

Exploring the Role of Netflix Cartoon Movies in Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Rismayanti^{1*}, Yugi Diraga Prawiyata², Rini Fadhilah Putri³, Nurhafni Siregar⁴

¹⁻⁴English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah, Medan, Indonesia

Email: rismayanti@umnaw.ac.id¹, yugidiraga@umnaw.ac.id², rinfadhilah@umnaw.ac.id³, nurhafni.siregar@umnaw.ac.id⁴

*Corresponding Author: rismayanti@umnaw.ac.id

Abstract. This study aims to explore the role of Netflix cartoon movies in enhancing elementary school students' English vocabulary mastery. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving 5 fourth-grade students at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah, Deli Serdang Regency. Data were collected through three instruments: vocabulary tasks, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis used the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that Netflix cartoon movies positively contributed to students' vocabulary mastery, as evidenced by improved participation, comprehension, and ability to use vocabulary in simple contexts. Students responded positively to this medium, stating that learning became more enjoyable, interesting, and less boring compared to conventional memorization methods. These findings are supported by Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory, which explain that the combination of visual and auditory input in Netflix cartoon movies creates meaningful learning experiences for young learners. This study recommends the integration of Netflix cartoon movies as an innovative medium for vocabulary learning at the elementary school level.

Keywords: Audiovisual Media; Elementary School; English Language Learning; Netflix Cartoon Movies; Vocabulary Mastery.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as one of the most fundamental aspects of human communication. In the contemporary global era, English has established itself as the dominant international language utilized across education, technology, business, and cultural domains. Consequently, mastering English constitutes an essential skill that students must acquire from an early age. Among the four foundational language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary plays a pivotal role as the cornerstone of effective communication. Without adequate vocabulary, students encounter significant difficulties in expressing their ideas, comprehending others, and participating meaningfully in communicative interactions. In the Indonesian context, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). However, numerous students, particularly at the elementary level, continue to face substantial challenges in acquiring and retaining new vocabulary. Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah, it was found that students frequently struggle to remember basic English words. This problem is largely attributed to limited exposure to authentic English materials and the persistent reliance on traditional, teacher-centered pedagogical approaches. Rote memorization and textbook-based exercises often engender boredom and diminished motivation, causing students to perceive English as a difficult and

uninteresting subject. Consequently, there exists an urgent imperative for creative and innovative strategies to render vocabulary learning more engaging and meaningful for these young learners.

In the current digital age, technology has become an integral component of education. The rapid advancement of digital media provides educators with diverse resources that can render learning more interactive and stimulating. One of the most prominent platforms is Netflix, which offers an extensive array of cartoon movies specifically designed for children. Unlike traditional media, Netflix provides high-quality audiovisual input that facilitates students' understanding of new words naturally through contextual cues, vivid imagery, and clear auditory signals. Cartoon movies on Netflix present authentic language in real-life situations, enabling students to hear correct pronunciation and observe how words are employed in everyday conversations. The utilization of Netflix cartoon movies can also stimulate students' interest and motivation. The combination of animation, colorful visuals, and engaging characters transforms the learning process from a formal lesson into an enjoyable activity. When students become emotionally invested in a story, they exhibit greater focus and receptivity to the language being used. Moreover, the repetitive nature of cartoon dialogues reinforces vocabulary retention. Through consistent exposure to English in an entertaining format, students can unconsciously acquire new words and enhance their vocabulary mastery.

Furthermore, integrating Netflix cartoon movies into English lessons aligns with the concept of multimodal learning, wherein learners utilize both visual and auditory channels to process information. This approach is particularly effective for young learners who acquire language more effectively through pictures, sounds, and repetition rather than abstract explanations. By employing movies, teachers can create a natural and stress-free learning environment that supports both comprehension and engagement. Despite the evident benefits of digital media, its implementation at the elementary school level, particularly in rural or semi-urban areas such as Desa Tengah, continues to face various challenges. Many educators have not fully explored how subscription-based platforms like Netflix can be utilized to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world language use. Therefore, this research is crucial to bridge that gap by investigating the practical application of this media in vocabulary instruction. Recent studies have increasingly highlighted the potential of audiovisual media in language learning. Sitorus, Wariyati, Dalila, and Risnawaty (2026) conducted a study entitled "Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills Through Animation-Based Learning in EFL Classroom," which demonstrated that animation-based learning successfully improved students' speaking skills, classroom participation, confidence, and motivation. Their findings revealed that

students' average speaking scores increased significantly from 48.13 in the pre-action stage to 87.56 in Cycle II, with the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion rising from 10% to 90%.

