childhood education, there remains a significant gap in research specifically addressing effective practices for using images to enhance language skills. This study aims to bridge this gap by identifying and highlighting best practices for integrating images into early language instruction, thereby offering a valuable contribution to the existing literature and informing future pedagogical approaches.

## **3. Study Purpose**

This study aims to investigate effective practices for utilizing images to enhance children's linguistic skills, with a particular focus on the insights and experiences of language teaching experts. By exploring how images can be strategically integrated into language instruction, the research seeks to identify specific methods that have proved successful in promoting language development among young learners. Special attention is given to understanding how images contribute to vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and the overall improvement of communication skills. Consequently, the study addresses the central research question: What are the best practices for using images to enhance young children's linguistic skills, according to experts in language education?

## **4. Method**

The qualitative methodology was employed to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon. By focusing on the collection and analysis of qualitative data, the study explored the experiences and interpretations of language education experts regarding the use of instructional images to enhance young children's linguistic skills. This approach allows for a detailed understanding of how children benefit from instructional images and how these images can be improved to achieve better outcomes in language

learning. Through qualitative analysis, the study provides detailed insights into best practices for using instructional images, contributing valuable recommendations for refining educational strategies and enhancing children's linguistic abilities.

#### 4.1. Participants

The research involved 33 professionals specializing in language education within early childhood settings in Jordan. These experts were carefully selected based on their extensive knowledge and background in the field, providing invaluable insights into the effective use of visuals to improve children's language abilities, grounded in their specialized expertise in early childhood language development.

The selection of language education specialists for investigating effective methods of utilizing instructional images is rooted in several key considerations:

- **Expertise in assessing visual impact:** Language education specialists possess the knowledge necessary to evaluate how educational visuals influence children's learning journeys and language development.
- **Program development expertise:** These professionals have experience in designing and implementing educational programs, enabling them to identify effective ways to incorporate visuals in various learning settings.
- **Understanding of language learning challenges:** Their familiarity with the challenges of language learning allows them to provide informed recommendations on using educational visuals to address these obstacles effectively.
- **Contribution to educational practices and policies:** Language educators offer insights that can help refine educational practices and policies regarding the use of instructional images.

Selecting experts in language education to review the use of instructional images is vital to ensuring that recommendations are grounded in scientific principles. This approach facilitates the development of effective strategies for utilizing educational images, thereby enhancing their impact on the learning process of young children. By drawing on the specialized knowledge and expertise of these professionals, the study aims to optimize the use of images in education to support and enrich children's language development.

#### 4.2. Interview

This study employed semi-structured interviews to explore best practices for enhancing children's linguistic skills through the use of photographic images. Participants were asked to provide detailed accounts of instances where images facilitated children's acquisition of new vocabulary or comprehension of complex concepts (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023a). The interviews were conducted with language education experts, and the questions were meticulously designed to align with the study's objectives. The researchers developed an interview guide comprising six key questions aimed at uncovering effective strategies for utilizing photographic images to support early language development in children. This approach allowed for a focused yet flexible exploration of expert perspectives, ensuring that responses were rich in detail and directly relevant to the research aims.

### 4.3. Validity and Reliability

The interview questions were thoughtfully crafted after a thorough review of relevant sources, literature, and discussions with field experts to ensure alignment with the study's objectives and comprehensive coverage of the effective use of instructional images for language enhancement. The guide was refined post-review, resulting in a concise set of five pivotal questions:

1. What was your definition of good practice in utilizing instructional images within children's linguistic learning environments?
2. How did effective practices in using instructional images enhance children's linguistic skills?
3. In what ways could the use of instructional images have been tailored to align with children's linguistic abilities?
4. How did educators effectively plan the use of instructional images to improve children's language skills?
5. In what ways did instructional images motivate children and increase their engagement in language learning?

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection process, the questions were initially piloted with a small group of experts to assess their clarity and relevance. Feedback from this pilot phase was instrumental in refining the questions, ensuring they were clear, unbiased, and capable of eliciting in-depth responses. Notably, the questions were modified based on reviewers' comments, with at least 80% of participants agreeing on the proposed changes.

Moreover, all interviews were conducted consistently, with the same interviewer facilitating each session to minimize variability in data collection. The data were analyzed using the Grounded Theory approach, renowned for enhancing the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of qualitative research. This methodology involves the iterative and interconnected collection and analysis of data, allowing the researcher to gather and analyze data concurrently without reliance on pre-existing hypotheses. Through continuous note-taking and periodic analysis, the study achieved theoretical saturation, ensuring that the findings were firmly rooted in empirical data.

