

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the research, research problems, objectives of the research, research hypothesis, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Research

In today's era of digital education, the integration of technology into the learning process has become essential for creating effective, interactive, and engaging learning environments. English, as an international language, holds a vital position in Indonesia's education system, especially at the junior high school level. Among the key aspects of learning English, vocabulary mastery is one of the most crucial elements. Without sufficient vocabulary, students face difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and communicating in both spoken and written forms. As Wilkins famously states, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This shows that vocabulary is the core of language proficiency.¹

In the Indonesian EFL context, many junior high school students still struggle with vocabulary acquisition despite learning English for several years. They often find it difficult to remember new words, understand their meanings in context, and use them appropriately in communication. This problem can be linked to the teaching methods commonly used in the

¹ Sakır, "The Use of Digital Storytelling in Early Childhood Education. (2019)"

classroom. Traditional techniques such as rote memorization, copying word lists, and relying heavily on dictionaries tend to be monotonous and less engaging. These approaches usually focus on form rather than context, so students may quickly forget the words they have learned and lose motivation to study English.

In line with this issue, Nation emphasizes that vocabulary learning should be supported by meaningful exposure and repeated use in various contexts so that learners can store and retrieve words more easily. Similarly, Harmer points out that students are more likely to remember new vocabulary when it is taught through interesting, relevant, and enjoyable activities rather than through mechanical memorization. These ideas highlight the need for more innovative and student-centered media in vocabulary instruction.

The rapid development of information and communication technology offers great potential to overcome these challenges. Digital learning media, especially online videos and storytelling platforms, provide rich input combining visual, auditory, and textual elements. Through these media, students can see and hear vocabulary used in authentic or semi-authentic situations, supported by images, animations, and narratives that make the learning process more meaningful and enjoyable. When technology is integrated thoughtfully into vocabulary

instruction, it can help increase students' attention, motivation, and retention of new words.²

Therefore, it is important to explore the use of innovative digital media as an alternative to traditional vocabulary teaching methods in junior high schools. By providing contextual, enjoyable, and technology-based exposure to English, teachers are expected to help students improve their vocabulary mastery and, consequently, their overall English proficiency.

YouTube has emerged as one of the most popular and influential digital platforms for language learning. It provides a wide range of audio-visual materials that can help students understand vocabulary in real contexts.³ found that the use of YouTube videos significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery in EFL classrooms.⁴ Similarly, a study conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that multimedia-based instruction through YouTube had a positive effect on students' vocabulary acquisition, especially with the support of visual and contextual cues.⁵

However, when observing the actual conditions in the field, the researcher encountered more complex and specific problems regarding students' vocabulary mastery. During preliminary observations, it was found that the main issue is not just a lack of word count, but the students'

² Fitria, *(ELT): Engaging Learners Through Multimedia*. (2020)

³ Heriyanto, "The Effectiveness of Using Youtube for Vocabulary Mastery (2021)."

⁴ Suardi, *Students' Interest in Learning English Vocabulary for Engineering by Using YouTube*. (2021)

⁵ Almurashi, *The Effective Use of YOUTUBE Videos for Teaching English Language in Classrooms as Supplementary Material at TAIBAH UNIVERSITY IN ALULA*. (2022)

inability to retain and apply vocabulary productively. Students frequently experience "passive-only recognition," where they might recognize a word when reading it in a simple text, but completely fail to recall its meaning, spelling, or proper usage when asked to write or speak. Furthermore, a major problem encountered among the students is low motivation and high anxiety when dealing with English texts. Students often feel overwhelmed by long paragraphs because they cannot guess the meaning of unfamiliar words contextually, leading to a quick loss of interest during the lesson.

One type of instructional video that is particularly beneficial is digital storytelling. The Fable Cottage YouTube channel provides bilingual fairy tales designed for language learners, combining storytelling, visuals, and native-language support to facilitate comprehension. Digital storytelling enables students to associate new vocabulary with images, sounds, and emotions, thus improving retention and contextual understanding.⁶ confirmed that digital storytelling positively influences young learners' vocabulary development. Additionally, emphasized that storytelling is more effective and memorable compared to traditional instructional materials.