While their study focused on speaking skills at the junior high school level, the principles of animation-based learning are equally applicable to vocabulary acquisition among elementary students. Sitorus et al. (2026) also contributed to the understanding of digital-assisted learning through their development of the DALNaz model, which integrates Project-Based Learning and Willingness to Communicate in enhancing Indonesian EFL students' intercultural communicative competence. These studies collectively underscore the transformative potential of digital and animation-based media in English language education. Building upon these foundations, this research aims to explore the role of Netflix cartoon movies in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah. This study focuses on understanding students' experiences, perceptions, and motivation when learning English vocabulary through watching Netflix cartoon movies. It is anticipated that the findings will provide valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of integrating digital media into English language teaching for young learners.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore how Netflix cartoon movies contribute to enhancing students' vocabulary mastery in a natural classroom setting. As stated by Creswell (2014), qualitative descriptive research focuses on describing social phenomena based on participants' real-life experiences without manipulating variables. The study was conducted at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah, Pantai Labu District, Deli Serdang Regency, during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Five fourth-grade students were selected through purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2017) because they were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding vocabulary learning through Netflix cartoon movies. Data were collected using three instruments: vocabulary tasks, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. The vocabulary tasks consisted of picture-word matching, word categorization, and contextual fill-in-the-blank activities administered after each viewing session to assess students' vocabulary acquisition. A 15-item closed-ended questionnaire using a three-point Likert scale with visual emoticons was distributed to identify students' engagement, comprehension, motivation, and perceptions of the learning media. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants to obtain deeper insights into their learning experiences. The research procedures included instrument preparation,

implementation of two learning sessions using selected Netflix cartoon movies, questionnaire administration, and interviews. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Relevant information from all instruments was selected, organized, and presented through descriptive narratives and thematic tables before drawing conclusions. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria were applied through triangulation of data sources, detailed descriptions of the research context, consistent research procedures, and confirmation that the findings were grounded in participants' responses rather than researcher bias.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The research was conducted over two meetings with 5 fourth-grade students at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah. Data were collected through vocabulary tasks, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The vocabulary tasks revealed a consistent improvement in students' vocabulary mastery across the two meetings. Table 1 summarizes the students' performance on the vocabulary tasks.

Table 1. Students' Vocabulary Task Scores.

Students	Meeting 1 score	Meeting 2 score	Improvement
S1	60	80	+20
S2	55	75	+20
S3	50	70	+20
S4	65	85	+20
S5	45	65	+20
Average	55.0	75.0	+20

The average score increased from 55.0 in the first meeting to 75.0 in the second meeting, indicating a 20-point improvement. Students demonstrated enhanced ability in picture-word matching, word categorization, and contextual fill-in-the-blank tasks. In the first meeting, students struggled to complete the tasks accurately, with many requiring teacher-assistance. By the second meeting, most students completed the tasks independently with greater accuracy. The questionnaire results revealed overwhelmingly positive responses toward the use of Netflix cartoon movies in vocabulary learning. All students (100%) agreed that Netflix cartoon movies made learning more interesting, helped them recognize vocabulary, and increased their motivation. Most students (80-100%) affirmed that the visual context and character pronunciation supported their comprehension. The interview results provided deeper insights into students' experiences. Five key themes emerged from the analysis: Theme 1: Enjoyment and Engagement, All students expressed enjoyment in learning through Netflix