To further validate the instrument, it was reviewed by a panel of specialized and experienced evaluators. This rigorous process yielded reliable and credible results, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the role of instructional images in enhancing young children's linguistic skills. The final set of interview questions is designed to be flexible, allowing for adaptation to meet the specific needs of different interview contexts and the linguistic learning requirements of children.

### 4.4. Data Collection

The data collection process commenced upon receiving official approval from the participants. Participants were consulted to select a suitable time and location that accommodated their convenience. Consent was obtained for recording the interviews to ensure transparency throughout the process.

The interviews were conducted personally by the authors, adhering to the qualitative research methodologies as outlined in the theoretical literature (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2018). The process began with an introduction to



the study's objectives, during which participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, which would be used exclusively for research purposes. This qualitative approach allowed the researchers to gather comprehensive insights from individuals with relevant experience, resulting in rich and nuanced data for analysis.

Efforts were made to minimize any potential influence on participants' responses. Questions were presented in various formats to promote consistency and stability in the responses, thereby providing a more accurate representation of participants' views and experiences.

#### **4.5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis began with the transcription of recorded interviews into written format, followed by an extensive interpretive reading of the transcripts. Each word was carefully examined and categorized into various sections and subcategories. Quotations from the participants' responses were selectively extracted for inclusion in the results section to illustrate key themes. Specifically, the analysis involved organizing the experts' responses into main and sub-categories, with frequencies and percentages calculated for each category to provide a quantitative overview of the data. This systematic approach ensured a detailed understanding of participants' insights and facilitated the identification of patterns within the qualitative data.

During the coding process, several key categories emerged, shedding light on various dimensions of effective practices in using instructional images. Prominent themes included the alignment of images with children's real-life experiences and the use of guided questioning to promote critical thinking. The analysis highlighted the following thematic areas:

1. Teachers should avoid providing explanations of images to students. Encouraging children to interpret images independently fosters critical thinking skills and supports cognitive development.
2. Teachers should have confidence in children's capacity to engage with visual materials. This confidence can enrich learning environments and increase children's involvement.
3. Provide feedback to children after they view images. This feedback helps clarify any confusion, reinforces learning, and enhances language abilities.
4. Encourage children to stimulate their thinking by exploring images. This practice aids in expressing ideas and developing language skills more effectively.
5. Ensure that images are prominently displayed as they facilitate understanding and make learning more effective.
6. Utilize illustrations that depict scenes from children's everyday lives. Such images can enhance the relatability and understanding of content while boosting motivation.
7. Tailoring image-based instruction to meet the needs of each child ensures that all students are included and benefit from effective teaching methods.

#### 4.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in the data collection phase of research, safeguarding both research integrity and the rights of participants. The following measures were implemented to uphold these ethical standards:

- **Informed Consent:** Consent was obtained voluntarily from participants, ensuring that there was no obligation or coercion involved.
- **Study Explanation:** Participants received a comprehensive overview of the study's purpose, procedures, and any potential risks or benefits associated with their participation.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
- **Confidentiality Assurance:** The identities of participants were kept confidential throughout the study, with each individual assigned a unique code to protect their anonymity.
- **Data Security:** All collected data were securely stored and utilized exclusively for scientific research purposes, ensuring compliance with data protection standards.

#### 5. Findings

During the initial data analysis identified categories encompass:

1. Avoiding teachers providing explicit interpretations of images;
2. Fostering teachers' beliefs in children's ability to interact with images;
3. Providing children with immediate feedback after viewing images;
4. Encouraging children to practice creative thinking when engaging with the content of images;
5. Displaying images clearly;
6. Drawing images from children's real lives, and
7. Considering individual differences among children.

Each category was presented as follows:

##### 5.1. Avoiding teachers providing explicit interpretations of images:

The results of data analysis indicate that 90.9% of respondents showed significant importance for the role of early childhood education teachers in avoiding direct explanations of the content of instructional images. Instead, they should assign children the task of interpreting the meanings and implications of the image content. In this context, the following quotations from language teaching experts are relevant:

*"Yes, the teacher should avoid providing direct explanations of the image content. Instead, children should be allowed to make critical contemplation of the image content, followed by extracting meanings and implications."*

*"One important requirement for effectively utilizing images as a learning source is posing open-ended questions about the images. This encourages children to express the meanings and implications of the images. Yes, the teacher should refrain from explaining the content of the image."*

The above responses underscore the importance of encouraging children to extract meanings and implications from the language embedded in images. This fosters their engagement in expressing their thoughts and observations in

language learning environments. In this context, teachers can pose questions to children such as, "What do you see in the picture?" "Can you describe what is in the picture?" "What does the picture suggest?"

