

## Nearpod for Vocabulary Mastery among Junior High Students: A Literature Review

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### Abstract

The integration of technology has transformed English language teaching, including in Indonesia, where digital learning platforms are increasingly adopted across educational levels. This article examines the effectiveness of Nearpod in enhancing vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. Fifteen studies published between 2022 and 2024 were analyzed, covering vocabulary learning, reading, grammar, writing, student engagement, and learning achievement. The findings indicate that Nearpod supports vocabulary mastery through interactive learning, multimedia integration, immediate feedback, collaborative activities, and gamification. These features also enhance students' motivation, participation, and learning autonomy, which contribute to more effective vocabulary acquisition. However, the review identifies a limited number of studies specifically investigating Nearpod's impact on vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. Overall, the evidence suggests that Nearpod is a promising instructional tool for supporting vocabulary development and creating engaging English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments.

**Keywords:** Nearpod; vocabulary mastery; English language learning; junior high school students; literature review.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has substantially transformed contemporary educational practices, including the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Technology is no longer viewed merely as a supplementary resource but has increasingly become an integral component of classroom instruction, providing learners with opportunities to engage with interactive, multimodal, and learner-centered activities. Digital learning environments can facilitate active participation and provide teachers with diverse ways of presenting instructional content and assessing students' understanding. Mayer (2021) explains that learning can be strengthened when verbal and visual information is appropriately integrated within multimedia environments. Similarly, the growing adoption of educational technology has encouraged teachers to reconsider conventional instructional practices and incorporate digital resources that support interaction, participation, and meaningful learning experiences (Bond et al., 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2021).

Within EFL education, vocabulary mastery represents a fundamental component of language development because lexical knowledge underpins learners' ability to comprehend and produce language. Adequate vocabulary knowledge enables students to understand spoken and written input while also supporting their ability to communicate ideas through speaking and writing. Nation (2022) emphasizes that systematic vocabulary development is essential to

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successful second-language learning, while Webb and Nation (2023) highlight the importance of repeated and meaningful encounters with words for developing both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, vocabulary should not be treated as an isolated linguistic component but as an essential foundation for broader communicative competence.

Despite its importance, vocabulary acquisition continues to present considerable challenges for EFL learners, particularly students at the junior high school level. Conventional instruction frequently emphasizes word lists, translation, memorization, and repetitive exercises. Although these practices may help students recall certain lexical items, excessive reliance on decontextualized memorization may provide limited opportunities for learners to encounter and use vocabulary meaningfully. Effective vocabulary learning instead requires repeated exposure, contextualized practice, active retrieval, and opportunities to apply newly learned words across different language activities (Nation, 2022; Webb & Nation, 2023). These considerations have increased interest in technology-supported approaches that can combine vocabulary presentation, practice, interaction, assessment, and feedback within more engaging learning environments.

One digital platform increasingly incorporated into classroom instruction is Nearpod. Nearpod is an interactive educational platform through which teachers can combine presentations with multimedia materials, quizzes, collaborative activities, games, videos, and formative assessments. These features allow students to interact directly with instructional content rather than functioning solely as passive recipients of information. Delacruz (2021a) identifies Nearpod as an educational technology that supports interactive classroom experiences, while Prasetyo and Andayani (2024) highlight its potential for integrating various instructional activities within a single digital learning environment. The platform can therefore provide teachers with opportunities to present learning materials multimodally, monitor student responses, and provide feedback throughout classroom instruction.

These characteristics appear particularly relevant to vocabulary instruction because vocabulary learning benefits from multiple encounters with lexical items through different modes and contexts. Nearpod can potentially present new vocabulary through combinations of words, images, audio, video, contextual examples, and interactive exercises. From the perspective of multimedia learning, appropriately combining verbal and visual representations can facilitate the processing and organization of new information (Mayer, 2021). Interactive activities and gamified elements may additionally encourage learners to retrieve and apply newly introduced vocabulary rather than simply memorize word lists. The broader literature on gamification also indicates that interactive and game-oriented instructional environments can positively influence learning-related outcomes, although their effectiveness depends on instructional design and context (Zainuddin et al., 2020).

Empirical research increasingly provides evidence for the educational potential of Nearpod. For example, Custodio et al. (2024) reported positive outcomes from the use of Nearpod among Grade 8 learners, demonstrating its applicability to interactive learning at the secondary level. Maghfiroh et al. (2023) similarly incorporated Nearpod into learning and assessment activities for junior high school students. Although these studies were conducted outside English vocabulary instruction, they demonstrate that Nearpod can be implemented with learners at an educational level comparable to the population addressed in the present review. Research in language-related contexts has also associated Nearpod with increased classroom participation and interactive learning experiences (Delacruz, 2021b).

