THE INFLUNCE OF YOU TUBE CONTENT ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

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Abstract

This article examines the role of YouTube content in developing English vocabulary among young children through classroom action research and qualitative analysis. Findings show significant vocabulary improvement after structured exposure to themed YouTube videos, supported by observations of natural language use in early childhood. The study also highlights the value of traditional methods such as storytelling and flashcards. Overall, the research concludes that combining digital media with guided instruction creates an effective, engaging environment for children's early English vocabulary development.

Keywords: Digital learning, multimodal acquisition, early childhood development, learning strategies, interactive instruction, child development, digital pedagogy.

Introduction

As we live in a rapidly developing era, we can hardly imagine our lives without modern technologies and social media, as they now influence every aspect of our daily life.

Social media is a group of online platforms that allow people to communicate, share information, and connect with others worldwide through text, video, photos, and other content. It includes popular networks like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where users post photos, videos, and messages. Social media helps people stay informed, express creativity, and promote businesses or ideas. However, it also has negative sides such as addiction, misinformation, and privacy risks. Despite its drawbacks, social media plays a major role in modern life by influencing communication, culture, and the way we access information. As of 2025, social media had more than five billion global users, which is equal to more than 68% of the world population (Kepios, 2025).

Social media can offer valuable benefits for children when used wisely. It helps them stay connected with friends and family, supporting communication and a sense of belonging. Many platforms also inspire creativity, allowing children to share art, videos, and ideas. Social media provides access to educational content, tutorials, and communities that help children learn new skills and explore their interests. It also develops digital literacy, an important skill for the modern world. With proper guidance, social media can be a helpful tool for learning, creativity, and personal growth. They can play a helpful role in supporting children's English learning by making the process more enjoyable and interactive. Child-friendly platforms such as YouTube Kids, educational channels, and simple learning apps offer cartoons, songs, stories, and visual lessons that naturally introduce new vocabulary and improve listening comprehension. Because the content is colorful and engaging, children stay motivated and learn without feeling pressured. Many social media tools also provide interactive activities—quizzes, mini-games, challenges, and pronunciation exercises—that turn learning into a fun experience. These activities help children practice English regularly and build confidence in using new words or phrases. Exposure to real-life English through videos and everyday conversations helps children understand natural pronunciation, tone, and communication styles (Education-FF, 2023).

In addition, social media allows children to explore topics they enjoy, such as animals, science, music, or art, all in English. This makes language learning more meaningful because they connect it with their interests. With proper guidance from parents or teachers, social media can become a safe, creative, and effective environment that strengthens children's English skills and encourages curiosity about the language.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY
A. Method
This study applies a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with a quantitative approach to enhance English vocabulary learning among children at Bina Jaya Kindergarten. CAR is used as a systematic method for teachers to identify learning problems and implement targeted actions to improve instructional quality. Following Kurt Lewin's four-stage model—planning, action, observation, and

reflection—the research aims to strengthen children's vocabulary acquisition through YouTube video media.

The learning intervention focused on the theme *Parts of the Body* and was implemented over three meetings, each lasting 120 minutes. Lessons followed a structured sequence of opening, core, and closing activities, all documented in the Daily Activity Plan (RKH). The research subjects were 13 kindergarten students (8 boys and 5 girls) selected due to their low initial ability to recognize English vocabulary. Data collection involved direct observation and documentation using photographs and videos to capture student participation, teacher performance, and classroom conditions.

This study was conducted at TK Bina Jaya, Sawit Seberang, Langkat, North Sumatra, from 23 October to 10 November 2023. Student learning outcomes were assessed using predetermined achievement indicators: 75–100% categorized as Very Well Developed (BSB), 50–74.99% as Developing as Expected (BSH), 25–49.99% as Beginning to Develop (MB), and 0–24.99% as Not Developed (BB). The research cycle was considered complete once students achieved a minimum competency level of 75%.

Quantitative data analysis used percentage calculations to determine the extent of students' progress. The formula $P = (f/n) \times 100\%$ was applied, where f represents the average score obtained by students and n denotes the maximum possible score. Through this analytic process, the study evaluated the effectiveness of YouTube video media in supporting young children's English vocabulary acquisition and confirmed that structured digital exposure can enhance early language learning (Dewi, Hidayati and Supriadi, 2024).

B. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which focuses on analyzing and presenting factual information systematically to enhance understanding. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research explores and interprets the meanings individuals or groups assign to social issues. It is widely used to investigate societal life, behavior, concepts, phenomena, and other social problems. Walidin et al. (2015) further note that qualitative research aims to understand human or social phenomena by forming a comprehensive narrative based on detailed accounts obtained in natural settings.

The primary data collection method in this study is the interview, conducted through direct conversation between the researcher and the child subject. This method requires the researcher to act as a key instrument capable of observing, recalling, and interpreting events accurately. The study examines the influence of early exposure to English on a three-year-old girl, Nathisa Syahda Thafana, who has watched English-language content on YouTube since the age of 1.5 years. Her habitual engagement with such media, combined with parental language practices, is analyzed to identify its role in her second-language acquisition.

A narrative analysis is applied by observing the child during play and family interactions, where she demonstrates responsive communication and clear indications of language influence. Data were collected through discreet audio recordings, later transcribed into written form for analysis. To ensure the validity of findings, the study uses credibility testing through data triangulation, which involves examining information gathered from various sources, situations, and times. As noted by Wijaya (2018), triangulation strengthens the accuracy and reliability of qualitative data.

RESULTS

The results presented in Figure 5 demonstrate a clear progression in children's learning achievements across the three stages of the study: pre-cycle, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2. In the pre-cycle, the overall achievement percentage was 30.76%, which fell under the *MB (Starting to Develop)* category. This initial score indicates that children's English vocabulary mastery was still at an early developmental stage prior to the intervention using YouTube videos.

Following the implementation of the first cycle of instructional activities, children's learning achievement rose significantly to 69.71%, marking an improvement of 38.95% compared to the pre-cycle. At this stage, the achievement level reached the *BSH (Developing as Expected)* criteria, showing that the integration of YouTube video media began to positively influence the children's vocabulary acquisition.

Further enhancement was observed in Cycle 2, where the achievement percentage increased to 79.81%, showing an additional 10.1% improvement from Cycle 1. This final percentage met the *BSB (Very Well Developed)* criteria, indicating that children demonstrated strong mastery of the vocabulary introduced through the learning media. Overall, Figure 5 clearly confirms that YouTube video media had

a substantial and progressive impact on improving children's English vocabulary learning outcomes.

The percentage of children's learning achievements in this study is presented in the graph below:
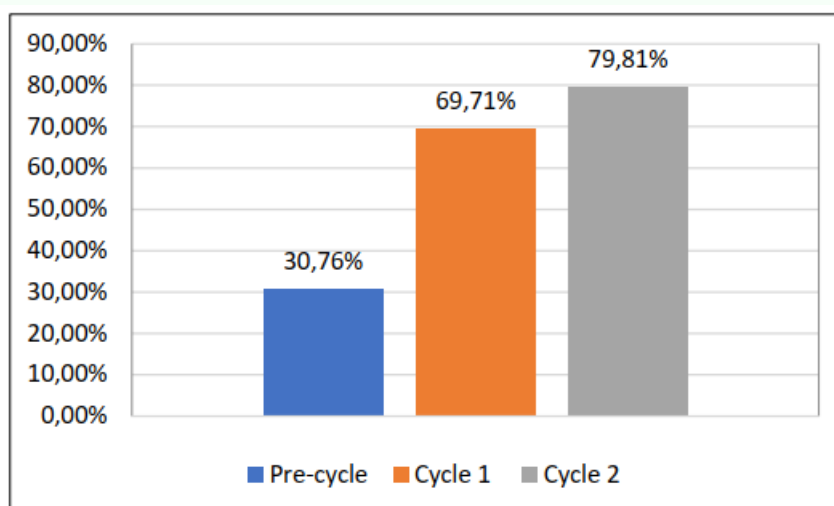

Table 1. Recapitulation of the Percentage of Children's Learning Achievements (Dewi, Hidayati and Supriadi, 2024, p.124)

The findings of this descriptive qualitative study reveal clear evidence of early second-language acquisition influenced by consistent exposure to English content. The three-year-old participant, Nathisa Syahda Thafana, who had regularly watched English-language YouTube videos since the age of 1.5, demonstrated notable receptive and productive vocabulary development. Narrative observations conducted during play and family interactions showed that the child responded fluently to questions, used English words spontaneously, and displayed strong comprehension of familiar vocabulary.