### **5.2. Fostering teachers' beliefs in children's ability to interact with images**

Based on the assertions of the study respondents regarding the necessity for early childhood educators to avoid providing explanations for the content of educational images, and in order to achieve this, the results of data analysis indicated that 31 respondents (93.93%) emphasized the importance of shaping personal beliefs among early childhood educators about children's ability to interact with educational images. Their interaction was deemed an integral part of effective learning practices for young children in early childhood.

The study sample reiterated the importance and the child's capability to interact with images, indicating that achieving this requires:

1. Encouraging educators to explore and implement evidence-based practices that highlight the positive impact of children's interaction with visual stimuli. One respondent stated: *"It is very necessary to introduce early childhood educators to pedagogical models that demonstrate children's interaction with images."*
2. Sharing studies and articles that highlight the connection between visual stimuli and language development.
3. Using modeling by providing effective interaction with images in the classroom. Teachers can demonstrate how to interact with images, ask questions, and encourage discussion.
4. Using videos or peer observation to showcase successful implementation of visual media in language teaching.
5. Activating the peer visitation model. One participant expressed, *"It is essential to have classroom situations attended by their peers who excel in using images in development."*
6. Supplying early childhood educators with a set of high-quality educational images aligned with language development goals. The educational supervisor in schools then provides guidance on how children interact with the images.

### **5.3. Providing children with immediate feedback after viewing images:**

The results of this category confirmed that enhancing children's confidence in interacting with learning images in early childhood education necessitates targeted feedback from teachers. Data analysis revealed that 27 experts (81.81%) highlighted the importance of providing positive feedback. Such feedback is crucial for boosting children's self-confidence, facilitating their engagement with images, helping them build linguistic meanings, and effectively expressing the content of the images.

Some quotes from the participants' responses follow:

*"Providing targeted feedback for children contributes to more effectively building linguistic meanings, as teachers can adapt lessons and exercises based on students' needs and linguistic levels while reflecting on the images."*

*"Directing feedback towards areas of improvement or concepts that need clarification can enhance children's abilities to express image content distinctly."*

*"Reinforcing positive behavior encourages children to continue engaging with educational images. Clarification and correction are essential."*

It is evident from the above quotations that providing children with constructive feedback during and after contemplating educational images contributes successfully, effectively, and significantly to enhancing children's confidence in them. Receiving positive feedback on their performance increases children's confidence in their language skills and encourages further development of their skills.

#### **5.4. Encouraging children to practice creative thinking when engaging with the content of images.**

The analysis process indicated responses reflecting aspects of creative thinking in using images to develop language skills in young children. In this context, all respondents (100%) indicated that the use of visual images could be one of the most important practices in developing children's language skills. Participants' responses were classified into four areas as follows:

- **Storytelling and narrative building:** This result emphasizes directing children to use images as stimuli for storytelling. Many respondents (75.75%) expressed this sentiment by saying, *"As a teacher, I assign children to create a story based on their observation of photographic images, with an emphasis on encouraging the use of imagination for narrative expression."*
- **Facilitating reflective discussions:** This result shows support for reflective discussions by inviting children to share their interpretations and thoughts about images. This, in turn, encourages them to engage in divergent thinking through their discussions about the content of the images.
- **Implementing comparative and contrast activities:** This result indicates using multiple images to encourage children to engage in comparative and contrastive activities. For example, a teacher can ask questions such as "How does image (A) differ from image (B) or (C)? Are there similarities between the two images?"
- **Role-playing activities:** This result shows that children engage in role-playing activities, where they can perform scenes based on the images they have seen. This allows children to employ language expression skills in a practical context and enhances their expressive skills.

#### **5.5. Displaying images clearly**

The results underscore the unanimous recognition among study participants regarding the pivotal role of effectively presenting images in language education to enhance language skills in children. This practice is deemed crucial for fostering active engagement in learning. Building upon the importance of clear visuals, participants highlighted the following key aspects:

- **Choosing well-designed images of the highest quality:** Early childhood educators are encouraged to select images characterized by high

resolution and quality. This ensures clarity and vibrancy, capturing children's attention and facilitating linguistic comprehension.

