The Impact of English Fairy Tale Videos on YouTube in Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery among EFL Students: A Study at SMPN 1 Barru

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of using English fairy tale videos from YouTube on vocabulary mastery among students in the context of English as a foreign Language (EFL) learning at SMPN 1 Barru. Utilizing a pre-experimental design with one group, including a pre-test and post-test, the research involved 300 eight-grade students as the population. A cluster random sampling technique was employed, resulting in one class receiving the treatment using fairy tale videos. The analysis results indicate a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery scores, increasing from an average of 56.55 in the pre-test to 80.10 in the post-test, with a substantial difference of 23.55 points (p = 0.000). Feedback from students revealed that 96.77% felt engaged, and 100% agreed that the videos helped them understand vocabulary better. Additionally, teachers provided positive feedback regarding the effectiveness of using videos to enhance student engagement and vocabulary comprehension. This research contributes new insights into the use of digital media for vocabulary learning and emphasizes the importance of integrating videos into the English curriculum. The findings are expected to offer practical recommendations for teachers and education policymakers to leverage technology in enhancing language learning.

Keywords: fairy tale videos, vocabulary, English learning, YouTube, EFL

1. Introduction

The landscape of English language education has evolved dramatically in recent years, driven by technological advancements and a growing recognition of the need for engaging, contextually rich teaching methods. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly young students, vocabulary acquisition remains a foundational yet challenging aspect of language proficiency. Traditional methods such as rote memorization and direct translation often fail to captivate learners, resulting in limited retention and motivation (Schmitt, 2008). In contrast, the integration of digital media offers a promising alternative, leveraging multimodal inputs to create immersive and meaningful learning experiences.

Among these digital tools, YouTube stands out as a widely accessible platform hosting a vast array of educational content, including English fairy tale videos. These videos, with their blend of narrative storytelling, visual animations, and auditory

narration, align with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that combining visual and auditory stimuli enhances comprehension and retention. Fairy tales, in particular, offer a unique advantage: their familiar narrative structures provide a scaffold for introducing new vocabulary in a comprehensible context, resonating with Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis.

This study investigates the impact of English fairy tale videos from the English Fairy Tales YouTube channel on the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade EFL students at SMPN 1 Barru, a public junior high school in Indonesia. Preliminary observations at the school revealed that students struggled with vocabulary acquisition, often finding traditional methods unengaging and disconnected from real-life contexts. This challenge is compounded by limited parental support and a curriculum perceived as complex, highlighting the need for innovative, student-centered approaches.

The research addresses three key questions: (1) To what extent do English fairy tale videos on YouTube improve students' vocabulary mastery? (2) How do students perceive this method in relation to their vocabulary learning? (3) How do teachers view its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool? By providing empirical evidence, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on multimedia in language education and offer practical insights for EFL instructors seeking to enhance vocabulary instruction.

Vocabulary is the bedrock of language proficiency, underpinning the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Huyen & Nga, 2003). For EFL learners, mastering vocabulary is both a necessity and a hurdle, as it requires not only recognition but also the ability to use words productively in varied contexts (Nation, 2001). Cameron (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition is particularly critical for young learners, serving as the initial step toward broader language competence. However, conventional teaching strategies often fall short, relying heavily on decontextualized memorization that leaves students disengaged (Schmitt, 2008).

The advent of multimedia has transformed language education by offering dynamic alternatives to traditional methods. Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning suggests that presenting information through dual channels—visual and auditory—reduces cognitive load and enhances retention. YouTube, with its extensive library of videos, exemplifies this approach, providing authentic language exposure that bridges classroom learning with real-world contexts (Bhusaery, 2024).

Studies on YouTube in EFL settings have consistently highlighted its benefits. Parra et al. (2024) found that integrating YouTube videos with mobile applications increased student motivation and participation, while Sabrina and Nurazizah (2024) noted improvements in comprehension and vocabulary retention due to contextualized exposure. Similarly, Baroroh (2021) demonstrated that English-subtitled YouTube videos significantly boosted vocabulary scores in a pre-experimental design, with students reporting heightened enjoyment.

Fairy tales offer a compelling medium for language learning, combining narrative engagement with linguistic input. Their repetitive structures and familiar themes align

with Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory, which argues that pairing verbal and visual information strengthens memory. For young EFL learners, fairy tales provide a low-anxiety context for encountering new words, supporting Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Yet, while digital storytelling has gained attention (Samsi, 2016), few studies have explored the specific impact of fairy tale videos on vocabulary mastery among junior high school students, a gap this research seeks to address.