Interview data, supported by discreet audio recordings, indicated that both media exposure and parental reinforcement contributed to her language progress. The transcribed recordings showed recurring patterns of accurate word recognition, pronunciation attempts, and context-appropriate usage. Credibility was ensured through triangulation across multiple situations, times, and data sources, confirming the consistency of the child's linguistic behaviors.

Overall, the results suggest that early and continuous engagement with English multimedia content can significantly support young children's vocabulary acquisition.

YouTube-based instructional videos substantially aid young learners' English vocabulary acquisition by increasing engagement, exposure, and retention. Hakim (2019) found that integrating YouTube into vocabulary lessons improved learners' word recognition, pronunciation, and motivation, with students reporting positive perceptions of video-supported activities. Ningsi & Tambusai (2023) demonstrated that animated YouTube videos produced measurable gains in vocabulary mastery compared with traditional instruction, attributing effects to multimodal input, repetition, and visual context that scaffold meaning for learners. Together, these studies indicate that carefully selected, pedagogically framed YouTube content can be an effective supplementary medium for early vocabulary development.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that YouTube content can effectively enhance children's English vocabulary development, supporting findings from earlier classroom action research where video media significantly improved vocabulary mastery (Junaida & Zannah, 2021). YouTube's strength lies in its multimodal input—animation, visuals, audio, and contextual examples—which helps children listen, imitate pronunciation, understand meaning, and recall new words more easily. These features align with Scott et al. (2023), who note that children use YouTube for cognitive, imaginative, and social purposes, creating natural opportunities for incidental language learning.

Non-YouTube vocabulary learning methods also show strong effectiveness when supported by structured instruction. Young learners naturally try to label objects around them, making simple, repetitive vocabulary tasks meaningful (Shafira & Handayani, 2022). Traditional strategies—such as storytelling, flashcards, and picture-based explanation—can be equally beneficial because they offer controlled pacing and focused learning without distractions. Research by Dore et al. (2017) further shows that technological innovations support language learning only when aligned with principles of early language acquisition. Meanwhile, Aziz & Ngadiron (2019) emphasize that mastering a wide vocabulary strengthens all four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—regardless of the medium.

Comparing both approaches, YouTube is preferable when engagement, authentic pronunciation, and repeated exposure are needed, while non-YouTube methods are more suitable for structured, teacher-led learning. Therefore, the most effective and balanced approach is a combination of both: integrating carefully selected YouTube content with explicit teaching, repetition, and interactive classroom activities. This blended method maximizes motivation, supports accurate learning, and ensures strong vocabulary development in children.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that YouTube content can meaningfully support early English vocabulary development in children when they use it in a structured and purposeful manner. Across the classroom action research cycles, children showed steady progress—from initial small vocabulary recognition to achieving strong mastery after exposure to themed YouTube videos. The results show that animated and visually enriched content helps children understand, remember, and use new words more confidently. Correspondingly, the qualitative findings highlight that persistent early exposure to English multimedia supports natural language acquisition, as seen in the child who regularly engaged with English videos from a young age.

At the same time, the study shows that vocabulary growth is also strengthened through traditional learning methods such as storytelling, flashcards, and teacher-guided explanation. These approaches offer controlled pacing, clear instruction, and focused practice, which remain essential for foundational learning. Taken together, the findings suggest that both digital and non-digital methods contribute important benefits to children's language development. Overall, a balanced approach that combines the engagement of YouTube videos with the structure of traditional instruction is most effective. When teachers and parents carefully guide media usage, YouTube becomes a supportive tool rather than a stand-alone method, enriching children's learning experiences and enhancing their English vocabulary growth.

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