

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING ANIMATION MEDIA TO IMPROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Abstract

This article presents a literature review on the effectiveness of animation media in improving English vocabulary mastery in elementary school students. Animation media was chosen because of its visual and auditory characteristics that can attract children's attention and simplify abstract concepts into more concrete ones. Vocabulary learning is the main foundation in mastering a foreign language, and a visually appealing approach can increase students' motivation and memory. The method used in this article is a systematic literature review of various relevant scientific sources, both national and international, in the period 2016–2024. The results of the review show that animation media has a significant contribution in creating an interactive and enjoyable learning experience, and has proven effective in improving student learning outcomes, especially in the vocabulary aspect. This article is expected to be a reference for educators and media developers in designing technology-based learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of elementary school students.

Keywords: *animation media, vocabulary, English, elementary school students, learning effectiveness*

Introduction

Vocabulary mastery is one of the basic components in the process of learning English, especially at the Elementary School level. At this age, students are still at the stage of cognitive development called concrete-operational, as stated by Piaget (1972), where children learn more effectively through direct experience, real objects, and visual representations. Therefore, they need learning media that are visual, interesting, contextual, and easy to understand. Learning that only relies on text or verbal explanations is often not effective enough to help them understand and remember the meaning of new vocabulary in depth.

One of the media that is considered appropriate to the characteristics of elementary school students is animation media, which is able to combine elements of moving images, attractive colors, sound, text, and short story narratives. Animation not only conveys information visually, but also creates a more lively and enjoyable learning experience. With the presence of dynamic visual elements and sound effects, children can build strong associations between words and meanings in an interesting context, thereby accelerating the process of vocabulary mastery. Amidst advances in educational technology, various studies have begun to lead to the development of interactive media to increase the effectiveness of learning. Research by Irwanto, (2019) shows that through the use of videos, children can experience more enjoyable, interactive, and visual learning, which can increase their interest and involvement in learning. In line with Melati et al., (2023) who stated that videos can also provide real examples and visualizations of complex concepts, thereby helping children understand and remember information better. In addition, the use of learning media technology can increase children's creativity in solving problems and stimulate their imagination.

In addition, animations provide real-life illustrations of the words being learned, helping students associate vocabulary with familiar images and situations. This supports long-term information retention because information is processed through visual and verbal channels simultaneously. This finding is supported by Mohammed et al. (2018)

who reported that students who learned using microlearning showed increased learning ability and higher learning enthusiasm compared to students who used conventional methods. Given that animation is often used as a main element in microlearning modules, this finding also supports the potential use of animation in learning. The relationship between visual and verbal processing is also explained in the Dual Coding theory by Paivio (1991), which states that information will be easier to process and remember if presented in two channels: visual and verbal. When children see animation and hear narration or text explaining the word, their brains encode the information in two different but complementary systems, thus strengthening memory and conceptual understanding. In the context of English learning, this theory is very relevant, because students not only understand the meaning of words textually, but also gain visual experiences that shape the contextual meaning of the word.

Thus, animated media can be an innovative solution in presenting learning that is not only effective, but also fun and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development. In addition, this media opens up opportunities for teachers to deliver learning materials creatively, increase learning motivation, and provide a more meaningful experience for Elementary School students in the process of learning English.

Method

This article is compiled using a systematic literature review method with the aim of collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the results of previous studies that are relevant to the topic of the effectiveness of animation media in learning English vocabulary at the Elementary School level. The literature search process is carried out in stages through various electronic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), SINTA (Science and Technology Index), and ScienceDirect to ensure the diversity and credibility of the sources.

The keywords used in the search include: “animation media”, “English vocabulary”, “elementary school students”, and “learning effectiveness”. Boolean combinations such as AND/OR are also applied to expand the range of relevant search results. In addition, the selection process is carried out carefully by setting inclusion criteria: (1) articles published in the period 2016 to 2024; (2) the focus of the research includes the use of animation media and/or improving English vocabulary mastery in elementary school students; and (3) the article is the result of empirical research with a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed approach that presents real data and concrete findings.

The exclusion criteria include articles that are only opinions or theoretical studies without empirical data, articles that do not mention the relationship between animation media and vocabulary learning outcomes, and articles that cannot be fully accessed. After going through the initial selection process for titles and abstracts, articles that meet the criteria are then read in depth to evaluate their suitability to the focus of the study.

All data and information obtained from selected articles were then analyzed thematically, namely by grouping findings based on certain themes such as improving learning outcomes, learning motivation, and student interaction in animation-based learning. This analysis aims to identify the real contribution of animation media to the effectiveness of vocabulary learning as a whole, as well as provide a deeper understanding of how the characteristics of this media can be utilized in the context of basic education.

Results

The results of the literature review show that the use of animation media has a positive impact on improving English vocabulary mastery in elementary school students. Based on the results of the research reviewed, several main findings were found as follows:

1. The Last Supper (2023)

The results of the study indicate that the use of animated video media has a significant effect compared to the control class using flashcard media on the introduction of English vocabulary to children at Mekar Bunga Padang Kindergarten. The comparison of the averages in both classes shows that the use of animated video media is higher than the control class with an average in the experimental class of 17.8 and an average in the control class of 15.8.