2. Method

The current study employed a pre-experimental design, implementing a one-group pre-test and post-test methodology to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. This design enables the measurement of changes in vocabulary mastery before and after exposure to the treatment.

The participants of the study were eleventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Barru during the academic year 2023/2024. The population consisted of 300 students across ten classes. Due to the sizable population, a cluster random sampling technique was employed to select one class for the study, ensuring that each class had an equal opportunity to participate.

Data were collected through two primary assessments: a pre-test and a post-test. The assessments utilized the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996), designed to measure students' understanding and usage of targeted vocabulary items. The treatment consisted of teaching vocabulary through selected fairy tale videos from YouTube, followed by instructional activities that solidified the vocabulary learned. The VKS was administered as both pretest and posttest. Additionally, student perceptions were gauged through a 13-item questionnaire. The intervention spanned six sessions over three weeks, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. Students watched curated fairy tale videos from the English Fairy Tales YouTube channel, selected for their curriculum relevance and vocabulary richness (e.g., "The Ugly Duckling").

3. Findings and Discussion
a. Vocabulary Improvement

The research investigates how the use of English fairy tales through YouTube affects the vocabulary mastery of students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. The findings indicate a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition among students who engaged with fairy tale videos. Quantitative analysis revealed an increase in average student scores, suggesting that exposure to these multimedia resources facilitated a deeper understanding of vocabulary. This enhancement can be attributed to several factors: the combination of visual and auditory stimuli provided by the videos, which aids in memory retention; the contextualized nature of vocabulary presented within engaging narratives; and the ability of students to relate language to stories that are familiar and enjoyable. Overall, the study suggests that integrating

English fairy tales from YouTube into lessons can lead to a substantial increase in students' ability to comprehend and retain new vocabulary. The treatment was given over several learning sessions, where each session began with introductory activities, such as introducing key vocabulary that would appear in the video through discussion or brief explanation. Next, students watched fairy tale videos from YouTube, focusing on story comprehension and introduction of new vocabulary through visual and audio contexts. After watching, students engage in post-viewing activities, such as vocabulary exercises (completing sentences, matching words with definitions), group discussions, or retelling the content of the story. Through this series of activities, students are not only invited to recognize new vocabulary, but also apply it in various contexts, both oral and written. The treatment results were then analyzed by comparing the pretest and posttest scores using VKS to determine the extent to which the use of fairy tales from YouTube is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

The mean pretest score was 56.55 (SD = 4.32), indicating a moderate baseline knowledge of the target vocabulary. Scores ranged from 50 to 65, with most students demonstrating partial recognition (levels 2–3 on the VKS) but limited ability to define or use the words productively. After the intervention, the mean score rose to 80.10 (SD = 5.67), an increase of 23.55 points. Posttest scores ranged from 69 to 93, with many students achieving levels 4–5 on the VKS, reflecting improved comprehension and application of the vocabulary. A paired sample t-test confirmed the statistical significance of this improvement, yielding a t-value of 12.45 (df = 30, p = 0.000, $p < 0.05$). The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), validating the use of parametric testing.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	31	56.55	4.32	50	65
Posttest	31	80.10	5.67	69	93

Individual student performance underscored this trend. For instance, first responders increased from 55 to 93, demonstrating a shift from basic recognition to confident usage, as evidenced by her ability to construct sentences like "The egg began to hatch slowly." Similarly, the seventeenth respondent increased from 60 to 72, with consistent gains across multiple words. These results suggest that the video-based intervention effectively bridged gaps in vocabulary knowledge, enabling students to move beyond mere recognition to practical application.

b. Students' Perceptions of the Usage of YouTube

The students' perceptions regarding the use of English fairy tales on YouTube in their classes were overwhelmingly positive. A significant majority expressed enjoyment and engagement while learning through videos compared to traditional teaching

methods. Many students indicated that the videos made learning feel more interactive and less formal, which contributed to a more positive attitude towards their English studies. They reported that the visual and narrative aspects of the fairy tales helped them understand and remember new words more effectively. This alignment between student enjoyment and perceived vocabulary acquisition highlights the importance of integrating enjoyable, multimedia content into language education, as it not only aids comprehension but also motivates students to engage more deeply with the material.