cartoon movies. Student 2 stated, *"I enjoy it very much because it is like watching TV,"* while S4 expressed, *"I feel excited and happy."* The entertainment value of the medium was consistently highlighted. Theme 2: Ease of Vocabulary Understanding, Students reported that visual context facilitated vocabulary comprehension. S3 explained, *"I can see the meaning from the movie,"* and S5 noted, *"The pictures and the story help me understand."* This suggests that the multimodal nature of cartoons supports vocabulary acquisition. Theme 3: Vocabulary Retention, Students found it easier to remember vocabulary from movies compared to textbooks. S1 stated, *"I can remember new words from the story,"* and S4 added, *"I remember because the story is funny."* The repetitive and contextualized nature of dialogues contributed to retention. Theme 4: Preference Over Traditional Methods, Students expressed a strong preference for cartoon-based learning over conventional methods. S5 explicitly stated, *"I like it more than reading books,"* while S2 described it as more fun and less boring. Theme 5: Challenges Encountered, Despite overall positive experiences, some challenges were identified. S1 noted, *"Sometimes easy, sometimes a little difficult,"* and S3 acknowledged, *"Some words are new."* The speed of dialogue and unfamiliar vocabulary were identified as occasional obstacles. However, students managed these challenges through visual context and teacher guidance.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Netflix cartoon movies positively contribute to vocabulary mastery among elementary school students. The 20% average improvement in vocabulary task scores indicates that repeated exposure to authentic audiovisual input enhances vocabulary recognition, comprehension, and retention. This finding is consistent with Nation's (2001) assertion that vocabulary learning requires multiple exposures in varied contexts to achieve mastery. The questionnaire results confirm that students perceived Netflix cartoon movies as an effective and engaging medium. The unanimous agreement on statements regarding interest, motivation, and effectiveness underscores the strong appeal of this medium among young learners. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) motivation theory, which emphasizes that interest and enjoyment are crucial factors in sustaining language learning engagement. The interview findings further illuminate students' positive experiences. The themes of enjoyment, ease of understanding, vocabulary retention, and preference over traditional methods align with the theoretical framework of this study. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis explains that comprehensible input, such as that provided by Netflix cartoons, facilitates acquisition when learners understand messages through context. Mayer's (2009) Multimedia Learning Theory

supports this by explaining that dual-channel processing (visual and auditory) enhances comprehension and memory.

Comparatively, these findings corroborate previous research. Sitorus et al. (2026) demonstrated that animation-based learning significantly improved students' speaking skills and motivation, with average scores increasing from 48.13 to 87.56. Similarly, Rahmawati (2022) found that Netflix movies enhance vocabulary learning through authentic input and visual context. Ismaili (2013) confirmed that movies create realistic contexts that make vocabulary learning meaningful and enjoyable. The present study extends these findings by specifically focusing on elementary school students and employing qualitative methods to capture their experiences. The challenges identified by students-fast dialogue speed and unfamiliar vocabulary are consistent with findings by Arndt and Woore (2018), who noted that beginner learners may struggle with authentic materials. However, the visual support in cartoons mitigates this challenge, as students can infer meaning from context. Teacher guidance and repeated viewing further address these difficulties, suggesting the importance of scaffolding in multimedia-based learning. Overall, the findings confirm that integrating Netflix cartoon movies into vocabulary instruction creates a more enjoyable, meaningful, and effective learning experience. The medium's ability to combine entertainment with education (edutainment) makes it particularly suitable for young learners, supporting both cognitive and affective aspects of language learning.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of Netflix cartoon movies has a positive and significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery at SDN 107420 Desa Tengah. The use of audiovisual learning media, particularly cartoon movies, has proven to provide a more engaging, contextual, and meaningful learning experience for elementary school students in learning English as a foreign language. First, in terms of vocabulary mastery, the use of Netflix cartoon movies helps students recognize, understand, and use new vocabulary in simple contexts. Through the support of visual elements, audio input, and engaging storylines, students are able to connect the meaning of words with the situations presented in the movies. In addition, the repetition of vocabulary in the dialogues strengthens students' memory and retention of new words. This indicates that learning vocabulary through cartoon movies is more effective than traditional memorization methods. Second, in terms of students' perceptions and interest, the findings show that students have very positive responses toward the use of Netflix cartoon

movies as a learning medium. Students feel happier, more interested, and more motivated when learning through cartoon movies compared to conventional teaching methods. The more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere encourages students to become more active and reduces their anxiety in learning English.

Third, in terms of learning experiences, students have more enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful experiences during the learning process. They find it easier to understand and remember vocabulary because it is supported by visual representation and story context. However, some challenges are still encountered, such as the fast speed of dialogue and difficulties in understanding certain pronunciations. Nevertheless, these challenges can be addressed through teacher guidance, the use of subtitles, and repeated viewing. Overall, this study shows that Netflix cartoon movies can be used as an effective learning medium to enhance students' vocabulary mastery while also increasing their motivation and engagement in the English learning process. Therefore, this media can be considered as an innovative alternative strategy, especially for elementary school students. Based on the findings of this study, teachers are encouraged to integrate engaging audiovisual media, such as Netflix cartoon movies, into English vocabulary instruction to create a more interactive and motivating learning environment. Students are also encouraged to use English cartoon movies as supplementary learning resources to enrich their vocabulary through regular exposure. Schools are expected to support the integration of technology-based learning by providing adequate digital facilities and resources. Future researchers are recommended to investigate the use of Netflix cartoon movies with larger samples, different research designs, or by examining their impact on other English language skills, such as speaking and listening.

