



## The use of YouTube in children's vocabulary acquisition: a case study of 3 and 5-year-old children in Medan

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### ABSTRACT

Acquisition of a second language can be obtained through the influence of the environment or activities carried out continuously. This study will describe how the effect of viewing on social media YouTube affects the acquisition of a second language for a three-year-old and five-year-old girl. This study aims to analyze the differences between children aged 3 and 5 years in the acquisition of English vocabulary which is influenced by the child's habit of watching English videos on YouTube. This research is using a qualitative descriptive method. The data collection technique in this research is an interview with children's parents, which is in the form of a conversation between the speaker and the interlocutor where the researcher will ask several questions about vocabulary obtained via YouTube by children aged 3 and 5 years. These habits have an influence on vocabulary acquisition because there are differences in the repetition process of children's viewing. The research found that 3-year-olds can learn many English words and say them naturally by repeating and forming habits. The vocabulary results spoken by the subjects in this study were nouns, verbs, adjectives, phrases and simple sentences. On the other hand, 5-year-olds don't do as well because they watch both English and Indonesian videos, dividing their attention and leading to a lack of understanding and practice

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### INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition happens during the acquisition of the first language, also known as the mother tongue, which is sometimes referred to in English as the mother tongue. Language acquisition is the process of learning a second language, specifically English. Language acquisition is a complex and dynamic process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout the lifespan (Al-Harb, 2020). It involves the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, as well as the ability to use language for communication and social interaction. The process of language acquisition is influenced by a range of factors, including biological, cognitive, social, and environmental factors (Chomsky, 1974). Language acquisition in early childhood has focused on understanding the mechanisms and processes involved in language development, as well as the factors that influence language acquisition (Snow, 1978).

Early childhood English learning is a process of introducing foreign languages to children, consisting of several language components that are part of the language program. Generally, the language components consist of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Binarkaheni, 2019). For young children, early vocabulary development is critical. Most children acquire oral vocabulary through parents-children conversations, interactions with peers and siblings, and shared storybook readings (Beck et al., 2013).

Vocabulary acquisition is a foundational aspect of language development in early childhood. The ability to effectively acquire and retain new words and expressions is closely linked to children's overall language proficiency and communication skills. Given the potential influence of digital media on vocabulary acquisition, this research will specifically examine the types of YouTube channels that are most conducive to supporting and enhancing young children's vocabulary development.

The acquisition of vocabulary in second language acquisition (SLA) is a fundamental aspect of language learning, particularly in children (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is integral to language learning and effective communication. Children's English vocabulary acquisition, especially in the context of SLA, has been the focus of various studies, including those that explore the factors influencing children's acquisition of English vocabulary (Maulidya, 2019). Additionally, the use of digital platforms such as YouTube has been investigated in the context of vocabulary acquisition for children aged 3 years, highlighting the potential impact of social media and habit forming on vocabulary acquisition in SLA (Dewi & Anggraeni, 2023). Furthermore, optimizing vocabulary acquisition in SLA has been emphasized as a crucial element in maximizing language learning outcomes, with a focus on the need to study and utilize effective vocabulary acquisition techniques (Borawski, 2019). Therefore, the relationship between SLA and vocabulary acquisition in children is a significant area of research that has implications for language learning and educational programs.

In recent years, the increasing prevalence of digital media has led to a growing interest in the role of technology in language acquisition. Online platforms such as YouTube have become popular sources of educational content for young children, including content designed to support language development. Research has explored the potential of YouTube channels to enhance vocabulary acquisition in young children, as well as the specific characteristics of effective channels and content (Dewi & Anggraeni, 2023). YouTube is one of the most popular online applications for children (Neumann & Herodotou, 2020). Children can use YouTube to increase their language learning opportunities. Furthermore, YouTube is a great social media platform that helps worldwide education (Alhamami, 2013; Lin et al., 2009). Children can learn English by watching stories, music, or YouTube videos. Only a few studies have looked into the effectiveness of YouTube in helping children learn languages.

## **METHODS**

This research is using a qualitative descriptive method. The data collection technique in this research is an interview with children's parents, which is in the form of a conversation between the speaker and the interlocutor where the researcher will ask

several questions about vocabulary obtained via YouTube by children aged 3 and 5 years. This research examines the differences in the influence of children's habits of watching English programs on YouTube: children aged 3 years and 5 years. The subjects of this research were a three years old girl named Zahra and a five years old girl named Adrena. These habits have an influence on vocabulary acquisition because there are differences in the repetition process of children's viewing. The researcher will explain how the subject shows the form of influence he gets from acquiring language vocabulary through the social media YouTube.

## FINDINGS

The results of observations from children who listen and watch to some YouTube channels, such as Coco Melon, Video clip Let it Go by Elsa Frozen, and Kids Diana Show. The interviews with children's parents are that the video content can help parents stimulate children's enthusiasm for language learning in an exciting way that is liked by children, namely through singing. The parents who played the video repeatedly could memorize some English vocabulary unconsciously for their children. This is a new beginning for the children in increasing their language and how to pronounce them. This research is to obtain data about YouTube videos for children based on English to help them acquire words. The results of the research data processing and description can show that vocabulary acquisition using YouTube video media can be seen. It is possible to see the influence of YouTube media on the acquisition of children's vocabulary ages 3 and 5.