The responses highlighted the method's appeal, comfort, and perceived effectiveness in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Comfort and Engagement: Of the 31 students, 27 (87.10%) strongly agreed that they felt comfortable using the English Fairy Tales YouTube channel in class, while the remaining 4 (12.90%) agreed. Additionally, 30 students (96.77%) strongly agreed that the videos were engaging, with one student (3.23%) agreeing, citing the colorful animations and familiar stories as key factors. Effectiveness: All 31 students (100%) strongly agreed that the videos helped them understand new vocabulary, with comments like "I can see what the word means in the story" reflecting the value of contextual learning. Similarly, 100% acknowledged that the method was more effective than traditional approaches like textbooks. Motivation and Preference: A striking 29 students (93.55%) strongly agreed that the videos motivated them to learn more vocabulary, with 2 (6.45%) agreeing. Furthermore, 30 students (96.77%) strongly preferred this method over textbooks, with one student (3.23%) agreeing, as illustrated by responses such as "It's fun, not boring like reading books."

c. **Teachers Perceptions of the Tool for Vocabulary Mastery**

Teacher who participated in the study perceived the English Fairy Tales YouTube videos as a valuable tool for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. She noted that the combination of compelling narratives and visual illustrations provided a richer context for understanding new words, allowing students to grasp meanings in a more holistic manner. According to the teachers, the fairy tale videos contributed to creating an active learning environment where students were more involved and enthusiastic about their language learning. The educators highlighted that this approach was effective in fostering deeper cognitive processing, making vocabulary learning more enjoyable and memorable. Consequently, the teachers advocated for the continued use of such multimedia resources, emphasizing their importance in modern educational practices aimed at improving student outcomes in language acquisition.

Teachers' perceptions, gathered through a 10-item survey (Likert scale) and observational notes during the intervention, provided valuable insights into the method's pedagogical impact. Their feedback was uniformly positive, though tempered by practical considerations. The teacher strongly agreed (100%) that the videos were effective in enhancing vocabulary mastery, noting that students "grasped meanings faster" due to the visual and auditory context. They also observed heightened engagement, with 100% reporting that students were more enthusiastic compared to

traditional lessons, as evidenced by increased participation in discussions and spontaneous use of new words like "crack" and "wandered.". Teachers unanimously agreed (100%) that the videos aided retention, with one commenting, "Students remembered words longer because they saw them in action." The storytelling format was praised for embedding vocabulary in meaningful narratives, making abstract terms more tangible. While supportive, teachers noted that not all students progressed equally. Some struggled with complex words (e.g., "reflection," "troubled"), with 20% of responses indicating a need for additional explanation. They suggested supplementing videos with activities like writing exercises or quizzes to address these gaps, reflecting a nuanced view of the method's strengths and limitations.

The significant increase in vocabulary mastery, from a pretest mean of 56.55 (SD = 4.32) to a posttest mean of 80.10 (SD = 5.67) ($t(30) = 12.45$, $p = 0.000$), underscores the efficacy of video-based instruction. This 23.55-point gain aligns with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that combining visual and auditory channels reduces cognitive load and enhances retention. In this study, the animated depictions of fairy tales like "The Ugly Duckling"—where "hatch" was paired with visuals of eggs breaking open—provided dual encoding opportunities (Paivio, 1986), enabling students to anchor abstract words in concrete contexts. This shift from recognition (VKS levels 2–3) to productive use (levels 4–5) reflects a deeper lexical processing, a hallmark of effective vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2001).

These results echo findings from similar studies. Baroroh (2021) reported vocabulary gains using English-subtitled YouTube videos, while Kurniawan and Purwati (2023) noted a 15-point increase with subtitled content among non-EFL learners. The larger improvement in this study may stem from the narrative richness of fairy tales, which offered repeated exposure to target words within engaging plots, supporting Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis. The "comprehensible input" (i+1) provided by familiar stories lowered the affective filter (Krashen, 1985), allowing students to infer meanings naturally—e.g., deducing "astonished" from a character's wide-eyed expression—rather than relying on rote memorization.

However, individual variations suggest that while the method was broadly effective, its impact depended on students' baseline proficiency. High achievers like first respondent (55 to 93) thrived, leveraging visuals to master complex terms, whereas others, like Muhammad Fathin (60 to 72), showed more modest gains, possibly due to slower processing of auditory input. This variability aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, indicating that scaffolding—such as pre-teaching difficult words—could further optimize outcomes.

