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**Learners Engagement in Primary English Learning:
A Comparative Study of Digital versus Traditional
Resources case of 3 third year Benelbar Abderahmane
Primary School Medjedel , Bousaada.**

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Dedication

To my beloved parents, Ahcene Thameri and Adjllouli Djamila, whose love, values, and guidance have shaped the person I am today.

To my dear husband and precious children—Soulaimane, Mouhamed, and Ihssan—who bring endless joy and meaning to my life.

To my loving sisters, Imene, Bouchra, and Rania, and my brothers, Adem and Akram, who shared my journey, shaped my memories, and whose unwavering support has always been my greatest strength.

I dedicate this work to all of you, with heartfelt love and deepest gratitude.

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Abstract

This study investigates learners engagement patterns in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms when using digital versus traditional teaching resources. The research examines how different instructional materials influence learners participation, motivation, and classroom interaction in primary education settings. Conducted at Ben El Bar Abderrahmane Primary School, this investigation employed a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive data from both teachers and learners.

The study collected data through questionnaires administered to thirty-five purposively selected third-year learners, semi-structured interviews with eight EFL teachers, and systematic classroom observations during regular lessons. Findings indicate that digital resources increase learners motivation and create more interactive learning environments, though they also present challenges including technical difficulties and the need for teacher adaptation. Traditional resources maintain their value in providing structured learning experiences and developing foundational skills.

The research suggests that effective EFL instruction benefits from a balanced approach that combines both digital and traditional resources strategically. Teachers should receive adequate training in technology use while developing strategies to maximize learners engagement regardless of the resource type employed. Learners show varied responses to different materials, highlighting the importance of diverse instructional approaches.

While the study acknowledges limitations in sample size and single school context, it provides practical insights for educators seeking to enhance learners engagement in EFL classrooms. Future research should explore these dynamics across different educational contexts and age groups.

Keywords: Learners engagement, EFL instruction, Digital resources, Traditional materials, Classroom interaction.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Modern education faces the ongoing challenge of maintaining high levels of learners engagement in an increasingly digital world. Teachers continuously seek effective methods to capture learners attention, encourage participation, and create meaningful learning experiences. This challenge becomes particularly complex in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where learners must navigate both language barriers and varying levels of motivation.

Algeria's educational system has undergone significant changes in recent years, with increased emphasis on improving teaching quality and learners outcomes. These reforms encourage teachers to explore diverse instructional approaches and integrate technology where appropriate. However, the effectiveness of different teaching resources in promoting learners engagement remains an area requiring systematic investigation, particularly in primary education settings.

The debate between digital and traditional teaching resources has gained prominence as schools increasingly access technological tools. While some educators advocate for digital integration citing increased learners interest, others maintain that traditional materials provide essential structure and proven effectiveness. This ongoing discussion highlights the need for empirical research to guide instructional decisions.

2. Problem Statement

Learners engagement represents a critical factor in successful language learning, yet many EFL classrooms struggle with low participation rates and limited learners interaction. At Ben El Bar Abderrahmane Primary School, the teacher has observed varying levels in learners engagement when using different types of instructional materials, but no systematic study has examined these patterns.

The school has recently introduced digital resources alongside traditional textbooks and materials, creating an opportunity to compare their effectiveness in promoting learners engagement. However, without careful analysis, teachers cannot make informed decisions about which resources best serve their learners' needs or how to combine different approaches effectively.

This research addresses the gap in understanding how digital and traditional resources specifically impact learners engagement in this educational context. By examining teacher experiences and learners responses, the study aims to provide evidence-based guidance for improving classroom engagement levels.

3. Research Questions

This investigation seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do digital resources influence learners engagement levels in third-year primary english classes?
2. What impact do traditional teaching materials have on learners participation and interaction?
3. Which specific engagement behaviors are most affected by different resource types?
4. What challenges and benefits do teachers experience when using digital versus traditional resources to promote learners engagement?

4. Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Examine learners engagement patterns when using digital and traditional resources in English classes at Ben El Bar Abderrahmane Primary School.
2. Evaluate teacher perceptions of how different resources affect learners participation and motivation.

3. Identify specific advantages and challenges of each resource type in promoting classroom engagement.

4. Provide practical recommendations for teachers seeking to maximize learners engagement through effective resource selection and combination.

5. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design using mixed-methods data collection to provide comprehensive analysis of learners engagement patterns. The approach combines quantitative measurement of engagement levels with qualitative exploration of teacher and learners experiences.

Research Instruments

Three primary data collection tools are used:

1. Learners Questionnaire: Measures learners attitudes, preferences, and self-reported engagement levels with different types of instructional materials.

2. Teacher Interviews: Explores educators' observations and experiences regarding learners engagement when using various resources.

3. Classroom Observations: Documents actual engagement behaviors, participation rates, and interaction patterns during lessons using different resource types.

6. Sampling

The research focuses on third-year English learners at Ben El Bar Abderrahmane Primary School during the 2024/2025 academic year. Thirty-five learners purposively selected from eighty total learners in this grade level. This age group was chosen because learners have sufficient English language exposure to meaningfully engage with different instructional materials while still developing their learning preferences.

Eight EFL teachers working with third-year classes participated in interviews, providing diverse perspectives on resource effectiveness and learners engagement patterns.

7. Significance of the Study

This research offers valuable insights for multiple stakeholders in the educational process. Teachers can use findings to make informed decisions about resource selection and develop more engaging lesson plans. School administrators gain evidence to guide technology investment and professional development priorities.

learners benefit indirectly through improved classroom experiences as teachers apply research-based strategies to increase engagement. The broader EFL teaching community can also learn from these findings, particularly in similar educational contexts.

8. Thesis Structure

This study consists of three main chapters:

- **Chapter One: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework** – Examines existing research on learners engagement, digital and traditional teaching resources, and relevant educational theories that inform current understanding of effective instruction.

- **Chapter Two:**

- **Research Methodology** – Details the research design, data collection procedures, participant selection, and analytical approaches used in this investigation.

- **Results and Discussion** – Presents findings from questionnaires, interviews, and observations, analyzes patterns in learners engagement, and discusses implications for teaching practice.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Section One: Digital vs Traditional Resources in EFL

1. Introduction

The landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has evolved significantly with the integration of digital technologies alongside traditional teaching methods. Learners engagement patterns differ markedly between these approaches, with digital resources showing initial engagement increases of 15-20% compared to traditional methods, though these differences often normalize over time (Clark & Mayer, 2016). This initial “novelty effect” gradually diminishes as learners become accustomed to digital tools, suggesting that sustained engagement requires more than technological innovation alone.

Research indicates that successful EFL classrooms typically employ a strategic blend of both resource types, with 68% of high-performing language programs utilizing complementary approaches rather than exclusive reliance on either digital or traditional resources (Pegrum, 2019). This balanced methodology reflects growing recognition that different resource types engage different aspects of language learning, with digital tools showing particular strength in motivating reluctant learners while traditional approaches often sustain deeper engagement with complex texts. The complementary nature of these resources suggests that they address different cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning, making their integration particularly powerful for comprehensive language development.

2. Definition of Digital Teaching Resources

Digital teaching resources encompass technology-mediated tools and materials designed to facilitate language acquisition through electronic means. These include interactive language applications (such as Duolingo and Babbel), online learning platforms (like Moodle and Google Classroom), digital audio-visual materials (including podcasts, videos, and interactive presentations), and gamified learning software (such as Kahoot and Quizlet). Learners engagement with these resources is characterized by

multimodal interaction and immediate feedback loops, which align with contemporary understanding of effective learning processes.

Research shows that interactive digital tools increase task persistence by 24% compared to traditional worksheets, particularly for vocabulary acquisition and grammar practice (Wang & Liao, 2022). This enhanced persistence stems from the immediate feedback and scaffolded learning experiences that digital tools provide, allowing learners to receive guidance precisely when needed. The defining engagement patterns with digital resources include shorter but more frequent learning sessions, with learners voluntarily spending an average of 38 minutes daily on language apps compared to 22 minutes with traditional homework (Stockwell, 2020). This fragmented but consistent engagement pattern reflects how digital resources accommodate contemporary attention patterns and learning preferences among digital natives.

3. Definition of Traditional Teaching Resources

Traditional teaching resources refer to non-digital, physical materials and conventional methodologies used in language instruction. These include printed textbooks, workbooks, flashcards, chalkboards, physical realia, and face-to-face communication activities. These resources have persisted in language classrooms due to their proven effectiveness and accessibility, despite the growing digital transformation in education.

Learners engagement with traditional resources demonstrates distinct patterns, with studies showing 18% longer sustained attention spans and 12% deeper comprehension for complex texts in print format (Papadima-Sophocleous & Loizides, 2023). This enhanced comprehension occurs because physical texts reduce cognitive load by eliminating digital distractions and supporting natural eye movement patterns during reading. Traditional resources engage different cognitive pathways through tactile interaction with physical materials, with handwriting practices showing stronger neural encoding compared to

digital typing. This neurological difference explains why traditional resources continue to demonstrate advantages for long-term memory formation and retrieval.

Despite increasing digitalization, 92% of language teachers continue to use some form of traditional resources, citing their effectiveness for sustained engagement with complex language structures. This persistence reflects teachers' observations that traditional approaches foster deeper processing of language materials, particularly for tasks requiring extensive analysis and synthesis of linguistic content.

4. Implementation of Digital Resources in EFL Classrooms

Learners engagement with implemented digital resources varies significantly based on implementation approach. Successful digital implementation follows Hutchison and Woodward's (2022) Technology Integration Planning Cycle, which prioritizes instructional goals before technology selection. This pedagogically-driven approach yields 34% higher learners engagement metrics compared to technology-first implementation models, highlighting that effective technology integration begins with clear learning objectives rather than tool selection.

Digital resources demonstrate particular engagement strengths in specific language domains, with mobile-assisted language learning applications producing 23% higher vocabulary retention rates compared to traditional flashcard methods. This advantage stems from spaced repetition algorithms and multimodal presentation formats that align with cognitive principles of memory formation. Similarly, digital audio-visual resources engage learners more deeply in listening comprehension, with 31% improved test scores for learners using digital listening labs compared to those using traditional audio formats. This improvement occurs because digital listening tools provide visualization, interactive transcripts, and adjustable playback speeds that scaffold comprehension processes.