The interview was conducted by asking the child's parents several questions regarding the child's understanding of English at the level of nouns, adjectives, verbs, phrases and simple sentences. A description of the acquisition of understanding can be seen in the table and explained in the description of the speech event. The subject gained understanding of English as a second language through the influence of watching videos on YouTube because the process or activity of watching videos on YouTube was carried out repeatedly, where the subject could watch the same show more than once in a day.

### Subject 1

Name : Dzafira Raysa Azzahra

Gender: Female

Age : 3 years old

**Table 1.** Table of Acquisition of English vocabulary ages 3 years old

No	Types of Vocab	Coco Melon	Let it go song	Kids Diana
1.	Noun	Cat Dog Elephant Monkey One Two Three Four Five Mom	Snow Queen Cold Frozen Ice	Doll Teddy bear One Two Three Four Five Cat Elephant Duck

No	Types of Vocab	Coco Melon	Let it go song	Kids Diana
		Dad Baby Ball Car Book Wheel Bus		Bunny Mom Dad Cake Ice cream Pizza Banana Car Bus Train Flower Sun Cloud Star
2.	Adjective			Red Blue Yellow Green Pink Dog
3.	Verb	Eat Sleep Play		Want Eat Sleep Play Go
4.	Phrase		Let it go	
5.	Sentence/ Expression	I want to eat Please		

#### **Interview data with children's parents 1**

E : *"Zabra suka nonton YouTube ya kak?"*

A : *"Iya suka"*

E : *"Biasanya zabra suka nonton YouTube apa kak?"*

A : *"Banyak sih dan paling sering nonton Youtube Berbahasa Inggris"*

E : *"Yang paling sering ditonton Zabra apa kak?"*

A : *"Ada Cocomelon, Lagu Let it go Elsa (frozen), Diana and Brother, dan banyak lag"*

E : *"Apa kata-kata yg sudah banyak diketahuinya?"*

A : *"Cukup banyak yg bisa diucapkan Adrena dalam Bahasa Inggris seperti kosa-kata bahasa inggris binatang, buah, warna, dan lain-lain."*

E : *"Apakah dia mengingat dan memahami makna video yg ia tonton?"*

A : “Iya dia mengingat dan memahami penggunaan kata-kata yang dia ucapkan. Dan dia juga secara spontan mengucapkan kosa-kata dalam bahasa inggris yg dia peroleh saat menonton video YouTube. Contohnya saat dia tiba-tiba nyanyi Let it go, lalu sat dia menyebutkan nama-nama warna dan binatang saat dia melihatnya, lalu saat dia ingin meminta makan dia spontan mengatakan ‘I want to eat’.

The results of the researcher's interviews with the child's parents showed that 3 years old children were able to acquire English vocabulary through YouTube videos and could pronounce the vocabulary spontaneously. This is influenced by the activity of watching YouTube videos which are repeated and stick in the child's memory so that the child can pronounce English vocabulary spontaneously.

In the snippet of conversation above, it can be understood that Zahra's favorite viewing is YouTube videos in English. Zahra watches the series on YouTube using English as her mother tongue. When researchers asked what content Zahra liked to watch the most, it was Cocomelon, Let it go song by Frozen, and Kids Diana. Followed by a question asked by the researcher, 'does he remember and understand the meaning of the words from the video he watched?'. The answer is yes, she can remember and mention the vocabulary she acquired spontaneously and she also knows the use of the vocabulary or sentences he conveys, for example when she suddenly sings the song 'Let it go', then when he mentions the names of names of ‘colors’ and ‘animals’ as he sees them. Then when he wanted to ask for food he spontaneously said 'I want to eat', this shows that he also understands the use of the words he is saying and knows the context of the sentence, this data can be seen in table 1.

Zahra pointed out that she used English as proof that she gained knowledge of English from the video because she did it repeatedly. This is in accordance with the behaviorist theory described in the introduction that language acquisition can occur due to habit or practice.

## Subject 2

Name : Azmeeya Adrena Tanjung

Gender: Female

Age : 5 years old

**Table 2.** Acquisition of English vocabulary ages 5 years old

No	Types of Vocabulary	Cocomelon	Kids Diana
1.	Noun	Cat Dog Elephant Monkey Tiger Panda Zebra Mom Dad Baby One Two	Tiger  Penguin  Monkey Spaghetti Pancakes Ice cream Butterfly Rainbow Stars

No	Types of Vocabulary	Cocomelon	Kids Diana
		Three... Ball Car Book Rainbow	
2.	Adjective		Purple Orange Brown Black
3.	Verb	Eat Sleep Play	Jump Dance Clap Play
4.	Phrase		
5.	Sentence / Expression	Hello Goodbye Please Thank you	

#### **Interview data with children's parents 2**

E : “Adrena suka nonton YouTube ya kak?”