In relation to this digital transition, MTsN 1 Tulungagung was specifically chosen as the research site for several compelling reasons. First, MTsN 1 Tulungagung is one of the leading and favorite Islamic junior high schools in the region, known for its excellent digital classroom

⁶ Belda-Medina and Goddard, "The Effect of Digital Storytelling on English Vocabulary Learning in Inclusive and Diverse Education." (2021)

facilities, stable internet access, and support for technology-integrated learning. However, despite having advanced digital infrastructure and having implemented the "Kurikulum Merdeka" (which encourages independent, digital-based learning), there is a noticeable gap between the available technology and students' actual language outcomes. The researcher discovered that many eighth-grade students at this school independently consume digital audio-visual content outside the classroom, particularly through platforms like YouTube. Yet, this high digital screen time has not been formally observed or analyzed to see whether it correlates directly with their academic language proficiency, specifically their vocabulary mastery. Therefore, conducting the study at MTsN 1 Tulungagung provides a perfect, data-rich context to investigate whether students' independent digital habits actually support their formal vocabulary acquisition.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the research, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. Is there a significant correlation between students' watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung?

C. Objective of the Research

Based on the problem formulation above, the objectives of this research are:

2. To find out whether there is a significant correlation between students' watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.

D. Research Hypothesis

Based on the research problem, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

a. Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant correlation between students' watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.

b. Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant correlation between students' watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung.

E. Significance of the Research

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions:

3. Theoretical Significance

The result of this study is expected to contribute to the existing literature on the use of digital media in language learning, especially YouTube-based storytelling. It may provide empirical evidence on how watching Fable Cottage fairy tales affects students' vocabulary learning outcomes.

4. Practical Significance

This study is expected to provide several practical benefits for teachers, students, schools, and future researchers. For teachers, the

findings of this research may help English teachers discover alternative and innovative media for teaching vocabulary through YouTube storytelling. By utilizing engaging visual and auditory materials such as Fable Cottage fairy tales, teachers can create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere that encourages students to understand and retain new vocabulary more effectively. For students, this study can serve as motivation to use online educational resources, particularly Fable Cottage YouTube videos, as an enjoyable and meaningful way to learn English vocabulary. Watching fairy tales allows students to learn new words within real and contextual stories, helping them improve their comprehension and language skills naturally. For schools, the results of this research may encourage administrators and curriculum developers to integrate multimedia and digital storytelling into English lessons. Such integration can foster a more engaging and student-centered learning environment, which aligns with the goals of modern education and the Merdeka Curriculum. Finally, for future researchers, this study can serve as a valuable reference for conducting further investigations related to the use of YouTube or other digital storytelling platforms in language education. It can inspire additional research on how technology-based learning media influence various aspects of language proficiency, such as listening, speaking, or writing skills.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Research

5. Scope of the Research

This study focuses on investigating the correlation between students' watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and vocabulary mastery among eighth grade students at MTsN 1 Tulungagung. The research applies a quantitative correlational design to determine the relationship between the two variables.

6. Study Limitation

The study is limited to:

- a. One YouTube channel, namely Fable Cottage, as the learning media.
- b. Vocabulary mastery as the dependent variable, without analyzing other aspects of language such as grammar, speaking, or writing.
- c. A single school setting (MTsN 1 Tulungagung) with a limited number of participants, which may not represent the broader population.

G. Definition of Key Terms

7. Fable Cottage YouTube Fairy Tales

A YouTube channel that provides bilingual fairy tales designed for English language learners. These videos use both English and students' native language to enhance comprehension and vocabulary learning.

8. Watching

The act of viewing and listening to Fable Cottage videos with the purpose of understanding the story and learning new vocabulary through visual and auditory elements.

9. Vocabulary Mastery

The students' actual competence and proficiency in understanding and identifying English vocabulary, specifically the words embedded in the Fable Cottage fairy tale videos. The students' ability to understand, remember, and use English words appropriately in context, including knowledge of word meaning, pronunciation, and usage.

10. Correlation

A statistical relationship between two variables. In this study, correlation refers to the relationship students' between watching Fable Cottage YouTube fairy tales and students' vocabulary mastery.

11. Habit

An acquired behavior pattern followed regularly and automatically until it becomes almost involuntary. In the context of this study, habit refers to the students' regular, repetitive, and consistent behavior in watching fairy tale videos on the Fable Cottage YouTube channel.