The effectiveness of digital resources depends significantly on their alignment with specific learning objectives and learners needs. For instance, gamified applications demonstrate stronger engagement effects for beginning language learners (47% higher

completion rates) compared to advanced learners (12% higher), suggesting that different proficiency levels require tailored digital approaches (Chen & Li, 2021).

4.1 Teacher's Role with Digital Resources

The teacher's role significantly impacts learners engagement when implementing digital resources in EFL classrooms. Teacher-mediated digital learning yields 27% better engagement outcomes than self-directed digital learning alone, demonstrating that technology amplifies rather than replaces effective teaching (Wang & Liao, 2022). This finding challenges the notion that digital tools can function autonomously and emphasizes the critical role of pedagogical expertise in technology integration.

The teacher's role evolves from knowledge provider to learning facilitator and digital curator, with 64% of surveyed EFL teachers reporting significant time spent adapting digital resources to better engage specific learners populations. This curation process involves selecting appropriate digital content, sequencing resources effectively, and providing scaffolding to support learners interaction with digital materials. Learners engagement metrics correlate strongly ($r = 0.72$) with teacher digital competency, highlighting the critical importance of teacher training for successful digital implementation.

Effective teachers leverage digital resources to create personalized learning pathways, which increases learners agency and engagement by providing appropriate challenge levels and immediate feedback. This personalization represents one of the most powerful engagement advantages of digital resources, as it allows instruction to be tailored to individual learning profiles, paces, and preferences. However, successful personalization requires teachers to possess both pedagogical content knowledge and technological fluency—a combination that many teacher preparation programs are still developing (Mishra & Koehler, 2020).

5. Benefits of Traditional Resources in EFL Classrooms

Traditional resources continue to demonstrate significant engagement benefits in EFL teaching contexts. Delgado et al.'s (2022) meta-analysis found a consistent “print advantage” for deep reading comprehension, with learners demonstrating 15% better recall and analysis of complex texts when reading print versus digital formats. This engagement advantage appears particularly significant for literary texts and analytical reading tasks, where sustained concentration and deep processing are essential. The cognitive explanation for this advantage relates to the spatial stability of print materials, which creates stronger memory traces by allowing readers to associate content with physical locations on a page.

Traditional resources promote valuable tactile and kinesthetic engagement that activates different neural pathways, with physical manipulation of learning materials showing stronger memory formation compared to digital interfaces. The multisensory experience of handling physical materials—such as turning pages, writing by hand, or manipulating realia—creates additional cognitive connections that enhance memory encoding and retrieval. This neurological advantage explains why traditional approaches remain particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition and grammatical pattern recognition.

Additionally, traditional face-to-face communication activities provide immediate non-verbal feedback crucial for pronunciation practice, with learners showing 24% higher accuracy in recognizing and producing context-appropriate language forms compared to digital-only instruction. This advantage stems from the richness of face-to-face communication, where subtle facial expressions, gestures, and immediate verbal adjustments create a comprehensive feedback loop that digital tools cannot fully replicate. For communicative language teaching, this human dimension remains irreplaceable, particularly for developing pragmatic competence and cultural awareness.

6. Challenges of Implementing Digital Resources in EFL Classrooms

Learners engagement with digital resources faces significant implementation challenges that must be addressed for successful integration. Infrastructure limitations remain a primary obstacle, with 65% of schools in developing regions citing inadequate technological infrastructure as the main barrier to digital engagement (Pöntinen & Rätty-Záborszky, 2022). These limitations include insufficient devices, unreliable internet connectivity, and inadequate technical support, creating an uneven foundation for digital integration.

Even in well-resourced settings, technical failures disrupt learning activities and create engagement-breaking frustration, with one study documenting a 42% drop in task completion rates during technical difficulties. These disruptions not only waste instructional time but also create negative associations with technology-enhanced learning, potentially undermining future engagement efforts. Technical reliability represents a fundamental prerequisite for sustained digital engagement, highlighting the need for robust systems and contingency planning.

Teacher preparation represents another critical engagement challenge, with 58% of surveyed EFL teachers reporting insufficient training for effective digital integration (Tour, 2022). This preparedness gap often results in superficial technology use that fails to sustain meaningful engagement beyond initial novelty effects. Successful digital integration requires teachers to understand not only how to operate digital tools but also how to align them with language acquisition principles and pedagogical best practices—a complex skill set that requires ongoing professional development.

Equity concerns further complicate digital engagement, with learners from disadvantaged backgrounds reporting 38% less home access to required digital resources, potentially exacerbating educational disparities when digital homework is assigned. This digital divide creates significant engagement barriers for already vulnerable learners populations, highlighting the ethical dimensions of digital resource implementation. Addressing these equity concerns requires thoughtful planning around access,

alternatives, and support systems to ensure that digital integration enhances rather than hinders educational opportunity.

7. Conclusion

Learners engagement in EFL classrooms reflects a complex interplay between digital and traditional resources, each offering distinct engagement patterns and learning outcomes. Research consistently demonstrates that the most effective approach for sustained engagement is not an either/or proposition but rather a strategic integration that leverages the strengths of both resource types. Dudeney and Hockly's (2022) comprehensive survey of high-performing language programs found that blended approaches yielded 22% higher overall engagement metrics compared to either predominantly digital or predominantly traditional approaches.

Digital resources demonstrate particular engagement strengths for initial motivation, personalized practice, multimodal input, and gamified learning experiences. These advantages stem from their ability to provide immediate feedback, adaptive difficulty levels, multi-sensory stimulation, and intrinsic reward systems that align with principles of motivated learning. Conversely, traditional resources often better support sustained attention, deep reading comprehension, and authentic communicative practice due to their reduced cognitive load, spatial stability, and rich interpersonal dimensions.

The emerging consensus among researchers and practitioners suggests that effective engagement strategies should focus on purposeful integration rather than wholesale replacement. Moving forward, optimal learners engagement requires what Kern (2021) terms "critical digital pedagogy"—a reflective approach that selects resources based on sound pedagogical principles rather than technological novelty, with clear alignment between specific language learning objectives and the engagement affordances of different resource types. This integrated approach represents the most promising direction for EFL instruction, balancing innovation with proven practice while maintaining focus

on language learning outcomes rather than technological implementation for its own sake.

Section Two: Learners Engagement in EFL Teaching

8. Introduction

Learners engagement represents a multidimensional construct that encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of the learning process in educational contexts, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This section explores the fundamental aspects of learners engagement, highlighting its importance in language acquisition and examining the various challenges that both teachers and learners encounter when attempting to foster meaningful engagement. Additionally, it investigates how digital resources influence learners engagement in contemporary EFL learning environments. Understanding learners engagement is crucial as it serves as a predictor of academic achievement and sustainable learning outcomes in language education contexts (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

The concept of learners engagement has evolved significantly over recent decades, with researchers and practitioners increasingly recognizing its multifaceted nature and its critical role in facilitating effective language learning. From early conceptualizations that focused primarily on time-on-task behaviors, engagement theory has expanded to include emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions that collectively contribute to language acquisition processes. Engagement in EFL classrooms extends beyond mere participation to encompass genuine interest, sustained attention, and active involvement in language learning tasks and activities. This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of learners engagement in EFL teaching, examining its theoretical frameworks, practical implications, and the challenges associated with its implementation (Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

The examination of learners engagement in Section Two builds upon our understanding of digital and traditional resources explored in Section One, providing a theoretical framework for understanding how different resource types influence engagement patterns. By establishing this conceptual foundation, we can better assess

how various teaching approaches impact the multidimensional aspects of learners engagement in language learning contexts.

9. Learners Engagement Framework

Learners engagement in EFL teaching can be conceptualized through several interconnected dimensions that collectively contribute to learners' overall involvement in the learning process. The most widely accepted framework divides engagement into three primary dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement refers to learners' active participation in classroom activities, adherence to classroom norms, and involvement in language learning tasks. This dimension encompasses observable actions such as raising hands, completing assignments, and following instructions—behaviors that indicate basic engagement with the learning process. Emotional engagement encompasses learners' affective reactions to language learning, including their interest, enjoyment, and sense of belonging within the EFL classroom community. This dimension recognizes that learning is not merely a cognitive activity but also an emotional experience that significantly influences motivation and persistence. Cognitive engagement involves learners' psychological investment in learning, including their willingness to exert effort to comprehend complex language concepts and develop language proficiency. This dimension reflects the depth of learners' thinking and their use of metacognitive strategies during language learning activities (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012).

More recently, researchers have proposed expanding this framework to include a fourth dimension—social engagement—which refers to the quality of learners' interactions with peers and teachers during the language learning process. This dimension recognizes the fundamentally social nature of language acquisition and the importance of collaborative learning in EFL contexts. Social engagement encompasses learners' participation in peer discussions, group projects, and classroom communities of practice that facilitate language development through authentic communication. Together, these

dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how learners engage with language learning processes and materials in EFL classrooms (Reeve, 2013).

The engagement framework also acknowledges the contextual factors that influence learners engagement, including classroom environment, teacher-learners relationships, institutional policies, and broader sociocultural influences. These factors interact dynamically to shape learners' engagement patterns and learning outcomes in EFL contexts. For example, classroom environments that support psychological safety and risk-taking tend to foster higher emotional engagement, while clearly structured learning activities with appropriate challenge levels promote cognitive engagement. Understanding these interactions is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance learners engagement in language classrooms (Qiu & Li, 2018).

10. The Importance of Learners Engagement in EFL Classrooms

Learners engagement plays a pivotal role in EFL education, serving as a critical factor in determining language learning outcomes and academic achievement. Engaged learners demonstrate higher levels of motivation, persistence, and self-regulation, which are essential qualities for successful language acquisition. Research consistently indicates that engaged EFL learners develop stronger language proficiency, more positive attitudes toward language learning, and greater confidence in using the target language in authentic communicative contexts (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In EFL classrooms specifically, engagement facilitates the active processing and internalization of language input, which is crucial for developing communicative competence. According to second language acquisition theory, mere exposure to language input is insufficient for proficiency development; learners must actively notice, process, and practice language features to internalize them effectively. When learners are genuinely engaged, they are more likely to participate in meaningful interactions in the target language, take risks with language production, and seek opportunities for language practice beyond the classroom. This active involvement accelerates language

development and promotes deeper understanding of linguistic and cultural aspects of the target language (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014).