A : “Iya suka”

E : “Biasanya zahra suka nonton YouTube apa kak?”

A : “Banyak sih, biasanya nonon video Youtube bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris”

E : “Apa video youtube yang paling sering ditonton Adrena kak?”

A : “ada Cocomelon dan Diana and Brother”

E : “Apa kata-kata yg sudah banyak diketahuinya?”

A : “Cukup banyak yg bisa diucapkan Adrena dalam Bahasa Inggris seperti kosa-kata bahasa inggris binatang, buah, warna, kata-kata hello, please dan lain-lain.”

E : “Apakah dia mengingat dan memahami makna video yg ia tonton?”

A : “Iya dia ingat dan memahaminya tapi dia sering mengatakannya saat ditanyakan saja dan tidak mengatakannya secara spontan. Saat ditanyakan bahasa inggris dari suatu warna atau binatang dia dapat menyebutkannya contohnya bahasa inggris ‘tiger’, ‘purple’ dan saat mengatakan ‘Hello’, ‘please’, ‘goodbye’ dan-lain-lain.”

The results of the researcher's interviews with the child's parents showed that 3 years old children were able to acquire English vocabulary through YouTube videos and could pronounce the vocabulary spontaneously. This is influenced by the activity of watching YouTube videos which are repeated and stick in the child's memory so that the child can pronounce English vocabulary spontaneously.

In the conversation excerpt above, it can be seen that Adrena watches YouTube videos in English which she likes, but she also watches YouTube videos in Indonesian according to her mother tongue (B1). This shows that he doesn't just focus on watching English-language YouTube. When researchers asked what content Adrena liked to watch the most, it turned out to be Cocomelon and Kids Diana. Followed by a question asked by the researcher, 'does he remember and understand the meaning of the words from the video he watched?'. The answer is yes, yes, he remembers and understands it, but he often says it when asked and doesn't say it in a moment. When asked in English for a color or animal, he can name it, for example in English 'tiger', 'purple' and when saying 'Hello', 'please', 'goodbye' etc. ", this data can be seen in table 2.

Adrena shows that she uses English as evidence that she gained knowledge of English from the video but she is not very spontaneous when speaking English because she does not do it repeatedly. This is also by the behaviorist theory explained in the introduction that language acquisition can occur due to habit or practice. This theory shows that Adrena is not too focused on watching English YouTube videos so that it influences her in acquiring the English vocabulary in the YouTube videos and she is not spontaneous in pronouncing the English vocabulary that she watches because of the English vocabulary. it doesn't really stick in his memory. This is because he does not focus on watching one YouTube video in English, but he also watches YouTube videos in Indonesian.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to interviews conducted with parents, the videos have a tremendous influence. It is also beneficial for children to understand basic vocabulary, such as the names of animals, fruits, colours, and others. Using audiovisual media in the form of animation media can increase a great sense of interest in learning and increase mastery of English vocabulary. Audio-visual-based media can stimulate children's understanding through stories with learning themes that are packaged as attractively as possible so that children can easily understand and want to watch the video. Moreover, animation media with songs is the process of creating motion effects. It can also be a change in the color of an object inside, animation media is also in the form of moving images and emitting sound projected through the projector lens. In this case, it is also explained that video is a communication tool to convey the information in a lesson.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on research analysis, it is shown that there is a difference in the language abilities of the two subjects between children aged 3 and 5 years in the acquisition of English which can be seen from their understanding of films and videos that are watched repeatedly. Mastery of a second language can also be seen in the subject's ability to mention vocabulary that often sees and hears when watching YouTube videos, such as saying the names of fruit and animals, as well as being able to say simple sentences in English. The results of this research show that 3 years old children can acquire a lot of English vocabulary and have the ability to spontaneously pronounce the English vocabulary they have acquired. She got this ability through repetition or habit. She watched a YouTube video in English repeatedly and continuously, giving rise to understanding, habits and application. The vocabulary results spoken by the subjects in

this study were nouns, verbs, adjectives, phrases and simple sentences. The subject's English language skills can be seen from his understanding of the spectacle she witnessed, she was able to name the objects he had watched and make phrases and sentences in English. Through music videos, subjects also gain the ability to sing using a second language. Meanwhile, 5 years old child's abilities are still less than a 3-year-old child's, this is due to his habit of watching YouTube videos in English and Indonesian so that his focus is divided, not just focusing on watching YouTube videos repeatedly and continuously, giving rise to a lack of understanding, habits and lack of application. Video-based social media widely used today, namely YouTube, greatly influences the acquisition of English studied in this research. YouTube has an important role in children's language acquisition. Children's language acquisition and learning can be studied through YouTube media, where the visuals and audio on YouTube are interesting and make it easier for children to acquire and remember language well. In this research, YouTube played a vital role in the knowledge of colors nouns and basic numerals in the children studied.

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