- **Ensuring visual images are large and visually appealing:** Images should be sizable and visually attractive to guarantee visibility for all children.
- **Focusing on images conveying a single idea:** Participants stressed the significance of selecting images that communicate a single idea or message and avoid crowded visuals with multiple concepts. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring the central point of the image is clear and easily discernible.
- **Presenting images through interactive boards or screens:** In language learning environments, using interactive boards or screens was highlighted as beneficial. This approach facilitates dynamic interaction, enabling features such as zooming in and highlighting specific elements, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience and making it more engaging for children.

### 5.6. Drawing images from children's real lives

The analysis of the data indicated that all 33 participants underscored the significance of opting for educational images inspired by the real-life experiences of children. They affirmed that establishing a connection between the images and children's lives enhances their language skills development, making it a valuable and captivating approach. The study findings underscored that early childhood educators should take into account the following recommendations:

- Select images derived from the daily lives, routines, and experiences of children. It became apparent that educators should focus on incorporating common activities, objects, and situations that are familiar to the children.
- Choose images closely linked to children's lives, ensuring alignment with the targeted words and vocabulary for development. In this context, the results highlighted the significance of considering vocabulary and linguistic concepts associated with daily routines, such as waking up, having breakfast, going to school, and more.
- Incorporate images from social events, activities, and celebrations related to children's lives.

### 5.7. Considering individual differences among children

The data analysis indicates that 25 respondents (75.75%) emphasized the importance of early childhood education teachers' practices in recognizing individual differences among children when selecting educational images to enhance their language skills. Respondents expressed the following:

*"It is essential to consider differences in children's abilities, needs, and preferences when diversifying the use of educational images that cater to diverse learning preferences."*

*"Yes, acknowledging individual cultural differences among children is crucial. Teachers must be aware of cultural variations and ensure that the educational images used respect different cultures and are relevant to students' diverse backgrounds in the classroom."*

In light of the findings, the importance of considering individual differences among children in the use of educational images is evident. Teachers must engage in continuous professional development to stay informed about the latest research and strategies for addressing individual differences in language development. This ongoing learning helps teachers enhance their instructional practice, creating a comprehensive and effective learning environment that takes into account cultural, academic, and social diversity.

## **6. Discussion**

The study's results underscore the importance of allowing children to form their own interpretations of images independently, without teachers imposing explicit explanations. This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes that refraining from direct explanations fosters independent thinking and stimulates creativity in children (Laufer & Rozovski-Roitblat, 2015; Fraihat et al., 2022; Moshkov et al., 2024; Pribadi et al., 2024; Sun, 2022). Observations from the study suggest that avoiding explicit explanations significantly enhances children's language skills and critical thinking abilities. Enabling children to draw their own conclusions from visual materials promotes independent cognitive processes and supports the development of analytical skills.

The findings corroborate the notion that allowing children to deduce information from images helps improve their capacity to analyze content critically. Sun (2022) emphasizes that effective image usage involves encouraging children to scrutinize image details and explore various interpretations and meanings. This approach directs children's attention to the words associated with visuals, thereby enhancing language comprehension and expanding vocabulary. Additionally, prompting children with questions about image content encourages them to articulate their observations with greater precision and detail, further refining their descriptive skills.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of fostering teachers' confidence in children's ability to interact with visuals to support language skills development. This finding is consistent with the perspectives of various educators (Birketveit, 2015; Choi et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2019; Kim, 2015), who stress the need to shape teachers' beliefs regarding children's potential to engage with images and grasp linguistic concepts. Creating a classroom environment that promotes the use of educational images can significantly enhance language acquisition. Teachers should be provided with opportunities for professional development focused on the role of visual culture in language learning. Collaborating with experienced educators and experts to share successful strategies and real-life examples can further support the effective use of images in teaching.

Overall, these findings support the integration of images as a powerful tool in early childhood education. By encouraging independent interpretation and fostering teachers' beliefs in the efficacy of visual stimuli, educators can significantly enhance children's language development and critical thinking skills.

To enhance children's confidence in developing their linguistic skills through interaction with photographic images, the study underscores the critical

importance of feedback, which is essential for fostering children's language development during their engagement with images. The study attributes these findings to the significant role of positive and supportive assessment, which enhances language comprehension and cognitive development.

Language teaching specialists (Pribadi et al., 2024; Herra & Kulinska, 2018) highlight the importance of feedback in developing linguistic skills. Feedback not only boosts self-confidence but also directs attention to areas needing improvement and helps children focus on aspects of their language abilities that require further development. Herra and Kulinska (2018) assert that learners need ongoing corrective and explanatory feedback, with teachers playing a crucial role in this process. Feedback should be delivered predictably and tailored to individual learning needs.