Furthermore, engagement in EFL contexts contributes to the development of learner autonomy and critical thinking skills. Engaged learners tend to take greater responsibility for their own learning, set personal language learning goals, and employ effective learning strategies. These self-regulated learning behaviors are particularly valuable in EFL contexts, where exposure to the target language may be limited outside the classroom setting. By fostering engagement, teachers can help learners develop the skills and dispositions necessary for lifelong language learning. This autonomy becomes especially important as learners progress beyond formal language education and need to maintain and develop their language skills independently (Little, Dam, & Legenhausen, 2017).

The importance of engagement extends beyond immediate language learning outcomes to include broader educational benefits. Engaged language learners develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and intercultural competence that contribute to their overall academic and professional development. In increasingly globalized educational and professional contexts, these engagement-fostered skills represent valuable assets that enhance learners' future opportunities and success.

11. Problems When Fostering Learners Engagement in EFL Classrooms

11.1 Problems Related to Teachers

Teachers face numerous challenges when attempting to foster learners engagement in EFL classrooms, many of which stem from systemic factors and professional development limitations. One significant obstacle is the difficulty of addressing diverse learning needs, proficiency levels, and interests within heterogeneous classroom settings. Many EFL teachers struggle to design activities that simultaneously challenge advanced learners while providing appropriate support for those who are less proficient, leading to disengagement among learners at both ends of the proficiency spectrum. This

differentiation challenge intensifies when classroom sizes are large or when institutional policies restrict flexible grouping arrangements (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013).

Another challenge relates to teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. Some EFL teachers may lack adequate training in contemporary engagement-focused methodologies, relying instead on traditional teacher-centered approaches that limit opportunities for authentic learners participation. This limitation often stems from teacher preparation programs that emphasize content knowledge over pedagogical strategies for fostering engagement. Moreover, teachers may struggle with implementing communicative language teaching approaches effectively, particularly in contexts where traditional educational paradigms emphasize grammar-translation methods and examination preparation. The mismatch between contemporary engagement theories and traditional teaching practices creates tension for teachers attempting to innovate within established educational systems (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Time and resource constraints also pose significant challenges for teachers. Developing engaging, authentic, and culturally relevant materials requires substantial time investment, which many teachers cannot afford given their heavy workloads and administrative responsibilities. The preparation time for engagement-focused activities typically exceeds that required for traditional lecture-based instruction, creating a practical barrier to implementation. Additionally, institutional pressures to cover prescribed curricula and prepare learners for standardized examinations often limit teachers' flexibility to implement more engaging but time-intensive instructional approaches. This tension between curricular requirements and engagement principles forces teachers to make difficult pedagogical compromises (Borg, 2015).

Furthermore, some teachers struggle with classroom management issues when implementing more interactive and learners-centered approaches. Activities designed to promote engagement often involve greater learners movement, collaboration, and spontaneous communication, which can create challenges related to noise levels, time management, and ensuring equal participation among all learners. Without effective

strategies to address these challenges, teachers may revert to less engaging but more manageable instructional approaches. This retreat to familiar practices represents a significant barrier to sustained engagement innovation in EFL classrooms (Harmer, 2015).

11.2 Problems Related to Learners

Learners also experience various challenges that hinder their engagement in EFL classrooms, many of which interact with teacher-related factors to create complex engagement barriers. Language anxiety represents a significant obstacle, with many learners feeling apprehensive about making errors, being negatively evaluated, or failing to comprehend language input. This anxiety can lead to reduced participation, reluctance to use the target language, and overall disengagement from the learning process. The physiological and psychological effects of anxiety directly interfere with cognitive processes essential for language acquisition, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of disengagement and limited progress (Horwitz, 2016).

Limited motivation poses another challenge, particularly in contexts where English is learned as a mandatory subject rather than by personal choice. Some learners may not perceive the relevance of English to their immediate needs or future goals, leading to instrumental motivation focused narrowly on passing examinations rather than developing communicative competence. This extrinsic motivation is typically associated with lower levels of engagement and less sustainable learning outcomes. Learners with predominantly instrumental motivation tend to engage superficially with language learning activities, focusing on memorization and test preparation rather than meaningful language use (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Prior negative experiences with language learning can also affect learners engagement. Learners who have experienced failure, ridicule, or frustration in previous language learning contexts may develop negative attitudes and low self-efficacy beliefs that inhibit their willingness to engage in new learning opportunities. These affective

factors can create persistent barriers to engagement that are difficult to overcome without targeted intervention. The impact of prior experiences highlights the cumulative nature of engagement, where past learning contexts shape current engagement patterns and create either virtuous or vicious cycles of involvement (Mercer & Williams, 2014).

Additionally, sociocultural factors influence learners engagement in EFL classrooms. Cultural norms regarding appropriate classroom behavior, expectations about teacher-learners relationships, and perceptions of language learning methodologies can either facilitate or hinder learners engagement. In some contexts, learners may be accustomed to passive learning roles and may resist more active, participatory approaches that characterize engagement-focused language teaching. These cultural expectations create tension when teachers attempt to implement engagement strategies that conflict with learners' established understanding of appropriate learning behaviors (Kramsch, 2013).

The challenges faced by teachers and learners are deeply interconnected, creating complex dynamics that influence engagement patterns in EFL classrooms. For example, teacher anxiety about implementing new engagement strategies may reinforce learners anxiety about participating in unfamiliar learning activities. Similarly, institutional pressures that constrain teachers' pedagogical choices may exacerbate learners' motivational challenges by emphasizing examination performance over meaningful language use. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive approaches that consider both teacher and learners perspectives while acknowledging the systemic factors that shape classroom engagement dynamics.

12. The Effects of Digital Resources on Learners Engagement

Digital resources have transformed EFL teaching landscapes, offering unprecedented opportunities to enhance learners engagement through authentic, interactive, and personalized learning experiences. Research indicates that well-designed digital resources can positively impact all dimensions of learners engagement in EFL

contexts. In terms of behavioral engagement, digital tools such as interactive language learning applications, online discussion forums, and digital storytelling platforms encourage active participation and sustained effort in language learning activities. This behavioral impact results from features like progress tracking, achievement badges, and interactive exercises that provide immediate responses to learners actions. The multimodal nature of many digital resources appeals to diverse learning preferences, thereby increasing learners' willingness to engage with language content (Thorne & Smith, 2011).

Regarding emotional engagement, digital resources can create more enjoyable and less threatening learning environments. Virtual environments, educational games, and social media platforms allow learners to practice language in low-anxiety contexts, promoting positive emotional associations with language learning. These digital spaces often reduce the fear of public mistakes that characterizes traditional classroom settings, allowing learners to take greater risks with language production. Furthermore, digital resources that incorporate elements of learners' interests and cultural backgrounds can enhance relevance and foster stronger emotional connections to language learning. This personalization aspect directly addresses motivational challenges by connecting language learning to learners' existing interests and identity frameworks (Gee & Hayes, 2011).

Cognitive engagement benefits from digital resources that provide opportunities for deeper processing of language input. Interactive simulations, problem-solving activities, and project-based learning supported by technological tools encourage higher-order thinking skills and meaningful language use. Digital resources can present language challenges that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—cognitive processes associated with deep learning and retention. Additionally, adaptive learning systems that adjust content difficulty based on individual performance can maintain an optimal level of cognitive challenge, keeping learners in their zone of proximal development and sustaining engagement. This adaptive capability addresses one of the key challenges teachers face in differentiated instruction for heterogeneous classrooms (Blake, 2013).

Social engagement is enhanced through digital resources that facilitate collaborative learning and authentic communication. Telecollaboration projects, online language exchange programs, and collaborative digital writing platforms connect learners with authentic audiences, including native speakers and other language learners, creating meaningful contexts for language use and intercultural exchange. These connections extend learning communities beyond classroom walls and increase opportunities for meaningful language practice. Digital platforms also enable forms of collaboration that may be difficult to implement in traditional classrooms, such as asynchronous discussions that allow all learners to participate regardless of confidence levels or processing speeds (Kern, Ware, & Warschauer, 2017).

However, the effectiveness of digital resources depends significantly on their pedagogical implementation. Simply incorporating technology without sound pedagogical principles may result in superficial engagement or distraction. Teachers play a crucial role in selecting appropriate digital resources, aligning them with learning objectives, and scaffolding their use to maximize engagement and learning outcomes. This finding connects back to our discussion of teacher challenges, highlighting the need for professional development that addresses not only technical skills but also pedagogical strategies for effective digital integration. Additionally, equitable access to technology and adequate digital literacy skills among both teachers and learners are essential prerequisites for realizing the engagement potential of digital resources in EFL contexts (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

The impact of digital resources on engagement must be understood within broader educational contexts, including infrastructure limitations, institutional policies, and cultural factors. Digital resources that work effectively in one context may fail in another due to these contextual variables. This contextual sensitivity highlights the importance of localizing digital implementation strategies and avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches to technology integration in EFL teaching.

13. Conclusion

Learners engagement represents a critical determinant of learning outcomes in EFL contexts, influencing language proficiency development, motivation for continued learning, and overall academic achievement. The multidimensional nature of engagement encompassing behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social aspect underscores the complexity of fostering meaningful learner involvement in language learning processes. While numerous challenges exist for both teachers and learners in promoting engagement, evidence suggests that thoughtfully implemented strategies and approaches can successfully address these challenges and create more engaging learning environments (Ellis, 2019).

Digital resources offer promising avenues for enhancing learners engagement in EFL classrooms, providing opportunities for authentic language use, personalized learning experiences, and expanded access to target language communities. However, their effectiveness ultimately depends on pedagogically sound implementation that aligns with principles of language acquisition and learners-centered learning. The key insight emerging from contemporary research is that technology serves as a powerful amplifier of existing pedagogical approaches rather than a standalone solution to engagement challenges. This understanding shifts focus from technology acquisition to pedagogical transformation as the primary driver of engagement innovation (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Moving forward, a balanced approach that integrates both traditional and digital resources, addresses diverse learning needs, and considers sociocultural contexts appears most promising for fostering sustained engagement in EFL classrooms. This integration should be guided by clear pedagogical principles rather than technological trends, with resource selection driven by specific learning objectives and learners needs. By recognizing engagement as a shared responsibility between teachers and learners and by creating supportive learning environments that value authentic communication and meaningful language use, EFL education can more effectively achieve its goal of developing proficient and confident language users (Brown, 2014).