More specifically, emerging studies have examined Nearpod in English language learning and vocabulary instruction. Kusmiati et al. (2024) investigated the implementation of Nearpod for vocabulary achievement among junior high school students, providing particularly direct evidence concerning the relationship between the platform and vocabulary learning. Srisakonwat (2022) likewise examined the effects of Nearpod on the vocabulary knowledge of Mathayom Suksa 3 students and reported its potential for supporting vocabulary development. More recent evidence from junior high school English classrooms has further indicated that students perceive Nearpod as a useful digital resource for English learning (Ardiansyah et al., 2025).

The relevance of Nearpod is not limited to vocabulary instruction. Studies have explored its implementation across different dimensions of language learning, indicating the broader adaptability of the platform. Anggoro and Khasanah (2025), for example, investigated Nearpod interactive video as an independent learning resource in an English writing course, while Contreras et al. (2025) examined its use for developing EFL grammar competence. Recent secondary-level research has also investigated the effectiveness of Nearpod for improving students' English achievement (Ilcham et al., 2026). Taken together, these studies suggest that Nearpod can support various forms of language instruction by providing interactive and multimedia-based learning opportunities.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of Nearpod should not be generalized solely from findings in other language skills, subjects, or educational levels. Existing research encompasses diverse populations and outcomes, including science process skills (Custodio et al., 2024), critical thinking assessment (Maghfiroh et al., 2023), reading activities (Delacruz, 2021b), writing instruction (Anggoro & Khasanah, 2025), grammar competence (Contreras et al., 2025), and general English achievement (Ilcham et al., 2026). Although this growing body of evidence demonstrates the flexibility of Nearpod as an instructional platform, studies specifically addressing vocabulary mastery among junior high school EFL learners remain comparatively limited.

This limitation creates a need to systematically examine what existing research reveals about the contribution of Nearpod to vocabulary learning, particularly among adolescent EFL learners. A literature review can integrate findings from studies conducted across related contexts, identify recurring patterns in the reported benefits and challenges of Nearpod, and distinguish direct evidence on vocabulary mastery from supporting evidence derived from other language-learning contexts. Such synthesis is important because literature reviews enable researchers to consolidate existing knowledge, identify inconsistencies, and reveal areas requiring further investigation (Snyder, 2019).

Therefore, this literature review aims to examine the effectiveness of Nearpod in supporting vocabulary mastery among junior high school students by synthesizing findings from fifteen recent and relevant studies. Specifically, the review focuses on how Nearpod has been implemented for vocabulary and related English-learning activities, the learning outcomes reported in previous research, the interactive features that may contribute to vocabulary development, and the limitations and challenges associated with its implementation. By integrating current evidence, this review seeks to provide a clearer understanding of Nearpod's potential as a technology-enhanced approach to vocabulary instruction and to identify directions for future empirical research in junior high school EFL contexts.

## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative literature review to examine the effectiveness of Nearpod in enhancing vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. The review synthesized findings from previous studies to identify common patterns, outcomes, and research gaps related to Nearpod-assisted vocabulary learning (Snyder, 2019).

Fifteen peer-reviewed studies were selected based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Eligible studies focused on the use of Nearpod in educational contexts, particularly vocabulary or English language learning, and reported findings related to learning achievement, engagement, motivation, or instructional effectiveness. Studies unrelated to Nearpod or lacking sufficient methodological information were excluded.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Relevant information concerning participants, research design, Nearpod implementation, and major findings was extracted and compared. The findings were then organized into key themes, including vocabulary achievement, motivation, engagement, interactive learning, technological affordances, and implementation challenges.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### ***Nearpod and Vocabulary Achievement***

Evidence from the reviewed literature indicates that Nearpod has considerable potential to facilitate vocabulary development among secondary-level learners. Srisakonwat (2022), for instance, examined its implementation among Thai secondary school students and documented substantial gains in vocabulary knowledge following Nearpod-assisted instruction. Learners also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the learning experience, particularly in response to the platform's interactive and multimedia-rich environment.

Comparable evidence was reported by Kusmiati et al. (2024), who demonstrated that the integration of Nearpod contributed positively to students' vocabulary achievement. Its interactive activities provided learners with repeated opportunities to encounter, retrieve, and practice target lexical items within digitally mediated learning tasks. Such opportunities are particularly important because successful vocabulary acquisition depends not merely on initial exposure but also on sustained engagement with lexical items across meaningful contexts.

Nearpod facilitates this process through features such as interactive quizzes, matching exercises, collaborative boards, and multimedia resources. Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of vocabulary instruction, these features require learners to actively recognize, process, and apply lexical knowledge. Taken together, the reviewed evidence indicates that Nearpod may strengthen vocabulary mastery through the combined effects of repeated exposure, active retrieval, contextualized practice, and sustained learner participation.

