



Received: 08-02-2025  
Accepted: 18-03-2025

## International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

### The Influence of Visual Instructional Media on Students' Acquisition of Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality

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#### Abstract

The study examined the influence of visual instructional media on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The study utilized a quasi-experimental research design. The target population was made up of all secondary schools in the Buea Municipality of the South West Region of Cameroon. The accessible population consisted of all secondary school students from two selected secondary schools in the Buea. The purposive and convenient sampling techniques were adopted. The sample population consisted of Form One students from two lay private schools found in the accessible population. The study used achievement tests to examine the English Language writing skills where the

experimental group received treatment and the control group was not exposed to the use of Visual instructional media making a total of 8 written tests for both groups. Data was analysed descriptively and inferentially. The descriptive data analysis tool were percentages, frequencies and the inferential data analysis tools that was used was an independent sample t-test. The study revealed that: Visual instructional media had a significant influence on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills. It was recommended that the Ministry of Secondary Education should put in place regulations, checks and balances to ensure that different visual instructional media are used in adopting writing skills.

**Keywords:** Visual instructional Media, English Language Writing Skills, Buea Municipality

#### Introduction

Writing is an important skill in the learning of English Language. Writing skill is important because it supports students' performance (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018)<sup>[2]</sup>. It is a significant skill in language production (Kellogg, 2008)<sup>[3]</sup> as its role is to convey the message accurately and effectively, and its proficiency play a major role in communication. It is also one of the most important means of communication in today's era of globalization (Yunus, 1981)<sup>[6]</sup>. Writing is an important English Language skill in the world of education. One of the factors that can influence students' acquisition of English language writing skills is visual instructional media. Visual instructional media are those instructional devices which are used in the classroom to encourage learning and make it easier and motivating (Rather, 2004)<sup>[5]</sup>. Advances in technology have made it possible to produce materials and devices that can assist teachers, reduce the burden of much talking and at the same time, make the message clearer, more interesting and easier for the learners to assimilate (Mezeiobi, 2006)<sup>[4]</sup>.

It is noticeable that, with regards to students' writing skills in English Language, many students cannot build vocabulary in writing, they are unable to spell well and they have no mastery of punctuation or mechanics. Some attention therefore has been received and scholars have carried out research in relation to students' writing skills in English Language but much has not been done in relation to visual instructional media. Consequently, the inconsistency and scarcity of contemporary research on visual instructional media and their influence on students' acquisition of English language writing skills and the quest to contribute to knowledge made it imperative for the researcher to have carried out this study. The problem posed a research question was therefore: To what extent do visual instructional media influence students' acquisition of English Language writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality?

### Research Objectives

The study was carried out to examine the influence of visual instructional media on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality.

Specifically, the study was guided by four research objectives which sought to investigate:

1. The influence of textbooks on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools.
  2. The influence of charts on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools.
  3. The influence of flashcards on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools.
  4. The influence of pictures on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools.
- These objectives were transformed to research questions.

### Research Hypotheses

The research hypothesis was:

**Ho:** Visual Instructional media do not significantly influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea municipality.

**Ho1:** Textbooks do not significantly influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools.

**Ho2:** Charts do not significantly influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools.

**Ho3:** Flash cards do not significantly influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools.

**Ho4:** Pictures do not significantly influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools.

### Research Methodology

The research design employed under this study was the quasi-experimental design. According to this design, two independent groups of students were used for the study. One group referred to as the experimental group received treatment which was consisted of exposing them to the use of visual instructional media and another known as the control group received no such treatment. The two independent groups then took an achievement test after the treatment process. The quasi-experimental design was seen as appropriate for this study because the manipulations of the two groups permitted for differences in performance with respect to students' acquisition of English Language writing skills established between the two independent groups involved in the study.

The study was carried out in the Buea Municipality. The area of the study here was the municipality of Buea. This area is found in the Fako division of the South West Region of Cameroon. The Buea Council Report (2005) presents a proper Description of the area as thus; Buea has an estimate population of above 200,000 inhabitants constituting essentially of the Bakweries (the indigenes) in the villages and a highly cosmopolitan population within the urban space putting the indigenes at a minority. The Bakweri language spoken by natives is equally written and documented. English and French are two official languages used for general interaction while pidgin is the lingua franca. The average life expectancy of this area is 50years

(1999 statistics) and literacy rate is on the rise with 60-75% of the youths having access to education. Buea is one of the fastest growing town in Cameroon today with mix cosmopolitan setting and constellation of about 67 villages. These villages are inhabited by the Bakweries who according to scientist, have lived around Mount Cameroon for at least 4000years. It's urban realms now includes; Molyko, Buea Station, Mile 16, Clerks and Federal Quarters, Great Soppo, Likoko- Membea, Bokwango, and Bonduma. Buea is presently the head-quarter of the southwest region of Cameroon.