Based on this review of literature, several promising research directions emerge. First, more studies are needed to examine how specific combinations of digital and traditional resources influence different dimensions of engagement across diverse EFL contexts. Second, investigation into effective teacher preparation models that develop both technological and pedagogical competencies would address a critical gap in current practice. Finally, the research exploring how engagement patterns evolve throughout longer-term language learning trajectories would provide valuable insights into sustainable engagement practices. These research directions would contribute significantly to our understanding of how to optimize engagement in increasingly diverse and technologically-enhanced language learning environments.

Chapter Two:
**Research Methodology, Data Analysis,
and Pedagogical Recommendations**

Section One: Research Methodology

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the methodology adopted in this study, which investigates the role of digital and traditional resources in enhancing the participation of third-year primary learners in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. It outlines the research approach, design, setting, participants, instruments used for data collection, procedures followed during the study, and the methods applied for data analysis.

2. The Research Methodology and Design

To ensure a thorough and objective examination of the research problem, a mixed-methods approach was utilized. This approach combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact that digital and traditional resources have on learners' engagement and participation. The rationale behind adopting this approach lies in its ability to capture not only statistical data but also contextual and interpretive insights from both learners and teachers.

3. Research Setting

This study was conducted at Abderrahmane Ben Elbar Primary School during the 2024/2025 academic year under normal conditions, with participants observed in their natural setting. The school is a public institution where English is taught as part of the formal curriculum, representing a typical EFL classroom environment in Algeria with access to both digital and traditional teaching resources.

4. The Population and Study Sample

The study population includes both third-year EFL learners and primary school teachers. The sample comprises all 80 third-year pupils from Abderrahmane Ben Elbar Primary School. In addition, a group of eight EFL Teachers from various primary schools in the region were selected to participate in the study. The selection of this sample allows

for both focused classroom observations and the gathering of diverse teacher perspectives through interviews and questionnaires.

Despite the intended sample of 80 learners, only 35 learners questionnaires could be collected due to the timing constraints imposed by the third term examinations. This limitation in data collection is acknowledged as a factor that may affect the generalizability of findings, though efforts were made to ensure that the collected responses represented diverse learners experiences and perspectives.

5.1 Learners' Questionnaire

5.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire

A specially designed questionnaire titled “My English Class Adventure” was developed to collect data from third-year primary learners regarding their engagement with digital and traditional resources in EFL classes.

Considering the young age of the participants (approximately 9 years old), the questionnaire was carefully crafted with age-appropriate language, visual elements, and simplified response formats to ensure comprehension and facilitate accurate self-reporting.

The questionnaire comprised five distinct sections designed to collect comprehensive information about learners' experiences and preferences:

1. **Getting to Know You:** This introductory section gathered basic demographic information including gender and English learning experience, establishing foundational variables for subsequent analysis.
2. **Your English Learning Adventure:** This section assessed learners' emotional engagement with various digital and traditional activities using a three-point smiley face scale (I love it, It's Okay, I don't like it) for activities ranging from reading physical storybooks to using educational applications.

3. Your English Class Journey: Questions in this section measured behavioral and cognitive dimensions of engagement, including participation patterns, effort investment, emotional responses to learning activities, and peer collaboration.

4. Digital vs. Traditional Activities: This comparative section directly assessed learners' preferences between digital and traditional resources across different language learning domains including vocabulary acquisition, motivation, retention, comprehension, and collaborative work.

5. Your Magical English Class: The final section included open-ended prompts with drawing and writing options to elicit creative responses about ideal learning experiences and perceived challenges in language acquisition.

The questionnaire utilized child-friendly metaphors (learning English as growing a plant, English class as an adventure) to make abstract concepts more accessible to young learners. The response options were simplified with pictorial representations and straightforward language to accommodate the developmental stage of the participants. Prior to implementation, the questionnaire underwent a pilot testing phase with a small group of third-year learners from another school to assess clarity, comprehensibility, and completion time. Modifications were made based on this preliminary assessment to enhance the instrument's effectiveness. Although the questionnaire was designed for all 80 third-year pupils, the study was limited to collecting data from only 35 learners due to the scheduling conflicts with third term examinations. This limitation is acknowledged as a constraint on the study's scope but still provided valuable insights into learners' perspectives on digital and traditional resources in EFL classrooms.

5.2.1 Description of the Interview

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to collect in-depth qualitative data from EFL teachers regarding their experiences, perceptions, and practices related to learners' engagement with digital and traditional resources. The interview instrument was

designed to elicit rich descriptions and reflective insights while maintaining sufficient structure to ensure comparability across participants.

The interview protocol comprised six thematic sections:

1. Teaching Background: Questions exploring teachers' experience with primary-level EFL instruction and their conceptualization of learners engagement.

2. Resources and Learners Engagement: Items investigating teachers' typical resource utilization patterns and implementation strategies for promoting active participation.

3. Comparing Resource Types: Questions examining perceived advantages and disadvantages of digital versus traditional resources for fostering learners engagement.

4. Teacher Training and Resource Implementation: Items exploring professional development experiences, technological proficiency, and implementation challenges.

5. Learners Response: Questions investigating observed learners reactions to different resource types and notable success stories.

6. Future Outlook: Items eliciting teachers' perspectives on evolving instructional approaches and recommendations for effective resource integration.

Each section contained 2-3 primary questions followed by potential probing questions to explore responses in greater depth. The interview structure balanced directive questioning with opportunities for emergent discussion, allowing teachers to articulate their experiences while ensuring coverage of key research topics.

Interviews were conducted individually in a private setting to ensure confidentiality and encourage candid responses. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent for accurate transcription. Teachers were encouraged to provide concrete examples from their classroom experiences to substantiate their perceptions and claims regarding resource effectiveness.

5.3 Classroom Observations

Systematic classroom observations were conducted to directly examine learners engagement patterns during EFL lessons featuring different instructional resources. This data collection method provided an objective complement to the self-reported information gathered through questionnaires and interviews.

A structured observation protocol was developed to ensure consistency across multiple classroom sessions while maintaining sufficient flexibility to capture emergent behaviors. The observation instrument focused on three primary dimensions of learners engagement:

- 1. Behavioral Engagement:** Observable indicators including on-task behavior, hand-raising frequency, voluntary contributions, physical positioning (leaning in/away), peer interactions, and task completion.
- 2. Emotional Engagement:** Visible manifestations of affect including facial expressions, verbal exclamations, enthusiasm displays, frustration indicators, and apparent interest levels.
- 3. Cognitive Engagement:** Indicators of mental investment including question-asking, persistence through challenges, elaboration on ideas, connections to prior knowledge, and metacognitive expressions.

Each classroom was observed during four different EFL lessons: two featuring predominantly digital resources and two utilizing mainly traditional materials. This balanced approach enabled comparative analysis of engagement patterns across different instructional contexts. Observations were conducted by the researcher who maintained a non-participatory role to minimize influence on natural classroom dynamics.

The observation process involved time-sampling techniques wherein engagement indicators were recorded at regular intervals throughout the lesson, supplemented by anecdotal field notes capturing qualitative aspects of learners-resource interactions.

Additionally, a checklist format was employed to track frequency counts of specific engagement behaviors during different instructional activities.

To enhance reliability, a pilot observation was conducted to refine the protocol, and a second observer participated in a portion of the observations to establish inter-rater reliability through coefficient calculation.

6. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process followed a structured sequence designed to

Maximize participation and ensure methodological integrity:

1. Preparatory Phase:

- Administrative permissions were secured from the school directorate and district educational authorities.
- Informed consent was obtained from teachers participating in interviews.
- Parental consent forms were distributed and collected for learners participants.
- Research instruments were finalized based on pilot testing feedback.
- A schedule for classroom observations and interview sessions was established in coordination with participating teachers.

2. Implementation Phase:

- Classroom observations were conducted first to establish baseline understanding of instructional practices and learners engagement patterns.
- Learners questionnaires were administered during regular class periods with the researcher present to provide clarification if needed.
- Teacher interviews were scheduled during non-instructional hours to prevent disruption to educational activities.

- All data collection activities were completed within a three-week timeframe to ensure temporal consistency.

3. Documentation Phase:

- Observation notes were reviewed and organized immediately following each session.
- Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim within 48 hours of completion.
- Questionnaire responses were coded and entered into a database for subsequent analysis.
- All research materials were secured to maintain participant confidentiality.

Throughout the data collection process, efforts were made to minimize disruption to regular educational activities while maintaining methodological rigor. The researcher maintained ongoing communication with school administration and participating teachers to address any concerns that arose during the research process.

7. Data Analysis Procedures

The mixed-methods design necessitated a comprehensive analytical approach integrating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques:

Quantitative Analysis:

- Questionnaire data were processed using statistical software to generate descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) for closed-ended responses.
- Cross-tabulation analyses were performed to examine relationships between demographic variables and engagement patterns.
- Comparative analyses were conducted to identify statistically significant differences in engagement levels between digital and traditional resource contexts.
- Visual representations including charts and graphs were generated to illustrate key trends in the quantitative data.

Qualitative Analysis:

- Interview transcripts and observation field notes underwent thematic analysis following a six-step process:
 1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading.
 2. Initial coding of meaningful segments.
 3. Searching for themes among coded data.
 4. Reviewing and refining identified themes.
 5. Defining and naming themes.
 6. Producing the analytical narrative integrating thematic findings.
- Content analysis was applied to open-ended questionnaire responses and drawings to identify recurring patterns and illustrative examples.
- Constant comparative technique was employed to identify commonalities and divergences across different data sources.

Integrated Analysis:

- Findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses were triangulated to identify convergent and divergent patterns.
- A matrix approach was used to organize and compare findings related to specific research questions across different data sources.
- Member checking was conducted with participating teachers to validate interpretations of interview data and enhance credibility.

This comprehensive analytical approach ensured thorough examination of the research questions while maintaining methodological integrity through systematic processing of diverse data types. The integration of findings from multiple sources strengthened the validity of conclusions regarding the relationship between instructional resources and learners engagement in primary EFL classrooms.