The study also reveals that the use of visual images encourages children to think creatively and enjoyably, stimulating their imagination. This outcome is attributed to the role of images in initiating mental brainstorming, which encourages children to generate diverse ideas and express themselves artistically without restrictive instructions. Researchers believe that the effectiveness of images in educational settings lies in their ability to position children as central characters, thereby capturing their attention and stimulating their imagination. Image designers and illustrators should consider these aspects when creating texts that depict children's characters engaging in imaginative play and overcoming challenges (Niland, 2023; Pribadi et al., 2024).

These findings align with studies (Fraihat et al., 2022; Moshkov et al., 2024; Pribadi et al., 2024) that demonstrate how pictures can effectively convey stories. When children group a series of photos and investigate their relationships, teachers can facilitate this process by asking questions about the images to help children express the story using appropriate language. This approach supports theories that encourage children to develop their thoughts by observing and interpreting images (Fraihat et al., 2022; Moshkov et al., 2024; Pribadi et al., 2024). Additionally, these discoveries align with educational patterns emphasizing the role of visuals in sparking creativity, allowing children to craft visual narratives or depict sequences of events or characters (Coffey & Patel, 2023; Niland, 2023).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the quality of visual aids in educational materials is crucial for fostering language ability. This aligns with research by Al-Barakat et al. (2023), which confirms that clear visuals enhance children's participation in conversations and debates while broadening their vocabulary. Vivid images guide children in understanding and applying words in various contexts, assisting them in storytelling and explanation, thereby improving writing skills. Clear images also evoke emotional connections, prompting children to engage with them more deeply. Consequently, the use of images positively impacts comprehension, expression, and language interaction in a captivating and effective manner.

The study's results emphasize the importance of designing and selecting images based on real-life experiences to provide a contextual framework for language learning. Images inspired by genuine situations, expressions, and cultural

elements enhance the relevance of language instruction in children's daily lives. This finding underscores the role of images in elucidating concepts that might not be easily comprehended through text alone.

Specifically, images reflecting children's experiences facilitate the creation of both non-verbal and verbal symbols, thereby enhancing the retrieval of textual content from visual representations. When children encounter images of everyday situations, they can better articulate their experiences, aligning with Khasawneh et al. (2022). This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which suggests that linking images to daily experiences can boost language skills by making children more attentive and engaged with the content. It also supports social interaction theory, which emphasizes that learners are more engaged when ideas are illustrated with visuals connected to their personal and real-life experiences. This approach stimulates interest and encourages more active language discussions among children. Previous research by AlAli and Al Barakat (2023), Bani Irshid et al. (2023), Fraihat et al. (2022), Kasmaienezhadfar et al. (2015), and Khasawneh et al. (2023) support the notion that enhancing language comprehension is closely tied to linking visuals with real-life scenarios.

The study highlights the need to consider individual differences when selecting educational images for language development. Educators (AlAli and Al-Barakat, 2022; Al-Hilah, 2020; Haddad, 2020; Kasmaienezhadfar et al., 2015) stress the importance of this consideration as a criterion for designing and selecting educational images, ensuring a comprehensive and effective learning experience. Additionally, the study underscores the critical role of teachers in considering the cultural and social backgrounds of their students. AlAli & Al-Barakat (2023b) emphasize the importance of incorporating images that reflect diverse cultures and social contexts to avoid relying solely on culturally specific symbols or concepts. This approach ensures equitable access and interaction for all students. Furthermore, educators highlight the need for fair gender representation in educational images to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

In the realm of childhood education, the use of instructional images as a teaching aid plays a crucial role in enhancing children's language abilities. Recent research supports the idea that instructional images nurture linguistic cognition and enrich vocabulary by providing clear visual cues for language application. To leverage these benefits, teachers should incorporate engaging activities, offer language drills, and create a conducive learning atmosphere that supports language development. These insights highlight the significant impact of visuals on improving linguistic cognition and vocabulary skills, which can inform the development of better teaching approaches that utilize the advantages of visuals in language acquisition.

The study suggests that teachers should avoid explaining images directly and, instead, encourage children to share their interpretations. By relying on children's ability to interpret images and providing prompt, constructive feedback, teachers can enhance the learning experience. Additionally, selecting images that reflect children's everyday lives and presenting them clearly and appropriately can increase involvement and comprehension. These methods



align with theories that emphasize the importance of contextual and interactive learning in language acquisition and challenge models that downplay the impact of visual aids on fostering a deeper understanding of the connection between visual and verbal learning.

The research also recommends developing methods to evaluate the effectiveness of image use in language development, and conducting further studies to explore educators' views on the successful implementation of images in early educational settings.

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