The target population of this study consisted of all secondary school students in the Buea municipality of the Fako Division of the South west Region of Cameroon. The accessible population of the study consisted of all secondary school students from two selected secondary school in the Buea municipality. NABESK Comprehensive College Buea and Summerset Bilingual College Buea. This study purposefully chooses lay private schools as the researcher worked according to the financial as well as the intellectual resources available. Reason the study was limited to lay private schools.

**Table 1:** Population of the Study

School	Number	Total Population
Government Schools	16	13,741
Lay Private Schools	13	4,140
Confessional Schools	8	4,029
<b>Grand total:</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21,910</b>

**Source:** Regional Delegation of Secondary Education for Southwest Region (2020)

**Table 2:** Accessible Population of the Study

Schools	School population	Accessible Population
NABESK Comprehensive College Buea	900	197
Summerset Bilingual College Buea	850	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>1750</b>	<b>287</b>

**Source:** NABESK Records office (2023)/Summerset Record Office (2023)

The sample population of the study was made up of 114 form one students from NABESK Comprehensive College Buea and Summerset Bilingual College Buea. In particular, 64 students of form one from NABESK and 50 form one students from Summerset constituted the sample of the study. Form one students of NABESK constituted the experimental group while form one students of Summerset Bilingual College constituted the control group of the study. The sample for this quasi-experimental study was taken while bearing in mind David (1938) <sup>[1]</sup> recommendation about the suitability of a small sample size for a quasi-experimental design.

**Table 3:** Sample of the Study

Schools	Accessible population	Sample
NABESK Comprehensive College Buea	197	64
Summerset Bilingual College Buea	90	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>114</b>

The study utilized two sampling techniques. A purposive sampling technique and the convenient sampling. The convenient sampling technique was used to select the two

schools, NABESK Comprehensive College and Summerset Bilingual College since two schools can conveniently be assessed by the research while a purposive sampling technique was used to select only form one students because they are novices and have little or no learning experience in the use of visual instructional media, as such they were able to evaluate its effectiveness to their acquisition of English language writing skills after the pre-test and post-test.

The instrument used for data collection was an achievement test which was administered to both groups, the researcher taught a set of 8 lesson over a period of two months during which the treatment group was exposed to the use of visual instructional media and then used an achievement test at the end of the teaching process to rate performance of students in both groups in the study.

After constructing the achievement test made up of 10 structural and essay questions, which was submitted to the supervisor, the statistician and other lecturers to check in order to ensure that they can be used to collect the relevant data. Feedback obtained from the judges were used to modify the instrument.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test and retest was applied where the researcher administered a pre-test post-test on the students, two of them were selected from form two which were not part of the sample. This was repeated using same respondents at an interval of 2 weeks. The results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the reliability coefficient using the statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS).

After establishing the validity of the instrument, the researcher then collected an introductory letter from the Head of Department in charge of Research at the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea. The authorization was to request for assistance from school authorities to enable the researcher collect data. Before the exercise proper, the researcher requested authorization from the Principal of the selected school. The data collection was done personally by the researcher. Emphasis was placed on ethical issues whereby the researcher was patient and made sure that the participants freely consent to participate in the study and show effective availability. The researcher endeavoured meeting codes of ethics such as politeness, honesty, friendliness, commitment and neatness. The researcher really made sure that participants were readily available before the experiment was conducted.

The achievement test was then administered to the students who made up the study's sample. The test was given to both groups and conditions of administration were same for both groups. The time allocation for the test was be determined by the researcher. There was strict invigilation and the

researcher was assisted by a colleague while administering the test.

The t-test was the main tool for data analysis of the study. The data for the study consisting of achievement test scores for both experimental and control groups were analysed by the formulae for independent sample t-test.

$$t = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where  $\bar{x}_1$  stands for total number of cases in the experimental group and  $\bar{x}_2$  stands for total number of cases in the control group. S stands for variance,  $S^2_1$  stands for the experimental group and  $S^2_2$  stands for the control group.

**Ethical Considerations**

Prior to the data collection, consent was obtained from the Management of the sample schools to provide access to study participants. A formal written letter that briefly describes the objectives of the study and the potential outcomes of the research was sent to the management to obtain permission to carry out the research. All participants also received information about the study.

All data was treated in a manner that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and organization involved in the study. The information obtained from the research was analysed, and at all times remain the property of the researcher.