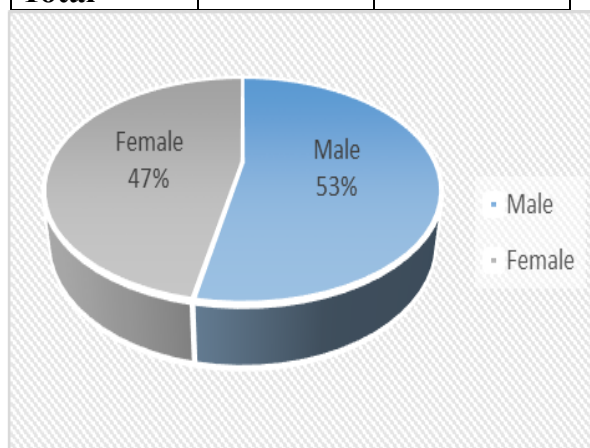
Section Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation

2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

1. Are boy or girl

Table 1: Gender

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Male	17	53%
Female	15	47%
Total	32	100%



Graph 1: Gender

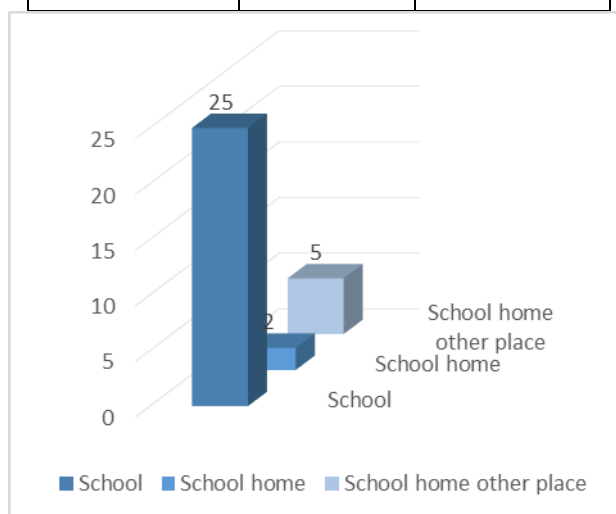
Analysis :

The sample shows a relatively balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority (53.1% male, 46.9% female), providing adequate representation from both groups for comparative analysis.

2. Where do you speak English?

Table 2: Where do you speak English

Options	Frequency	Percentages
School	25	78%
School home	2	6%
School home other place	5	16%
Total	32	100%



Graph 2:Where do you speak English?

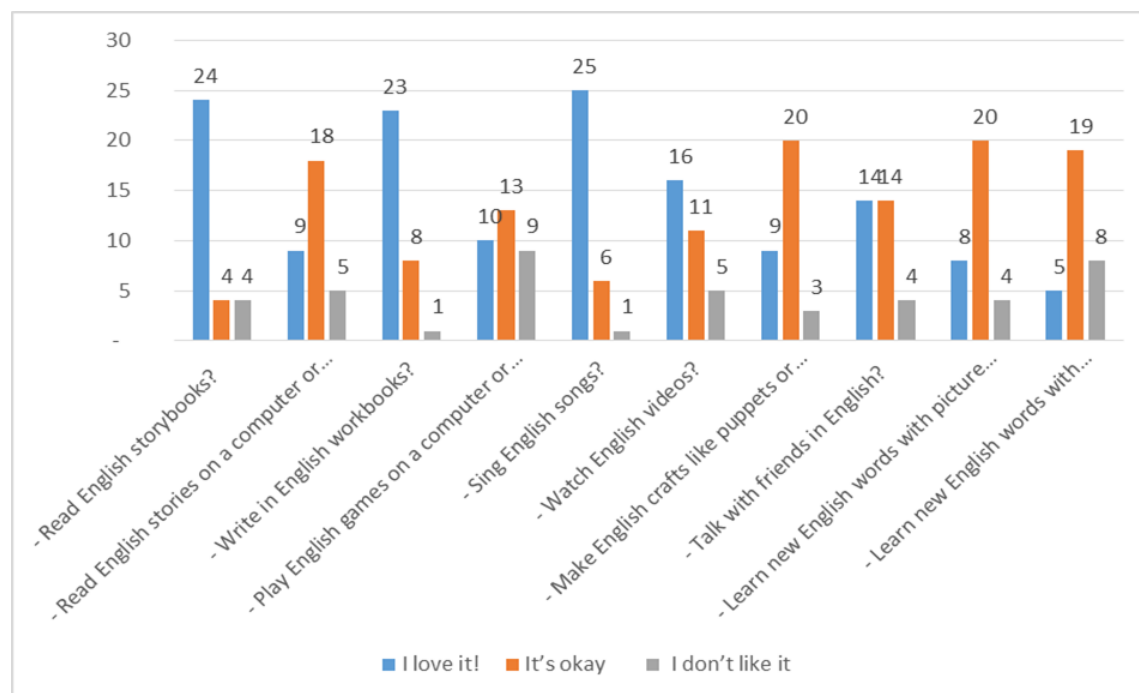
Analysis :

The majority of learners (78.1%) use English exclusively in school settings, indicating limited exposure to English outside the classroom environment. Only 6.3% practice English at home, suggesting minimal parental involvement or home support for English learning. The 15.6% who use English in multiple contexts may represent learners with higher motivation or additional learning opportunities.

3. Tick the appropriate box that show you feel?

Table 3: How do you feel?

How do you feel when you...				Mean	Perc	feeling
- Read English storybooks?	24	4	4	2,63	88%	
- Read English stories on a computer or tablet?	9	18	5	2,13	71%	
- Write in English workbooks?	23	8	1	2,69	90%	
- Play English games on a computer or tablet?	10	13	9	2,03	68%	
- Sing English songs?	25	6	1	2,75	92%	
- Watch English videos?	16	11	5	2,34	78%	
- Make English crafts like puppets or posters?	9	20	3	2,19	73%	
- Talk with friends in English?	14	14	4	2,31	77%	
- Learn new English words with picture cards?	8	20	4	2,13	71%	
- Learn new English words with computer games?	5	19	8	1,91	64%	



Graph 3: How do you feel?

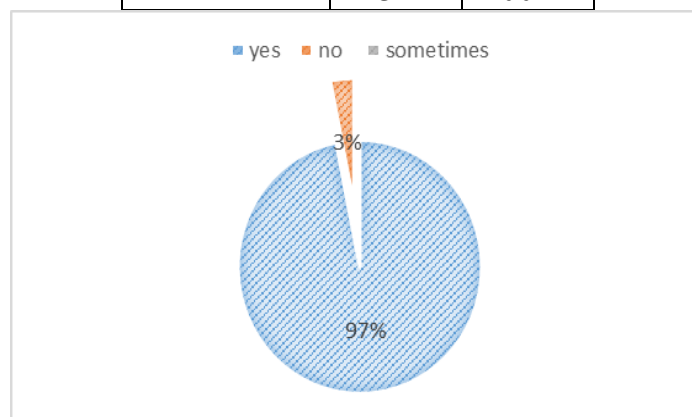
Analysis :

- ✓ **Highest positive response:** Singing English songs (78.1% positive).
- ✓ **Traditional activities outperform digital:** Physical storybooks (75.0%) vs. digital stories (28.1%).
- ✓ **Consistent pattern:** Learners show stronger positive responses to traditional learning methods.
- ✓ **Digital learning challenges:** Computer-based activities consistently receive lower positive ratings.

4. Do you usually know what to do in English class?

Table 4: What to do in English Class

What to do in English Class		
Yes	31	97%
no	1	3%
sometimes	0	0%
Total	32	100 %



Graph 4: What to do in English Class

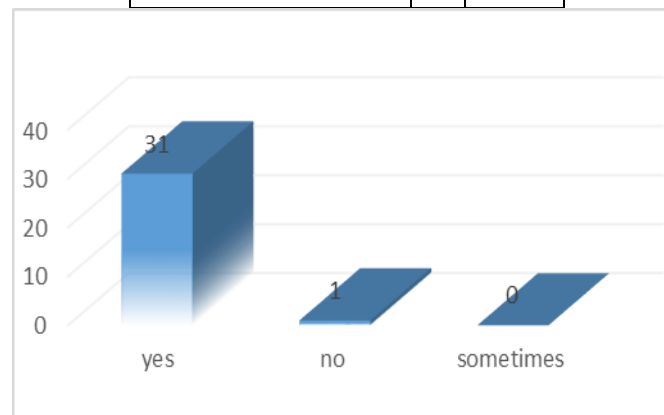
Analysis :

Nearly all learners (96.9%) report understanding classroom instructions, indicating effective teacher communication and appropriate lesson complexity for the learners level.

5. Do you try your best in English class?

Table 5: Try your best

Try your best		
Yes	31	97%
No	1	3%
Sometimes	0	0%
Total	32	100%



Graph 5:Try your best

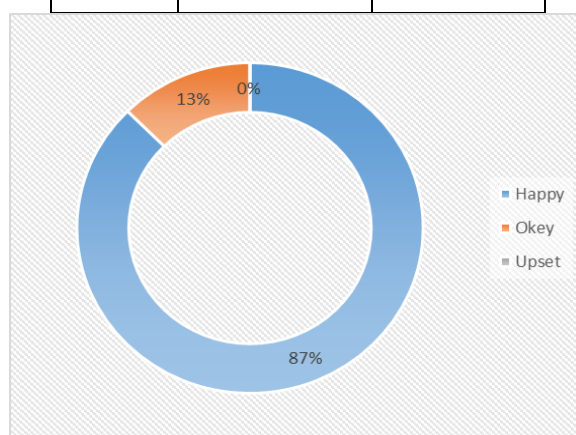
Analysis :

Learners self-reported effort levels are extremely high (96.9%), suggesting strong intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward English learning.

6. How do you feel in English class

Table 6: Feeling in English Class

Feeling in English Class		
Happy	28	88%
Okey	4	13%
Upset	0	0%
total	32	100%



Graph 6:Feeling in English Class

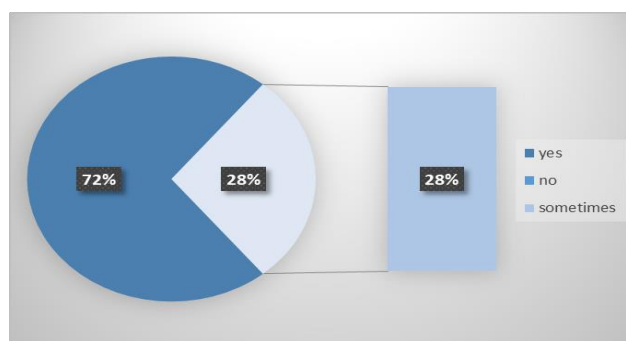
Analysis :

The overwhelming majority of learners (87.5%) report feeling happy in English class, indicating a positive classroom environment and effective teaching methods.