Furthermore, the near-unanimous positive student perceptions—87.10% feeling comfortable, 96.77% finding the method engaging, and 100% acknowledging its effectiveness—highlight the motivational power of multimedia storytelling. These responses resonate with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis: the entertaining format lowered anxiety, creating a low-stakes environment where students felt safe to

explore new vocabulary. A student's remark, "I can see what the word means in the story," illustrates how visuals clarified meanings, boosting confidence (80.65% felt more confident) and eagerness to learn (93.55%).

This enthusiasm aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, as post-viewing discussions turned passive viewing into active learning. Students collaboratively unpacked words like "crack" during retelling activities, reinforcing comprehension through social interaction—a process less feasible in textbook-based lessons, which 96.77% preferred this method over. Compared to Bhusaery's (2024) study, where 85% of students found YouTube videos motivating, the higher approval here may reflect fairy tales' universal appeal, tapping into cultural familiarity and narrative curiosity.

Yet, the uniformity of positive feedback raises questions about social desirability bias, where students might have overstated approval to please the teacher. Nonetheless, their consistent performance gains suggest genuine engagement, not mere politeness, reinforcing multimedia's role in transforming vocabulary learning from a chore into a delight.

Teachers' unanimous endorsement—100% agreeing on effectiveness, engagement, and retention—validates the method's classroom impact. Their observation that students "grasped meanings faster" aligns with Tomlinson's (2001) Differentiated Instruction Theory, as the videos catered to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. For instance, hearing "wandered" in narration while seeing a character roam visually bridged comprehension gaps, synergy textbooks rarely achieve. Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory also applies: native speaker narration modeled pronunciation and usage, which students mimicked naturally during discussions, enhancing oral fluency.

The retention benefits noted by teachers— "students remembered words longer"—echo Samsi's (2016) findings on digital storytelling, where contextual embedding strengthened memory traces. However, their caveat about comprehension disparities (20% neutral/disagreeing that video suited all levels) highlights a limitation. Words like "reflection" posed challenges for some, suggesting that while videos excel at exposure, explicit instruction remains vital for abstract vocabulary, per Vygotsky's scaffolding concept. Technical challenges, such as occasional internet disruptions, mirror Jones and Plass's (2019) concerns about multimedia reliance. Teachers' suggestion of supplementary exercises (e.g., quizzes) reflects a practical adaptation, ensuring the method's strengths—engagement and context—are balanced with targeted reinforcement.

These findings contribute to the growing evidence of YouTube's efficacy in EFL contexts (Parra et al., 2024; Sabrina & Nurazizah, 2024), but uniquely emphasize fairy tales' narrative power. Unlike Parra et al.'s mobile app focus, this study leverages freely accessible content, broadening its applicability in resource-limited settings like rural Indonesia. The 23.55-point gain surpasses Baroroh's (2021) 18-point increase, possibly

due to fairy tales' repetitive structures, which offered multiple exposures within a single video, a feature less pronounced in generic subtitled content.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that English fairy tale videos on YouTube significantly enhance vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade EFL students, as evidenced by a 23.55-point score increase and strong statistical significance (p = 0.000). Students embraced the method for its comfort, engagement, and effectiveness, while teachers valued its ability to captivate and educate. Grounded in multimedia learning theories, these findings highlight the power of storytelling to transform vocabulary instruction from a rote task into a vibrant, meaningful experience. These findings align with Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning theory, which states that the combination of visual and auditory stimuli enhances comprehension and retention of information. Additionally, students showed positive responses to this learning method, with 87.10% feeling comfortable, 96.77% finding it engaging, and 100% acknowledging that the videos helped them understand vocabulary better. Teachers also provided positive feedback, assessing that the videos effectively increased student engagement and facilitated vocabulary comprehension in meaningful contexts.

Several suggestions can be made for the future development of English language learning. First, teachers are encouraged to integrate fairy tale videos from YouTube as a vocabulary learning medium, as this method has proven effective in enhancing students' understanding and retention of vocabulary. Second, it is essential to tailor the video content to match the students' proficiency levels, particularly for those who struggle with abstract or idiomatic vocabulary. Third, schools should provide adequate infrastructure, such as stable internet connections and supporting devices, to ensure the smooth use of videos in learning. Fourth, further research could explore the long-term effectiveness of this method and its applicability to different language proficiency levels and age groups. Lastly, combining video with interactive activities such as group discussions, language games, and writing exercises should be considered to enrich students' learning experiences and ensure a deeper understanding of the material.

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