#### ***Interactive Learning and Student Engagement***

Enhanced learner engagement emerged as one of the most consistent themes across the reviewed studies. AlMuzahmi (2023) reported that the use of Nearpod strengthened classroom interaction among Grade 8 learners, including student–teacher, student–student, and student–content interaction. Similar patterns were identified in studies integrating Nearpod into language-related classroom activities, where students demonstrated greater participation when learning was mediated through interactive digital resources.

Engagement is particularly relevant to vocabulary acquisition because learners are more likely to process and retain lexical information when they actively interact with instructional content. Nearpod facilitates such involvement by transforming conventional classroom activities into participatory tasks involving quizzes, collaborative responses, multimedia presentations, and game-based exercises.

Evidence from Custodio et al. (2024) further illustrates this pedagogical potential. Features such as *Collaborate Board*, *Poll*, *Draw It*, and *Time to Climb* were associated with increased participation and improved learning experiences. Although their study was not specifically situated within vocabulary instruction, these findings demonstrate how Nearpod's interactive affordances can encourage sustained learner involvement. When adapted to vocabulary teaching, such features may provide meaningful opportunities for students to recognize, retrieve, categorize, and apply newly acquired words.

#### ***Multimedia Learning and Vocabulary Development***

Multimedia integration represents another prominent mechanism through which Nearpod may contribute to vocabulary development. Srisakonwat (2022) reported favorable learner responses to the incorporation of images, videos, cartoons, graphics, and games within Nearpod-based vocabulary instruction. Likewise, Zahran (2024) demonstrated that combining Nearpod with guided reading strategies contributed to improved reading comprehension and learner motivation in an EFL context.

The pedagogical value of these features can be interpreted through multimedia learning theory. Mayer (2021) argues that appropriately coordinated verbal and visual representations can facilitate information processing and promote meaningful learning. In vocabulary instruction, presenting lexical items alongside relevant images, audio, animations, videos, or contextual examples may assist learners in establishing stronger associations between word forms and

meanings.

Accordingly, Nearpod provides opportunities for learners to encounter vocabulary through multiple modes of representation rather than through textual definitions alone. Such multimodal exposure may reinforce comprehension and retention while simultaneously supporting pronunciation, word recognition, and contextual understanding. The effectiveness of multimedia, however, depends on purposeful instructional design rather than simply increasing the quantity of digital content presented to learners.

### ***Immediate Feedback and Formative Assessment***

The provision of immediate feedback constitutes another pedagogically significant feature of Nearpod. Across the reviewed literature, real-time assessment was frequently associated with opportunities for learners to identify errors and modify their understanding during the learning process. Custodio et al. (2024), for example, demonstrated the value of Nearpod-supported formative activities in facilitating student participation and learning performance.

This functionality has particular relevance to vocabulary instruction. Immediate feedback allows students to recognize inaccurate interpretations of word meanings, inappropriate lexical choices, spelling errors, or incorrect usage before such misunderstandings become reinforced. Rather than postponing correction until the completion of an instructional sequence, Nearpod enables assessment and feedback to occur continuously throughout the lesson.

The assessment potential of the platform is further supported by Maghfiroh et al. (2023), who developed a Nearpod-based assessment instrument and reported satisfactory levels of validity and practicality. Although their investigation focused on science learning rather than vocabulary, the findings demonstrate Nearpod's capacity to support technology-mediated formative assessment. Applied to EFL vocabulary instruction, this capability may enable teachers to monitor lexical development systematically while adjusting instruction in response to learners' immediate needs.

### ***Motivation and Positive Learning Attitudes***

Learner motivation and positive attitudes toward technology constituted another recurring theme in the reviewed literature. Srisakonwat (2022) reported high levels of satisfaction among students participating in Nearpod-supported vocabulary instruction, while Zahran (2024) identified improvements in learners' motivation when Nearpod was integrated with guided reading activities.

Research examining students' acceptance of Nearpod further suggests that learners tend to value its interactive and accessible characteristics. Sholikhah and Ningsih (2023), for example, reported favorable perceptions regarding the usefulness and accessibility of Nearpod for grammar learning. Such perceptions are pedagogically important because students who regard a learning technology as useful and manageable may be more willing to participate actively in technology-mediated activities.

In vocabulary instruction, increased motivation may encourage learners to devote greater attention and effort to repeated lexical practice. Interactive tasks, multimedia materials, collaborative activities, and gamified exercises can make vocabulary practice less monotonous than instruction based predominantly on memorization. Nevertheless, motivational benefits should be understood as supporting rather than independently determining vocabulary achievement; meaningful instructional design remains necessary for engagement to translate into measurable learning gains.

### ***Nearpod and Broader Educational Outcomes***

The educational potential of Nearpod extends beyond vocabulary and language instruction. Ramadhani et al. (2024), for example, reported improvements in Information and Communication Technology learning, while Custodio et al. (2024) documented positive outcomes in Grade 8 learners' integrated science process skills. These findings demonstrate the adaptability of Nearpod across subject areas and suggest that its instructional value derives partly

from pedagogical features that are applicable across disciplinary contexts.