7. Do you raise your hand to answer questions?

Table 7: Raising hand

Raising hand		
Yes	23	72%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	9	28%
Total	32	100%



Graph 7:Raising hand

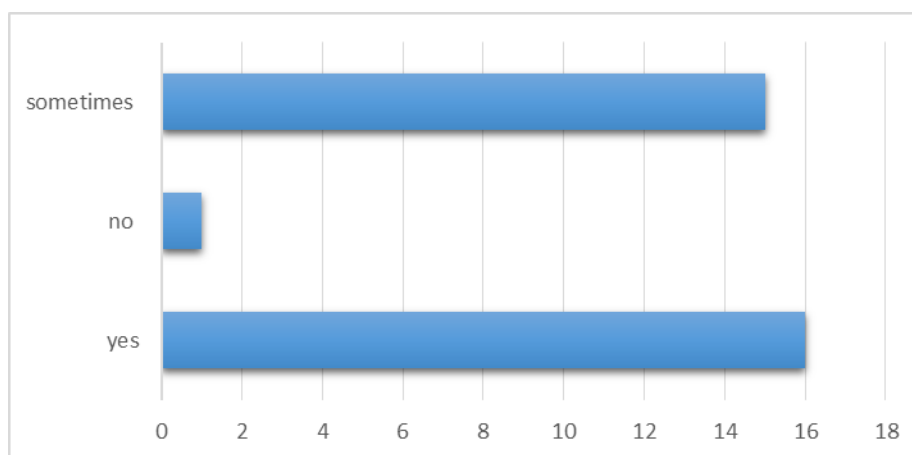
Analysis :

Active participation is high, with 71.9% of learners regularly raising their hands to answer questions. The remaining 28.1% participate selectively, suggesting confidence-based participation patterns.

8. Do you help your friends in English class?

Table 8: Help friends

Help friends		
yes	16	50%
no	1	3%
sometimes	15	47%
total	32	100%



Graph 8: Help friends

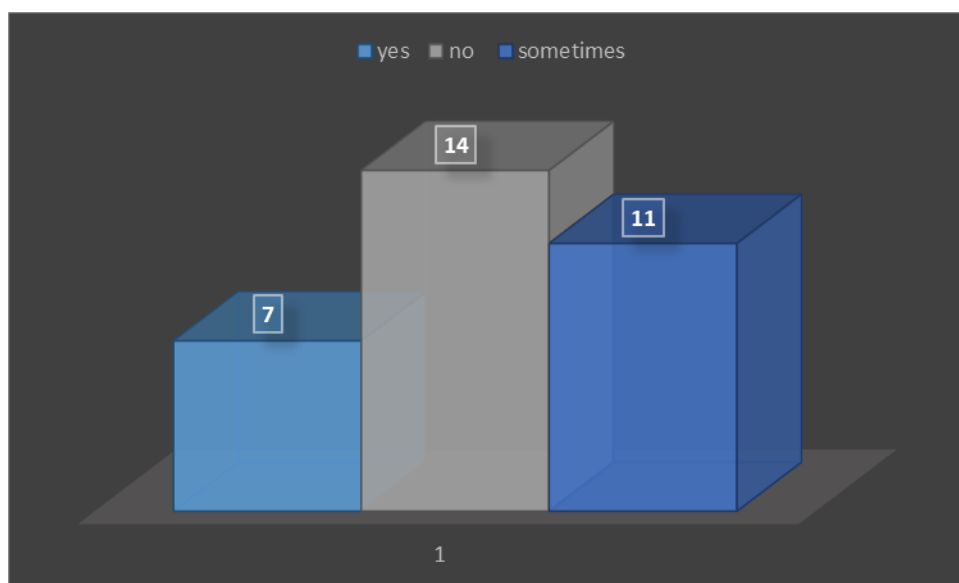
Analysis :

Learners demonstrate strong collaborative tendencies, with 50% regularly helping peers and 46.9% providing occasional assistance. Only 3.1% report not helping classmates.

9. Do you get tired in English class?

Table 9: Tired

Tired		
yes	7	22%
no	14	44%
sometimes	11	34%
total	32	100%



Graph 9: Tired

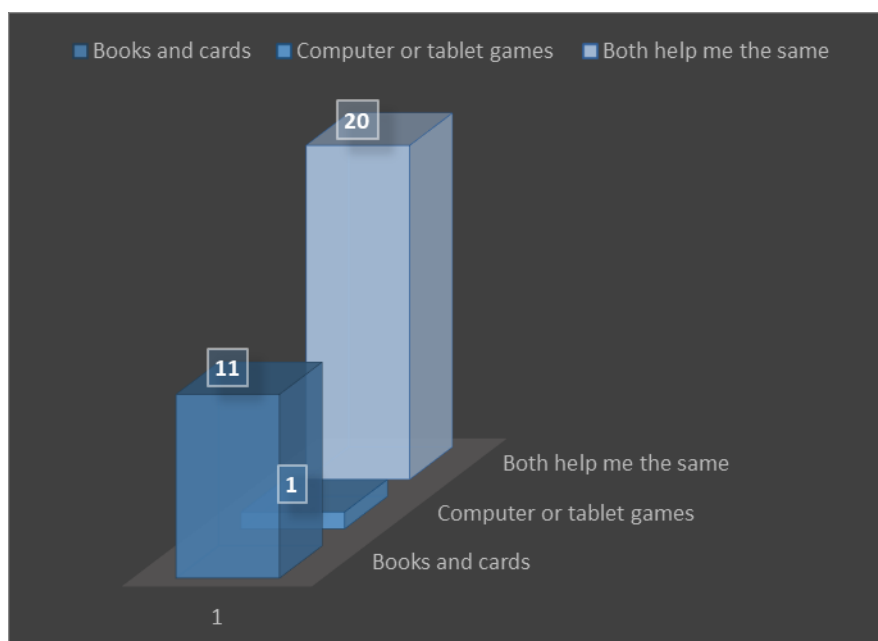
Analysis :

Most learners (43.8%) do not experience fatigue during English class, while 34.3% occasionally feel tired. The low percentage of consistently tired learners (21.9%) suggests appropriate lesson pacing and engagement levels.

10. What helps you learn English words better?

Table 10: Learn English words

Learn English words		
Books and cards	11	34%
Computer or tablet games	1	3%
Both help me the same	20	63%
Total	32	100%



Graph 10: Learn English words

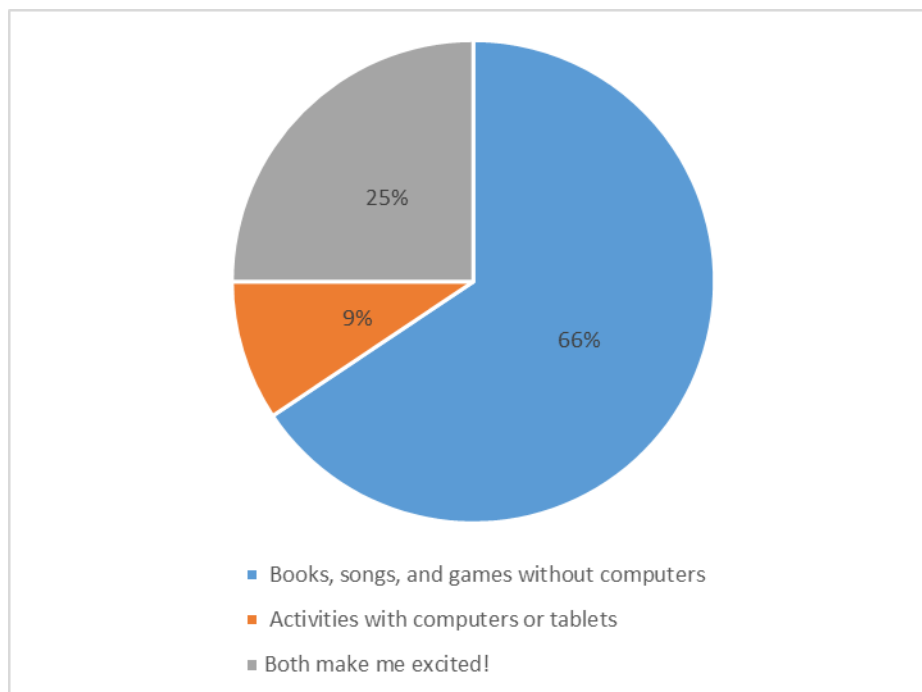
Analysis:

While 62.5% of learners recognize both methods as effective, traditional methods (books and cards) are preferred individually by 34.4% compared to only 3.1% preferring digital methods exclusively.

11. What makes you more excited about learning English?

Table 11: What makes you more excited about learning English

What makes you more excited about learning English		
Books, songs, and games without computers	21	66%
Activities with computers or tablets	3	9%
Both make me excited!	8	25%
Total	32	100%



Graph 11:What makes you more excited about learning English

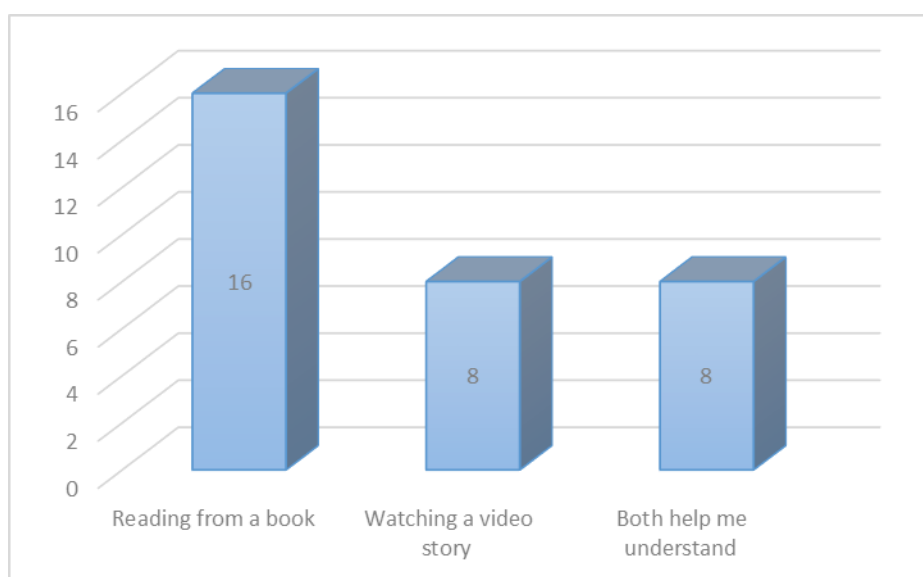
Analysis :

Traditional learning methods significantly outperform digital alternatives as motivational tools (65.6% vs. 9.4%), indicating strong learners preference for hands-on, interpersonal learning experiences.