Ethical issues relate to the privacy of possible and actual participants, voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw partially or completely from the process, consent, possible deception of participants and maintenance of confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity. Thus, care was taken in this research to avoid harm to all respondents, for example, consent was obtained first before any engagement and their personal identity were held confidential during administering of the test. Respondents were not pressured to take the tests and data was collected at the convenient time for both parties.

**Presentation of Results**

Results showing the influence of visual instructional media on students' acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in Buea Municipality were presented. In addition, the statistical tool for data analysis for the study (t-test) was computed and then research questions were answered and specific research hypotheses tested.

**Table 4:** Group Statistics and T-test for Equality of Means for the Effect of the Use of Textbooks on the Acquisition of English Language Writing Skills

Group Statistics for Charts							
Type of group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Experimental	56	64.1071	25.92133	3.46388			
Control	48	40.0000	23.24705	3.35542			
t-test for Equality of Means							
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4.957	102	.000	24.10714	4.86339	14.46064	33.75365
Equal variances not assumed	4.999	101.777	.000	24.10714	4.82259	14.54131	33.67298

The table above presents the results of the study showing the effect of the use of textbooks on the experimental group while controlling for the other group. The table compares differences in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and the control groups or the use of textbooks.

**Research Question One: To what extent do textbooks influence students’ acquisition of English Language writing Skills in Secondary Schools?**

The results from the t-test table above revealed that the use of textbooks had a positive influence on students’ acquisition of English language writing skills for those in the experimental group given that they scored higher on average (mean=64.1 points) compared to students in the control group whose mean performances were lower (mean=40.0 points). The difference in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the two groups was 24.1 points. The results reveal that the experimental group benefited from the treatment.

**Verification of Hypothesis One**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Textbooks do not significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea municipality.

**H<sub>a1</sub>:** Textbooks significantly influence students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

The results of the study revealed that the p-value for the influence of textbooks and students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Buea municipality was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05,  $t(102,0.05)=4.957$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ , implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded textbooks significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

Concerning the influence of textbooks on the acquisition of English Language Writing Skills, the following results were obtained.

**Table 5:** Group Statistics and T-test for Equality of Means for the Influence of Charts on the Acquisition of English Language Writing Skills

Group Statistics for Charts							
Type of group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Experimental	60	64.0000	24.92021	3.21719			
Control	50	30.4000	16.89825	2.38977			
t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	8.104	108	.000	33.60000	4.14607	25.38177	41.81823
Equal variances not assumed	8.384	103.961	.000	33.60000	4.00766	25.65263	41.54737

The table above presents the results of the study showing the influence of charts on the experimental group while controlling for the other group. The table compares differences in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and the control groups for the use of charts.

**Research Question Two: To what extent do charts influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools?**

The results from the t-test table above revealed that charts had a positive influence on students’ acquisition of English language Writing skills for those in the experimental group given that they scored higher on average (mean=64.0 points) compared to students in the control group whose mean performances were lower (mean=30.4 points). The difference in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the two groups was 33.6 points. The results reveal that the experimental group benefited from the treatment.

**Verification of Hypothesis Two**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Charts do not significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea municipality.

**H<sub>a1</sub>:** Charts significantly influence students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

The results of the study revealed that the p-value for the influence on charts and students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Buea municipality was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05,  $t(108,0.05)=8.104$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ , implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded charts significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality. Concerning the influence of charts on the acquisition of English Language writing Skills, the following results were obtained.

**Table 6:** Group Statistics and T-test for Equality of Means for the Influence of Flash Cards on the Acquisition of English Language Writing Skills

Group Statistics for Charts							
Type of group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Experimental	60	61.0000	21.52649	2.77906			
Control	47	45.9574	26.91852	3.92647			
t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.213	105	.002	15.04255	4.68238	5.75826	24.32685
Equal variances not assumed	3.127	86.673	.002	15.04255	4.81044	5.48077	24.60433

The table above presents the results of the study showing the influence of flashcards on the experimental group while controlling for the other group. The table compares differences in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and the control groups for the use of flash cards.

**Research Question Three: To what extent do flash cards influence students’ acquisition of English Language writing Skills in Secondary Schools?**

The results from the t-test table above revealed that flash cards had a positive influence on students’ acquisition of English language writing skills for those in the experimental group given that they scored higher on average (mean=61.0 points) compared to students in the control group whose mean performances were lower (mean=45.96 points). The difference in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the two groups was 15.04 points. The results reveal that the experimental group benefited from the treatment.

**Verification of Hypothesis Three**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Flash cards do not significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea municipality.

