Article

The Impact of Youtube Animated Videos on Students' Motivation and Vocabulary Development in Learning English at SDN 26 Palu

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the impact of YouTube animated videos on students' motivation and vocabulary development in learning English at SDN 26 Palu. In recent years, technology integration in language education has become crucial for enhancing young learners' engagement and comprehension. However, few studies have examined the specific effects of YouTube animated videos within Indonesian public elementary school contexts. This study employed a mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design measured vocabulary improvement, while interviews and classroom observations explored students' motivation. The participants consisted of 15 sixth-grade students who took part in six meetings over two weeks. The findings revealed that the use of YouTube animated videos significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery and motivation in learning English. Quantitative data showed a mean increase of 10.2 points from pre-test to post-test, while qualitative data indicated that students found the videos engaging and enjoyable. It is concluded that YouTube animated videos are effective and accessible media for improving English vocabulary and sustaining motivation among elementary learners.

Keywords: *YouTube Animated, Motivation in Learning English, Vocabulary Development*

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital advancement, the integration of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT) has become an essential component of modern classrooms. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provides teachers with innovative tools to create more engaging and effective learning experiences. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), technology has transformed language education by offering flexible, interactive, and student-centered resources for teachers and learners. Among various technological innovations, video-based media have proven to be particularly powerful in enhancing students' language acquisition, especially in vocabulary learning and motivation.

YouTube, as one of the most widely used online platforms, offers abundant educational content, including animated videos designed to support language learning. These videos combine visuals, narration, music, and storytelling, aligning with Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which states that learners comprehend information better when it is presented through both visual and auditory channels. Similarly, Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory suggests that combining verbal and visual elements enhances memory retention and understanding. Supporting these theories, Berk (2009) and Cheng & Tsai (2019) found that video-based instruction increases students' cognitive engagement and helps them acquire vocabulary more effectively through contextual and visual input.

Animated videos are particularly effective for young learners because they capture attention, stimulate imagination, and improve retention of new words. Research by Setiawati and Septiana (2022) revealed that using animated videos in vocabulary instruction significantly increased students' post-test scores compared to traditional teaching methods.

Furthermore, Putri and Ginting (2021) confirmed that YouTube-based materials enhance students' vocabulary mastery and motivation by presenting familiar characters, repetitive structures, and enjoyable visual contexts. These findings indicate that animated videos serve as an engaging and effective medium for promoting vocabulary growth among elementary learners.

Despite the growing evidence supporting digital media in education, many Indonesian elementary schools continue to rely heavily on traditional textbook-based teaching methods. Such approaches often result in limited vocabulary growth and low student motivation (Sabgini & Wiraatmaja, 2023). In public schools, particularly in regions such as Central Sulawesi, the use of multimedia in English lessons remains underdeveloped due to factors such as a lack of facilities, teacher readiness, and limited exposure to digital tools. Therefore, integrating YouTube animated videos into English instruction could be a promising strategy to address these challenges and improve students' engagement and learning outcomes.

Motivation also plays a vital role in language learning success. Based on Keller's (1987) ARCS Model of Motivation, which includes Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction, students learn more effectively when instructional materials are interesting, relevant, and rewarding. Animated videos have been shown to enhance these motivational components by providing attractive visuals, relatable contexts, and enjoyable experiences. According to Dörnyei (2001) and Rahimi & Fathi (2021), when learners are motivated, they are more actively engaged in learning activities, which in turn supports better vocabulary retention and long-term achievement.

Considering these theoretical and empirical foundations, this study aims to investigate the impact of YouTube animated videos on students' motivation and vocabulary development in learning English at SDN 26 Palu. It seeks to determine whether the use of animated videos can improve vocabulary mastery and sustain motivation among young learners. The findings are expected to provide insights for English teachers in adopting effective multimedia strategies and contribute to the growing field of technology-enhanced language learning in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively investigate the impact of YouTube animated videos on students' motivation and vocabulary development. The quantitative aspect measured vocabulary improvement through pre-test and post-test scores, while the qualitative aspect explored students' motivation, participation, and perceptions during and after the intervention.

The participants of this study were 15 sixth-grade students (aged 11–12 years) from SDN 26 Palu in the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the English teacher's recommendation. They were considered suitable for this study because they had limited English vocabulary and low motivation to learn English, making them appropriate subjects for the use of multimedia-based instruction.

The instructional materials used in this study consisted of three YouTube animated videos selected from child-friendly educational channels, namely *Kids Vocabulary – Animals* (Smile and Learn), *Pinkfong Colors for Kids* (Pinkfong), and *Action Verbs* (Dream English Kids). Each video lasted between three and five minutes and was selected for its clear pronunciation, repetitive vocabulary, and engaging visuals, all of which are suitable for young learners. The total duration of the treatment was two weeks, consisting of six 35-minute meetings. These videos were selected because they aligned with the students' language level and the elementary English curriculum, providing both entertainment and meaningful language exposure.

Three instruments were employed to collect data: a vocabulary test, an observation sheet, and an interview guide. The vocabulary test consisted of 15 multiple-choice questions aligned with the vocabulary presented in the selected videos. Each correct answer was

awarded one point, resulting in a total possible score of 15. The test's content validity was examined by an English education lecturer, while its reliability was verified through a pilot test conducted with a different group of students at the same grade level. The observation sheet was developed based on Keller's (1987) ARCS Model of Motivation to assess students' attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction during the learning sessions. Meanwhile, the interview guide consisted of several open-ended questions designed to explore students' enjoyment, engagement, and perceptions of learning English through YouTube animated videos.