12. What helps you remember English words longer?

Table 12: What helps you understand English stories better?

What helps you understand English stories better?		
Reading from a book	16	50%
Watching a video story	8	25%
Both help me understand	8	25%
Total	32	100%



Graph 12: What helps you understand English stories better?

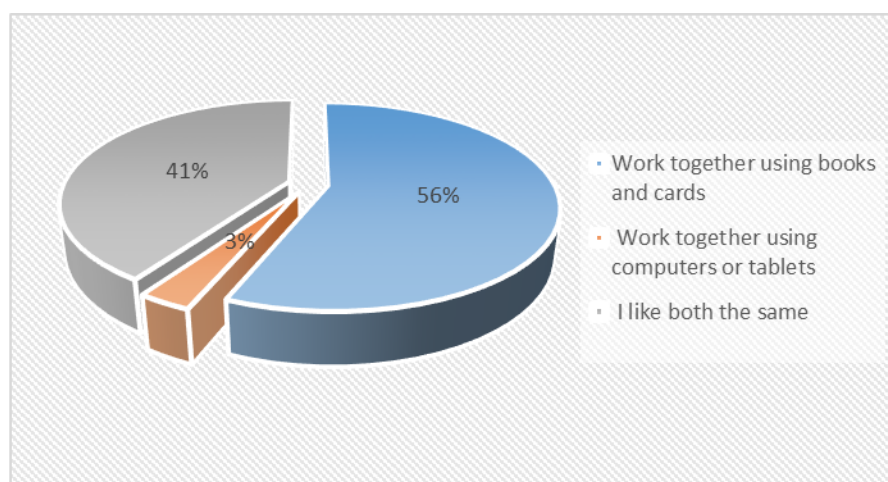
Analysis :

Half of the learners (50.0%) demonstrate better comprehension through traditional reading methods, while video and combined approaches each account for 25.0% of preferences, suggesting varied learning style needs.

13. What do you like to do more with your friends?

Table 13: What do you like to do more with your friends?

What do you like to do more with your friends?		
Work together using books and cards	18	56%
Work together using computers or tablets	1	3%
I like both the same	13	41%
Total	32	100%



Graph 13: What do you like to do more with your friends?

Analysis :

Learners show a strong preference for traditional collaborative tools (56.3%) over digital collaboration (3.1%), emphasizing the importance of tactile, shared learning experiences in peer interaction.

Section 3: Learners Engagement with Digital vs Traditional Resources

3.1 Analysis of Interview Data

According to the data collected through teacher interviews, several insightful patterns emerged regarding how young EFL learners respond to different types of teaching materials.

1. Teaching Experience and Pedagogical Focus

Most of the teachers interviewed had a moderate level of experience, with approximately two-thirds having taught English to young learners for 3–5 years. This duration appears to have given them sufficient time to develop informed perspectives on what works effectively in their classrooms. Notably, nearly all teachers emphasized the importance of focusing on speaking, listening, and reading activities. This reflects an understanding of how children naturally acquire language through exposure and interaction. In contrast, writing activities were less emphasized, and even fewer teachers prioritized formal grammar instruction. Teachers seem to recognize that young learners absorb language patterns implicitly, making structured grammar lessons less relevant at this stage.

2. Learners Engagement: Perceptions and Practices

When asked about learners engagement, most teachers reported relying on observable behaviors such as attention, interest, and participation. While these surface-level indicators are useful, fewer teachers demonstrated awareness of deeper aspects of engagement such as emotional investment or cognitive processing. This may suggest that some of the more subtle signs of meaningful learning are overlooked in daily classroom practice.

Regarding assessment of engagement, most teachers reported using informal, observational methods. Only a minority used any formal tools to monitor engagement, raising concerns that valuable data on learners learning may not be fully captured.

3. Teaching Materials: Traditional vs. Digital

Teachers reported widespread use of traditional materials, particularly flashcards, slates, and worksheets, largely due to their simplicity, reusability, and familiarity. However, posters, especially those designed for language learning, were rarely used possibly due to spatial limitations or perceived ineffectiveness.

In contrast, digital materials revealed a stark shift in engagement. All teachers reported frequent use of videos, which were praised for their simplicity, entertainment value, and effectiveness in capturing attention. However, only a small number of teachers (around 25%) reported using educational apps or interactive games, which may indicate limited access to technology or lack of confidence in using more complex digital tools.

4. Learners Response to Materials

Teacher perceptions of how learners respond to different materials varied significantly. Traditional resources were seen as structured and reliable, but also passive and less engaging. Only 38% of teachers believed their learners remained engaged during traditional lessons. This suggests that, in most classrooms, maintaining learners attention through traditional means remains a challenge.

By contrast, all interviewed teachers observed higher motivation and engagement when digital tools were used. They noted that digital content not only increased interest but also contributed to learners' digital literacy and overall comfort with technology. Every teacher emphasized that learners engagement levels were clearly higher with digital resources compared to traditional ones.

5. Perceived Advantages and Challenges

Traditional materials were valued for their structure, predictability, and ease of use. Digital materials, on the other hand, were widely praised for their ability to enhance engagement, provide flexibility, and improve accessibility. Interestingly, concepts such as personalized learning and immediate feedback despite being widely discussed in the

literature were rarely mentioned, indicating that teachers may not yet be fully leveraging the potential of digital tools.

Teachers also discussed the challenges associated with each type of resource. With traditional materials, the primary issues were limited learners engagement, lack of relevance to real-world contexts, and time-consuming preparation. Digital tools posed more practical difficulties, including technical problems, inconsistent access to devices, and the time required to learn new technologies.

Conclusion

The interview data suggest that while teachers intuitively recognize the effectiveness of digital tools in fostering engagement, practical limitations continue to constrain their broader use. A consistent pattern emerged: teachers witness significantly higher engagement with digital materials but still rely heavily on traditional ones for structure and content delivery. The universal agreement among participants regarding the contrast in engagement levels between digital and traditional resources underscores a tangible shift in the classroom experience—one that future training and infrastructure improvements could help address more fully.

3.2 Classroom Observation Analysis

The classroom observations provided concrete evidence of the engagement patterns teachers described in their interviews, revealing distinct behavioral differences when learners interacted with various learning materials.

Traditional Material Interactions

During traditional lessons using books, flashcards, and worksheets, learners behavior followed predictable patterns. Learners showed initial attention that gradually declined over 15-20 minute periods. Participation was often limited to the most confident learners, while others remained passive recipients. The structured nature of these

activities provided clear learning objectives but limited opportunities for creative expression or peer collaboration.

Digital Material Engagement

When digital tools were introduced, the classroom atmosphere shifted noticeably. Learners demonstrated sustained attention for longer periods, with increased voluntary participation and peer interaction. The multimedia nature of digital content appeared to support different learning styles simultaneously, accommodating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preferences within single activities.

Collaborative Learning Patterns

Observations revealed that traditional materials often led to individual work, even during group activities. Digital tools, conversely, naturally encouraged collaboration, with learners spontaneously helping each other navigate technology and sharing discoveries about content.

3.3 Interpretation of the Study Findings

The Traditional-Digital Engagement Paradox

The study reveals a fascinating paradox: while learners show clear preference and higher engagement with digital resources, they also demonstrate strong appreciation for certain traditional activities. The learners survey data shows 88% happiness when reading English storybooks and 90% satisfaction with writing in workbooks, yet 66% prefer non-digital activities when asked about excitement in learning.

Age-Appropriate Technology Integration

Nine-year-old learners in this study showed nuanced responses to different digital tools. While they expressed moderate feelings toward learning words through computer games (64% neutral), they responded much more positively to watching English videos (78% happy). This suggests that passive digital consumption may be more developmentally appropriate than complex interactive digital tasks for this age group.

Social Learning Preferences

The finding that 56% of learners prefer working with friends using books and cards, compared to only 3% preferring digital collaboration, indicates that traditional materials may better support the social aspects of learning that are crucial for young learners' development.

Comprehension and Retention Patterns

Learners' preference for reading books over watching videos for story comprehension (50% vs 25%) suggests that traditional reading may provide deeper processing opportunities, while digital tools excel at initial engagement and motivation.

Conclusion

The research reveals that effective EFL instruction for young learners requires thoughtful integration of both traditional and digital resources rather than an either-or approach. Traditional materials provide structure, support deep processing, and facilitate meaningful social interaction. Digital tools excel at capturing attention, maintaining motivation, and accommodating diverse learning styles. The most successful classrooms appear to be those that strategically combine both approaches, using digital tools to spark interest and traditional methods to consolidate learning.

Section Three: Pedagogical Recommendations and Implications

Introduction

Based on the research findings from 32 third-grade EFL learners and their teachers, this section provides practical recommendations for enhancing learners engagement through strategic use of both traditional and digital resources. The recommendations acknowledge the realities of classroom constraints while maximizing learning opportunities for young EFL learners.

3.1 Recommendations for EFL Teachers

Strategic Material Selection

Teachers should adopt a hybrid approach that leverages the strengths of both traditional and digital resources. Begin lessons with digital tools to capture attention and create excitement, then transition to traditional materials for skill consolidation and deeper processing. For example, introduce new vocabulary through engaging videos, then practice and reinforce using flashcards and workbooks.

Understanding Developmental Appropriateness

Recognize that 9-year-old learners respond differently to various digital tools. Simple, passive digital content like videos proves more effective than complex interactive games. Focus on digital tools that provide clear visual and auditory support rather than those requiring complex navigation or abstract thinking.

Maximizing Social Learning Opportunities

Since learners show strong preference for peer collaboration with traditional materials, structure activities that combine the motivational benefits of digital tools with the social benefits of hands-on materials. Consider using digital content for whole-class introduction, followed by small-group activities using traditional materials.