2. Annisa & Muryanti (2022)

The processed research data is included in normal and homogeneous data, and the introduction of English vocabulary in the experimental class is more improved than the control class. This can be seen from the average of each group, the average of the experimental group is higher than the control class.

3. Younas & Dong (2024)

The significance level of t shows that the difference in mean scores between the control and experimental groups is significant. So, we can say that using animated pictures to teach English vocabulary to fifth graders is a good idea.

4. Increasing students' interest in reading is one of the positive results obtained from the application of animated videos in learning. Before the intervention, only 60% of students showed a high interest in reading. However, after the application of animated videos, this figure increased significantly to 85%. This shows that the use of interesting and interactive media can increase students' interest in reading activities (Purnama & Kusmiyati, 2024).

Discussion

These results reinforce that animated media has great potential in improving the effectiveness of learning, especially in the aspect of English vocabulary mastery. The main advantage of animated media lies in its visual and dynamic characteristics, which are able to activate the cognitive processes of students through attractive, meaningful, and easy-to-understand displays. For elementary school students who are at the stage of concrete thinking development, visual media that moves and sounds are easier to accept than text or abstract explanations alone.

According to Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia (2005), learning will be more effective if information is delivered through two channels at once—visual and verbal—that work synergistically. In this case, animation serves as a visual channel, while narration, text, or sound becomes a verbal channel. This integrated presentation helps the brain process and store information more efficiently, thereby strengthening students' understanding and memory of new vocabulary. In addition, Mayer also emphasizes the importance of reducing cognitive load, where well-designed learning media can avoid information overload and focus students' attention on the core material being studied.

Animated media also encourages stronger emotional involvement in the learning process. Colors, movements, characters, and storylines in animation can arouse students' curiosity, laughter, and empathy, all of which have a positive impact on learning motivation and active participation. According to Astleitner and Wiesner (2004), students' affective involvement plays an important role in the effectiveness of digital learning, especially in the context of independent or online learning. In the context of English learning, animated media can be used to display vocabulary in a lively and relevant context, such as conversations between characters, situations at home or school, or short story narratives. Students not only learn the meaning of words separately, but also see how the words are used in real sentences and situations. This is in line with the opinion of Pagarra et al. (2022) who stated that films and videos are able to present elements of images, sound and movement in an integrated and complete manner so that they can provide comprehensive information. With the capabilities of this audio-visual media, this media has the characteristics of being able to provide or improve: 1) perception, 2) understanding, 3) transfer (transfer) of learning, 4) reinforcement or knowledge of the results achieved, 5) retention (memory), 6) direct experience and 7) motivation because it tends to provide a pleasant effect for students. Furthermore, animation can also be used to introduce cultural and social values through stories or characters that represent the everyday environment. This is very important in learning a foreign language, because vocabulary does not stand alone, but is always related to the cultural meaning and context of its use. Locally designed animation media can even help students understand the content more easily because it is close to their experience.

However, the effectiveness of animation media is greatly influenced by several important factors. First, the quality of the content—the material delivered must be accurate, in accordance with the curriculum, and presented in a language that is appropriate to the level of student development. Second, the suitability of the material to the age of the students—animation that is too complicated or too simple can actually interfere with the learning process. Third, the teacher's competence in integrating animation into learning strategies is also a determinant of success. Teachers need to understand when and how to use animation to support the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, careful planning and instructional design based on learning theory, such as multimedia learning theory and constructivist theory, are needed. Good animation media is not only visually appealing, but also able to guide students' thinking processes, provide opportunities for exploration of meaning, and encourage students to be active in the learning process.

Conclusion

This review concludes that animated media is effective in improving elementary school students' English vocabulary mastery. By combining visual and verbal elements, animated media provides a learning experience that is in accordance with the characteristics of children's cognitive development, while increasing student retention, motivation, and engagement. Presenting vocabulary in a meaningful visual context makes learning more interesting and easier to understand.

However, the success of its implementation is highly dependent on the right learning design, the availability of supporting technology, and the competence of teachers in utilizing media effectively. Therefore, animated media does not only function as a tool, but as an innovative and relevant learning strategy to answer the challenges of learning English at the elementary level.

Suggestion

Based on the results of the review that has been conducted, here are some suggestions that can be considered:

1. For educators, it is recommended to start integrating animated media in English learning, especially to improve elementary school students' vocabulary mastery in a more interesting and meaningful way.
2. For the government and educational institutions, it is hoped that they will provide support in the form of:
 - 1) Training and strengthening of teacher competencies in the use of animation media.
 - 2) Provision of technological facilities that support animation-based learning.
3. For media developers, it is necessary to create animated content that is appropriate to the curriculum, age characteristics of students, and local context so that it is easy to understand and relevant.
4. For researchers, it is recommended to conduct further empirical studies to strengthen these findings, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of animation media at various levels and aspects of learning.

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