

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance.

A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary learning is one of the essential foundations of children's language development. A well-developed vocabulary contributes to a child's ability to communicate effectively, understand text, and achieve academically later in life. Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to language proficiency, as it facilitates the understanding of more complex texts and concepts as children get older (Kucan et al., 2013). According to Beck et al. (2002), good vocabulary development can improve understanding of more complex concepts, which is essential for children's learning process at an early age. Introducing English to children early on can help them stay ahead of their peers. Vocabulary can be introduced to children through engaging media that make learning enjoyable, so the words stay in their memory and can be used in daily life. One effective method is to use audio-visual media, such as animated videos with songs.

In today's digital era, technology supports language learning through interactive visuals and sounds. Children start learning English as a second language early in life (Shanahan et al., 2017), gradually recognizing and using new words. Even when they don't fully understand a term, tone, gestures, and facial expressions help them grasp meaning. Through this understanding, they naturally learn new words and concepts. Therefore, vocabulary can be taught using fun, visual media such as pictures or videos. With technological advances, many digital platforms now support this process. YouTube, in particular, has become an effective and engaging tool for teaching English vocabulary to children.

A noticeable phenomenon has emerged regarding the use of YouTube among young learners. In the researcher's relative's neighborhood in Tasikmalaya, a five-year-old child demonstrated a remarkable improvement in English

vocabulary after consistently watching Super JoJo videos on YouTube. This “remarkable improvement” refers to a significant and observable increase in the child’s ability not only to recognize but also to recall and actively use English vocabulary beyond what is typically expected for children of the same age, especially in a non-English-speaking environment. The child was able to recall and use basic English words such as apple, cat, and car, as well as simple phrases like let’s go. This suggests that repeated exposure to engaging audio-visual content can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition. The case highlights how digital media, particularly YouTube Kids, can serve as an effective tool for supporting early English language learning, especially in contexts where children have limited access to English exposure in their daily environment. This phenomenon has caught the researcher’s interest in exploring Super JoJo as a potential medium for vocabulary learning among young learners. In today’s digital era, the widespread use of YouTube among children highlights the urgency of exploring its potential as an educational medium. As one of the most popular online platforms for young learners (Neumann & Herodotou, 2020), YouTube offers easy access and a wide variety of engaging content that naturally attracts children’s attention. This makes it an increasingly relevant tool for supporting early language learning. Among the numerous educational channels available, Super JoJo stands out for its effectiveness in introducing English vocabulary through animated visuals, lively characters, and rhythmic songs. Since music and visual stimuli significantly influence children’s cognitive and emotional development (Mullick et al., 2018), understanding how Super JoJo fosters vocabulary acquisition is crucial. Investigating this phenomenon is important not only to determine the educational value of digital media but also to address the growing need for accessible, appealing, and effective learning resources for early English language education.

Several studies have shown that YouTube can effectively support vocabulary learning in children. For instance, Hayati et al. (2021) investigated the use of the Cocomelon YouTube channel to introduce English vocabulary to children aged 4–6 in Tangerang. They found that children achieved an average recognition score of 87.7%. However, the study primarily focused on quantitative results and

did not explore vocabulary acquisition in depth. Similarly, Imran and Nasaruddin (2022) examined the effectiveness of YouTube Kids using a one-group pretest–posttest design and reported a significant improvement in children’s vocabulary scores. However, their research did not analyze how children internalized or responded to the vocabulary they learned. Another study by Hidayati and Syafriyadin (2023) explored students’ perceptions of YouTube as a vocabulary learning resource and found generally positive attitudes, but it focused only on older learners and did not directly observe early childhood learning processes.

These previous studies confirm that YouTube has great potential for enhancing children’s vocabulary learning. However, limited research has specifically examined the Super JoJo, particularly in the context of Indonesian young learners. Moreover, none of the studies have applied Nation’s (2001) theoretical framework of vocabulary learning to analyze how children acquire vocabulary through YouTube. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating how children learn vocabulary from Super JoJo videos based on Nation’s theory.

B. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher can conclude the formulation of the problems with the research question “How is Super JoJo used as a vocabulary learning media for young learner?”

C. Operational Definitions

1. Super JoJo

Super JoJo is a YouTube media that features educational animated videos specifically designed for young children. The Super JoJo presents English nursery rhymes and short stories with themes related to daily life, such as Wash My Hands, Time to Brush Your Teeth, Please and Thank You, My Good Table Manners, and The Colors Song. Each video combines songs, simple narratives, and engaging visuals to create an enjoyable learning experience. In this study, the English version of Super JoJo is used as the learning medium to observe how

repeated exposure to its content supports early childhood English vocabulary acquisition.

2. English Vocabulary Learning

In this study, English vocabulary learning is operationally defined as the measurable improvement in young children's ability to recognize, understand, and use English words and phrases after repeated exposure to videos from the Super Jojo on YouTube. This process reflects the integration of learning and acquisition, in which learning occurs through the mother's role as an informal teacher who provides explanations, repetition, and reinforcement, while acquisition occurs naturally as children absorb vocabulary by watching and imitating content. The integration of these processes is reflected in and includes children's ability to identify and remember new vocabulary introduced in the videos, demonstrate understanding of word meanings through appropriate responses or actions, and use the learned vocabulary in relevant contexts.

3. Young Learners

In this study, young learners refer to children who are in the early stages of acquiring a second language. Specifically, the participant is a 5-year-old child categorized as a very young learner (under 7 years old). This child regularly watches the Super JoJo on YouTube and serves as the case study subject to examine the impact of digital media on English vocabulary development.

D. Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate how the Super Jojo is used as a vocabulary-learning medium for young learner.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Use

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of English vocabulary learning theory by applying Nation's (2001) theory within the context of digital media use among young learners.

2. Practical Use

Practically, this research offers valuable implications for teachers and parents. For teachers, the findings can inform strategies for integrating audiovisual learning media, particularly YouTube videos, into lesson plans to make vocabulary learning more engaging and effective. For parents, this study highlights the practical value of using Super JoJo as an effective audio-visual medium for introducing and reinforcing children's English vocabulary at home. The findings suggest that when used purposefully and accompanied by simple parental guidance, Super JoJo videos can support vocabulary learning through repetition, engaging songs, and meaningful contexts that help children understand and use new words in everyday situations.

3. Empirical Use

Empirically, this research provides insight into the use of digital media, such as the Super JoJo YouTube, to introduce English vocabulary to children. It offers detailed evidence of how vocabulary acquisition occurs through audiovisual exposure, including the processes of imitation, meaning-making, and communicative use in real-life contexts. Furthermore, this study contributes to researchers by providing a contextualized understanding of how young learners interact with digital content in natural settings, particularly in environments with limited English exposure. The findings can serve as a reference for future researchers who aim to investigate similar topics, refine research designs, or explore the effectiveness of other digital learning media in early language acquisition.