**H<sub>a1</sub>:** Flash cards significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

The results of the study revealed that the p-value for the influence on flash cards and students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Buea municipality was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05,  $t(105,0.05)=3.213$ ,  $p=0.002<0.05$ , implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded charts significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

Concerning the influence of flash cards on the acquisition of English Language writing Skills, the following results were obtained.

**Table 7:** Group Statistics and T-test for Equality of Means for the Influence of Pictures on the Acquisition of English Language writing Skills

Group Statistics for Charts							
Type of group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Experimental	61	49.1803	19.60400	2.51004			
Control	49	35.5102	16.08069	2.29724			
t-test for Equality of Means							
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.932	108	.000	13.67012	3.47664	6.77882	20.56143
Equal variances not assumed	4.018	107.943	.000	13.67012	3.40259	6.92557	20.41468

The table above presents the results of the study showing the influence of pictures on the experimental group while controlling for the other group. The table compares differences in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and the control groups for the use of pictures.

**Research Question Three: To what extent do pictures influence students’ acquisition of English Language writing Skills in Secondary Schools?**

The results from the t-test table above revealed that pictures had a positive influence on students’ acquisition of English language writing skills for those in the experimental group given that they scored higher on average (mean=49.2 points) compared to students in the control group whose mean performances were lower (mean=35.5points). The difference in the mean acquisition of English language writing skills between the two groups was 13.7 points. The results reveal that the experimental group benefited from the treatment.

**Verification of Hypothesis Four**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Pictures do not significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea municipality.

**H<sub>a1</sub>:** Pictures significantly influence students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

The results of the study revealed that the p-value for the influence on pictures and students’ acquisition of English Language Writing Skills in Buea municipality was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05,  $t(108,0.05)=3.932$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ , implying that the relationship was

statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded pictures significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality.

**Summary of Results**

Results of the study revealed that students in the experimental group significantly benefited from the various treatments introduced to the group. In particular, textbooks ( $p=0.000$ ), charts ( $p=0.000$ ), flash cards ( $p=0.002$ ) and pictures ( $p=0.000$ ) significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality. The biggest influence in the acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and control groups was textbooks given that the there was a 33.6 points difference between the two group performances, while the variable with the least influence on the acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and control groups was pictures given that the there was a 13.7 points difference between the two group performances.

**Conclusion**

The results of the study revealed that students in the experimental group significantly benefited from the various treatments introduced to the group. In particular, textbooks ( $p=0.000$ ), charts ( $p=0.000$ ), flash cards ( $p=0.002$ ) and pictures ( $p=0.000$ ) significantly influenced students’ acquisition of English writing Language Skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality. The biggest influence in

the acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and control groups was textbooks given that the there was a 33.6 points difference between the two group performances, while the variable with the least influence on the acquisition of English language writing skills between the experimental and control groups was pictures given that the there was a 13.7 points difference between the two group performances. Judging from the above, the use of visual instructional media does influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills, the t-test analysis results show a significant difference between the experimental and control group.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of the research, the following recommendations are made.

Research question one was to find out the extent to which textbooks influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The results revealed that the use of textbooks have a positive influence on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills. It is recommended that, parents should be encouraged to make provisions for students' instructional media. Also, students should be informed about diverse instructional media as it will help them to be more conscious, motivated, facilitate and encourage and make the teaching and learning process more systematic.

Research question two was to investigate the extent to which charts influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality. The results revealed that charts have a positive influence on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills. It is recommended that the Ministry of Secondary Education should put in place regulations, checks and balances to ensure that charts are effectively used in the teaching and learning process. Teachers do need support in teacher education and professional development to become critical and informed instructional media users. The Ministry of Secondary Education should organize training sessions for teachers on how to use diverse instructional media.

Research question three was to find out to what extent flash cards influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in the Buea Municipality. The results revealed that, the use of flashcards had a positive influence on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills. It is recommended that schools and administrative authorities should share the opinions of flashcards that will be helpful in enhancing the teaching and learning process, know the different types of lessons to use flashcards, so that the level of socialization among students are monitored. School administration should make provision for these instructional media and include them in their yearly budget.

Research question four was to find out to what extent pictures influence students' acquisition of English Language writing skills in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The results revealed that pictures had a positive influence on students' acquisition of English Language writing skills. It is recommended that, there is the need for teachers to have a forum for meeting periodically to assess the effectiveness of their use of instructional media and teachers should give importance to the student's opinion as it adapts to the learners' interest as well as increase the influence these instructional media has in the teaching and learning process.

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