Prasetyo and Andayani (2024) similarly highlighted the broader potential of Nearpod for supporting teaching and learning through its interactive, multimedia, and assessment capabilities. Within language education specifically, Kusmiati et al. (2024) provide more direct evidence by demonstrating the effectiveness of Nearpod in supporting vocabulary achievement among junior high school learners.

Taken collectively, the reviewed evidence suggests that Nearpod's educational value is associated with the interaction of several mechanisms rather than with technology use alone. Multimedia representation, active participation, repeated practice, immediate feedback, collaborative activities, and formative assessment collectively create conditions that may facilitate vocabulary development. Nevertheless, because a substantial proportion of the existing evidence originates from different subjects, language skills, and educational levels, conclusions regarding vocabulary mastery among junior high school EFL learners should be interpreted cautiously.

### **Research Gap**

Despite the expanding literature on technology-enhanced instruction, several important gaps remain regarding the specific contribution of Nearpod to vocabulary mastery among junior high school EFL learners. Existing studies generally demonstrate that digital learning environments can facilitate learner engagement, interaction, motivation, and academic performance through multimedia resources, interactive activities, and formative feedback. At the same time, vocabulary scholarship emphasizes that durable lexical development requires repeated exposure, active retrieval, meaningful contextualization, and opportunities to use newly acquired words rather than relying exclusively on memorization (Nation, 2022; Webb & Nation, 2023).

A primary limitation of the existing literature concerns the relatively small number of studies in which vocabulary mastery constitutes the principal learning outcome. Much of the available Nearpod research has concentrated on reading comprehension, grammar, writing, general English achievement, motivation, or outcomes in non-language subjects. Although such evidence demonstrates the platform's broader educational potential, findings from these areas cannot automatically be interpreted as evidence of vocabulary development. More vocabulary-specific research is therefore necessary to establish the extent to which Nearpod contributes to measurable lexical gains.

A second gap concerns the mechanisms through which Nearpod may facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Previous research frequently reports favorable outcomes associated with interactive activities, multimedia materials, gamification, and immediate feedback; however, these features are not always explicitly connected to established principles of vocabulary acquisition. From a theoretical perspective, multimedia presentation may facilitate the construction of associations between lexical forms and meanings (Mayer, 2021), while repeated retrieval and contextualized encounters may strengthen vocabulary retention (Nation, 2022; Webb & Nation, 2023). A more integrated account is therefore required to explain not merely whether Nearpod supports vocabulary learning, but also how and why particular features may contribute to lexical development.

A further limitation relates to population and educational context. Existing Nearpod studies encompass elementary pupils, secondary learners, university students, and participants from different disciplinary and linguistic settings. Such diversity strengthens the general evidence concerning the flexibility of Nearpod but restricts the extent to which findings can be generalized specifically to junior high school EFL learners. Adolescents at this educational stage have distinctive linguistic proficiency, learning needs, and motivational characteristics, making context-specific evidence particularly important.

Finally, although individual studies increasingly document positive outcomes from Nearpod-supported instruction, focused syntheses examining Nearpod specifically in relation to vocabulary mastery among junior high school students remain limited. This fragmented evidence

creates a need for a literature review that brings together relevant empirical findings, distinguishes direct vocabulary evidence from broader supporting evidence, and identifies recurring pedagogical mechanisms, benefits, and implementation challenges. Addressing these gaps can provide a more coherent understanding of Nearpod-assisted vocabulary instruction while offering evidence-based implications for English teachers and directions for future empirical research.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This literature review indicates that Nearpod is a promising digital platform for supporting vocabulary mastery among junior high school EFL learners. Its interactive activities, multimedia resources, gamification, collaborative features, and immediate feedback can promote active participation, motivation, repeated vocabulary exposure, and meaningful language practice. Although relatively few studies have examined vocabulary as the primary outcome, the available evidence suggests that Nearpod can create an engaging and learner-centered environment conducive to vocabulary acquisition and retention.

The findings also have practical implications for English language teaching. Teachers can integrate Nearpod into vocabulary lessons to provide contextualized practice, formative assessment, and interactive learning experiences. However, the reviewed studies vary considerably in their participants, research designs, educational contexts, and learning outcomes, limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Future research should therefore employ experimental and longitudinal designs with larger and more diverse samples. Further studies should also investigate how specific Nearpod features, such as *Time to Climb*, *Collaborate Board*, *Draw It*, interactive quizzes, and multimedia resources, influence receptive and productive vocabulary development. Such research could provide stronger evidence for optimizing Nearpod-assisted vocabulary instruction in junior high school EFL classrooms.

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