Assessment and Engagement Monitoring

Develop more systematic approaches to monitoring learners engagement beyond surface-level observation. Create simple engagement checklists that capture both behavioral indicators (participation, attention) and learning indicators (comprehension, retention, application).

Technology Integration Planning

Start with simple, reliable digital tools before advancing to more complex applications. Ensure backup traditional activities are always prepared to handle technical difficulties without disrupting learning flow.

3.2 Recommendations for EFL Learners

Embrace Both Learning Modalities

Learners should understand that different activities serve different learning purposes. Digital tools can help with initial exposure and motivation, while traditional materials support deeper understanding and long-term retention.

Develop Self-Awareness of Learning Preferences

Young learners should be encouraged to recognize which types of activities help them learn best. Some may find books more helpful for comprehension, while others benefit from video support. This self-awareness will serve them throughout their educational journey.

Practice Active Engagement

Regardless of whether activities use traditional or digital materials, learners should focus on active participation rather than passive consumption. This means asking questions, making connections, and helping classmates when appropriate.

Balance Individual and Collaborative Learning

Take advantage of opportunities to work both independently and with peers. Traditional materials often provide better opportunities for meaningful collaboration, while digital tools may support individual pacing and exploration.

3.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

Study Limitations

This research was conducted with a relatively small sample of 32 learners from a single educational context. The findings may not generalize to all third-grade EFL learners, particularly those from different cultural backgrounds or with varying levels of technology access.

The study focused primarily on immediate engagement indicators rather than long-term learning outcomes. While higher engagement is generally associated with better learning, this connection was not directly measured in the current research.

Teacher interviews, while providing valuable insights, were based on self-reported observations rather than systematic measurement tools. This may introduce bias in the reported engagement levels and learners responses.

Recommendations for Future Research

Longitudinal studies should examine whether the engagement advantages of digital tools translate into improved learning outcomes over time. Research should track vocabulary retention, reading comprehension, and speaking confidence across extended periods using both traditional and digital approaches.

Comparative studies across different age groups would help determine how digital tool effectiveness changes as learners develop cognitively and gain more experience with technology.

Investigation into optimal ratios of traditional to digital activities could provide specific guidance for lesson planning. Research questions might include: What percentage of class time should involve digital tools? How should the balance change based on learning objectives?

Studies examining the cost-effectiveness of different approaches would help schools make informed decisions about resource allocation, particularly in contexts where technology access is limited.

Research into teacher training needs could identify specific professional development requirements for effective integration of digital tools in young learner EFL contexts.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that effective EFL instruction for young learners benefits from thoughtful integration of both traditional and digital resources. Rather than viewing these approaches as competing alternatives, educators should recognize their complementary strengths. Digital tools excel at capturing initial interest and providing multimedia support, while traditional materials offer structured practice opportunities and support social learning.

The key to successful implementation lies in understanding the developmental needs of 9-year-old learners, the practical constraints of classroom environments, and the specific learning objectives of each lesson. Teachers who can skillfully blend these approaches while remaining responsive to learners needs and classroom realities will create the most engaging and effective learning experiences.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research into learners engagement with digital versus traditional resources in third-grade EFL instruction reveals important insights for educational practice. The study demonstrates that the question is not whether to use traditional or digital materials, but rather how to combine them most effectively for young learners.

The findings challenge the assumption that newer is always better. While digital tools consistently generate higher immediate engagement, traditional materials continue to play crucial roles in supporting comprehension, social interaction, and structured learning. Nine-year-old EFL learners benefit most from approaches that harness the motivational power of digital media while maintaining the proven pedagogical benefits of traditional methods.

For the field of EFL education, this research suggests that successful technology integration requires careful consideration of developmental appropriateness, learning objectives, and classroom realities. Teachers need support in developing the skills and confidence to blend these approaches effectively, while schools need realistic strategies for managing technological and resource constraints.

The implications extend beyond individual classrooms to policy and curriculum development. Educational decision-makers should focus on providing teachers with flexible resources and training that enable strategic use of both traditional and digital tools, rather than mandating wholesale adoption of either approach.

Ultimately, this study reinforces that effective teaching remains fundamentally about understanding learners' needs and responding with appropriate pedagogical choices. Whether through the pages of a storybook or the screen of a tablet, the goal remains the same: creating meaningful learning experiences that engage, support, and inspire young EFL learners in their language learning journey.

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Appendices

1) Teacher Interview Protocol: Digital vs. Traditional Resources for Young EFL Learners

Section 1: Teaching Background and Approach

1. Teaching Experience

How long have you been teaching English to young learners (ages 8-10)?

What types of EFL classes do you teach with this age group?

How has your approach to teaching young children evolved over time?

2. Teaching Philosophy

How would you describe your approach to teaching English to young learners?

What do you believe works best for this specific age group?

What are your main goals when teaching English to 9-year-olds?

Section 2: Resources and Materials

3. Resource Selection

What types of traditional teaching materials do you use with your young learners?

What digital resources do you incorporate in your lessons?

How do you decide which type of resource to use for different language skills?

4. Resource Implementation

Could you walk me through how you typically introduce a new digital tool to your young learners?

How does this differ from introducing traditional resources?

How much time do you typically spend on digital versus traditional activities in a week?

5. Resource Effectiveness

Which resources seem to work best for teaching vocabulary to this age group?

Which resources are most effective for developing listening and speaking skills?

Have you found certain resources that work particularly well for reading and writing?

Section 3: Learners Engagement

6. Engagement Patterns

How do your 9-year-old learners typically respond to digital resources?

How do they respond to traditional resources?

What differences do you notice in their attention spans with different resource types?

7. Behavioral Engagement

What behaviors indicate that your young learners are engaged with a resource?

Have you noticed differences in participation when using digital versus traditional materials?

How do you manage classroom behavior when using different resource types?

8. Emotional Engagement

How do digital resources affect your learners' enjoyment of learning English?

What emotional responses do you observe with traditional resources?

How do you address signs of frustration or boredom with either resource type?

9. Cognitive Engagement

How do you ensure that digital activities promote thinking rather than just entertainment?

Which resources seem to help learners remember new words and phrases best?

How do you know when a learners is really understanding versus just participating?

10. Social Engagement

How do different resources affect how your young learners interact with each other?

What differences do you see in collaboration when using digital versus traditional resources?

How do you encourage shy learners to participate with different resource types?

Section 4: Challenges and Support

11. Implementation Challenges

What difficulties do you face when using digital resources with young learners?

What challenges do you encounter with traditional resources?

How do you overcome these challenges?

12. Institutional Support

What support does your school provide for using different teaching resources?

What additional support would help you teach more effectively?

How does your classroom environment affect your resource choices?

13. Recommendations

What advice would you give to other teachers of young EFL learners about balancing digital and traditional resources?

What do you believe are the most important considerations when selecting resources for this age group?

How do you see the future of teaching English to young learners?

Closing

Is there anything else you would like to share about teaching English to young learners?

Do you have any questions about this research?

2) Classroom Observation Checklist

Observation Category	Indicators	Traditional Materials	Digital Materials
Attention Span	Learners maintain focus for 15+ minutes Minimal off-task behavior	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Participation Level	Voluntary answering Asking questions Peer discussions	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
Engagement Type	Passive listening vs. active involvement	☐ Mostly passive ☐ Active	☐ Mostly passive ☐ Active
Collaboration	Group interaction Peer assistance Joint task completion	☐ Rare ☐ Moderate ☐ Frequent	☐ Rare ☐ Moderate ☐ Frequent
Creativity Opportunities	Learners-generated responses Use of imagination or choice in activity	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
Learning Style Support	Visual, auditory, kinesthetic engagement	☐ Limited ☐ Some ☐ Varied	☐ Limited ☐ Some ☐ Varied
Learners Enthusiasm	Smiles, excitement, verbal enthusiasm, eagerness to participate	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
Behavioral Challenges	Disruptions, boredom, or withdrawal	☐ Frequent ☐ Occasional ☐ Rare	☐ Frequent ☐ Occasional ☐ Rare

3) Learners questionnaire:

Part 1:

- 1- Are you a boy or a girl?
A boy ☐ A girl ☐
- 2- Where do you speak English?
- Only at school ☐
- At school and sometimes at home ☐
- At school, at home, and other places ☐

Part 2:

- 3- Tick the appropriate box that shows how you feel."
(Use 3 smiley faces: 😊 = I love it! 😐 = It's okay ☹ = I don't like it)

How do you feel when you...	😊	😐	☹
- Read English storybooks?			
- Read English stories on a computer or tablet?			
- Write in English workbooks?			
- Play English games on a computer or tablet?			
- Sing English songs?			
- Watch English videos?			
- Make English crafts like puppets or posters?			
- Talk with friends in English?			
- Learn new English words with picture cards?			
- Learn new English words with computer games?			

Part 3:

- 4- Do you usually know what to do in English class?"
- Yes ☐ - Sometimes ☐ - No ☐
- 5- Do you try your best in English class?"
- Yes ☐ - Sometimes ☐ - No ☐
- 6- How do you feel in English class?"
😊 ☐ 😐 ☐ ☹ ☐
- 7- Do you raise your hand to answer questions?"
- Yes ☐ - Sometimes ☐ - No ☐
- 8- Do you help your friends in English class?"
- Yes ☐ - Sometimes ☐ - No ☐
- 9- Do you get tired in English class?"
- Yes ☐ - Sometimes ☐ - No ☐

Part 4:

- 10- What helps you learn English words better?
- Books and cards ☐
- Computer or tablet games ☐
- Both help me the same ☐
- 11- What makes you more excited about learning English?
- Books, songs, and games without computers ☐
- Activities with computers or tablets ☐
- Both make me excited! ☐
- 12- What helps you remember English words longer?
- Writing words in my notebook ☐
- Practicing words on a computer or tablet ☐
- Both help me remember ☐

- 13- What helps you understand English stories better?
- Reading from a book ☐
- Watching a video story ☐
- Both help me understand ☐

- 14- What do you like to do more with your friends?
- Work together using books and cards ☐
- Work together using computers or tablets ☐
- I like both the same ☐

Part 5:

- 15- Can you draw your favorite English class activity?

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.....

- 16- If you had a magic wand, how would you make learning English more fun? (You can draw or write)

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- 17- If you could make one thing about learning English easier, what would it be?" (You can draw or write)

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