The procedures of this study were divided into three main stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. In the pre-test stage, students completed a 15-item vocabulary test to measure their initial knowledge of English words related to the topics presented in the videos. During the treatment stage, which took place over two weeks (six meetings), students learned English vocabulary through YouTube animated videos. Each meeting followed three phases: pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing. In the pre-viewing phase, the teacher introduced key vocabulary and encouraged students to predict the video content. In the while-viewing phase, students watched the video and participated by repeating or responding to key words. Finally, in the post-viewing phase, students engaged in vocabulary-based games, matching activities, and short discussions to reinforce the new words. Throughout the learning sessions, students' motivation and participation were observed using the ARCS-based observation sheet. After completing all treatment sessions, the same vocabulary test was administered as a post-test to measure students' improvement in vocabulary mastery. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several students to obtain qualitative data on their motivation, engagement, and attitudes toward learning English using YouTube animated videos.

The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, and a paired-sample t-test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference in students' vocabulary achievement before and after the treatment. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Keller's (1987) ARCS Model of Motivation, focusing on four key dimensions: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. The integration of quantitative and qualitative results provided a comprehensive understanding of how YouTube animated videos influenced students' vocabulary learning and motivation in the English classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Effect on Vocabulary Development

The quantitative results revealed that students' vocabulary scores significantly improved after the use of YouTube animated videos. The pre-test results indicated that most students had limited vocabulary knowledge, as reflected in the mean score of **73.13**. After six sessions of learning with YouTube animated videos, the mean score increased to **82.33**. The statistical analysis using the paired-sample t-test showed that the obtained *t*-count (5.36) was higher than the *t*-table value (2.145) at a 0.05 significance level, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. This finding suggests that YouTube animated videos had a positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery.

The improvement can be attributed to the rich contextual and multimodal features of the animated videos. According to Mayer's (2001) *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning*, learners acquire knowledge more effectively when information is presented through both visual and auditory channels. The combination of pictures, sounds, dialogues, and movements in the YouTube videos allowed students to process meaning simultaneously through sight and hearing, which helped them retain new words more effectively. Moreover, the repetition of vocabulary throughout the videos, such as repeated use of words like *run*, *jump*, *apple*, or *blue*,

provided students with multiple exposures to the same target words. This repetition strengthened memory recall and word retention.

In addition, the videos presented vocabulary in meaningful and contextual situations, helping students understand how the words function within sentences or everyday settings rather than as isolated items. For instance, when learning about *colors* through the "Pinkfong Colors for Kids" video, students not only heard color names but also saw objects representing each color, such as "red apple" or "blue car." This contextualized input enabled them to connect vocabulary with real-world meaning, which supports long-term comprehension. Furthermore, the use of cheerful music, colorful animation, and relatable characters created a fun and low-anxiety learning atmosphere**,** which encouraged students to participate actively and enjoy the learning process.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Test	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Pre-Test	73.13	20.61	Fair
Post-Test	82.33	19.41	Good

Effect on Students' Motivation

The qualitative findings from classroom observations and interviews also revealed that YouTube animated videos significantly enhanced students' motivation in learning English. During lessons that incorporated animated videos, students were more enthusiastic, attentive, and eager to participate. They frequently repeated vocabulary words, sang along, and answered comprehension questions confidently. Observation notes indicated that students displayed greater focus and enjoyment compared to traditional lessons without videos.

The interview results supported these findings, showing that students perceived the use of animated videos as "fun," "interesting," and "easy to understand." Many expressed excitement about watching familiar animated characters while learning English words in context. The presence of visual storytelling helped sustain their attention, while simple and repetitive dialogues allowed them to feel confident in pronouncing and using new vocabulary. This aligns with Keller's (1987) *ARCS Model of Motivation*, which emphasizes that effective instructional materials should attract Attention, establish Relevance, build Confidence, and create Satisfaction. The visual appeal and engaging narratives of the animated videos captured students' attention, while the repetitive exposure to vocabulary provided a sense of mastery and satisfaction after each lesson.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that YouTube animated videos not only facilitate vocabulary improvement but also foster a positive emotional response toward learning. The combination of visual stimulation, repetition, contextual learning, and enjoyable interaction made the lessons more engaging and meaningful for the students. Thus, integrating YouTube animated videos into English language instruction can effectively support both the cognitive aspect (vocabulary acquisition) and the affective aspect (learning motivation) of language learning, especially among young learners in elementary school settings.

Table 2. Students' Motivation Scores Based on the Scoring Rubric

No	Student	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Category
1	MP	2	2	2	2	8	High
2	FAM	2	2	2	2	8	High
3	AR	2	2	2	2	8	High
4	RBY	1	2	2	1	6	Moderate
5	AI	1	1	1	1	4	Low

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study confirm that YouTube animated videos significantly and positively enhance students' vocabulary development and motivation in learning English at SDN 26 Palu, as shown by the increase in students' mean scores from 73.13 in the pre-test to 82.33 in the post-test, with a t-count of 5.36 surpassing the t-table value of 2.145 at the 0.05 significance level. This improvement is attributed to the videos' multimodal features—visuals,

audio, repetition, and contextual storytelling—which help students recognize, recall, and apply new vocabulary more effectively. Qualitative data from interviews and observations also revealed higher motivation, enthusiasm, confidence, and participation among students, aligning with Keller's ARCS Model of Motivation that emphasizes attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction in learning. Overall, YouTube animated videos support both cognitive and affective aspects of learning by providing meaningful vocabulary input and creating a positive, low-anxiety learning environment. These results suggest that English teachers should incorporate multimedia tools into instruction, carefully selecting age-appropriate and contextually relevant videos and designing pre-, while-, and post-viewing activities. Schools are encouraged to provide adequate technological support to ensure successful implementation. Future research should investigate long-term effects on other language skills and involve larger samples or extended treatment periods to enhance the generalizability of findings.

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