REFERENCES

- Aditi, B., Silaban, P., & Ronny, Y. (2023). *International Journal of Data and Network Science* The effect of social media and word of mouth on buying interest and brand image in creative eco-nomic business. 7, 225–234. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.11.001>
- Al-Dmour, H., Aloqaily, A., Al-Qaimari, R., & Al-Hassan, M. (2021). The effect of the electronic word of mouth on purchase intention via the brand image as a mediating factor: An empirical study. *International Journal of Networking and Virtual Organizations*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJNVO.2021.114732>
- alif.supriyatno. (2018). The effect of corporate social responsibility on word of mouth with trust and corporate. 9(2), 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.18196/mb.9263>
- Andhini, G. K., & Andanawarih, F. Q. (2022). The Importance of Brand Stories towards Brand Perception and Purchase Intention in Gen Z Indonesians. 23(September), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.21512/tw.v23i2.7481>

- Annastasya, A. (2022). Pengaruh Brand Image, Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) dan Kepuasan Pelanggan terhadap Niat Membeli. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis Dan Kewirausahaan*, 6(1), 45–50. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jmbk.v6i1.16353>
- Ari, Y., & Rinata, C. (2024). Gacoan di surabaya. 13(1), 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.33508/jumma.v13i1.5733>
- Bator, R. J., Bryan, A. D., & Schultz, P. W. (2011). Who Gives a Hoot?: Intercept Surveys of Literers and Disposers. *Environment and Behavior*, 43(3), 295–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916509356884>
- Buchori. (2020). Buletin Ekonomi words of mouth (wom) sebagai penentu keputusan pembelian. *Buletin Ekonomi*, 2, 159–166. <https://doi.org/10.31315/be.v18i2.5635>
- Chamid, A., & Wibowo, B. S. (2025). Encouraging Purchases Through Stories: The Effectiveness of Word of mouth in the Digital Era. 5(1), 547–557. <https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v5i1.711>
- Chen, S. (2024). The Impact of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention. 30, 239–246. <https://doi.org/10.54097/88gfk880>
- Christarevy Renaputra Hosfiar, Miguna Astuti, A. H. I. (2021). Pengaruh citra merek, kesadaran merek dan e-wom terhadap minat beli obat jamu masuk angin bejo jahe merah di indonesia. 6(10). <https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-literate.v6i10.4351>
- Daud, R. F., & Novrimansyah, E. A. (2022). Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Jamu Tradisional di Era Teknologi Digitalisasi 4.0 Tradisional Herbal Medicine Marketing Communication Strategy in the Era of Digitalization Technology 4.0. 1(3), 233–248. <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjas.v1i3.1031>
- Fairuz Malinda Rahma, Ujang Sumarwan, P. J. (2023). Pengaruh citra merek, persepsi kualitas, dan social media influencer terhadap loyalitas merek somethinc: studi pada pengguna produk merek somethinc. 9(3), 919–929. <https://doi.org/10.17358/jabm.9.3.919>
- Fauziyah Fitri. (2023). Pengaruh kualitas produk, harga, dan citra merek terhadap minat beli. 02(3), 828–838. <https://doi.org/10.21776/jbppk.2022.02.3.24>
- Hasibuan, F. U., Syamsulbahri, Putra, W. P., & Yusniar. (2024). Analisis Pengaruh Word of Mouth, Social Media Activities, dan Citra Merek Terhadap Minat Beli Konsumen Mixue di Jabodetabek. *Jurnal Bisnis dan Manajemen West Science*, 3(01), 20–28. <https://doi.org/10.58812/jbmws.v3i01.978>
- Hidayati, S. N. (2016). Pengaruh Pendekatan Keras dan Lunak Pemimpin Organisasi terhadap Kepuasan Kerja dan Potensi Mogok Kerja Karyawan. *Jurnal Maksipreneur: Manajemen, Koperasi, dan Entrepreneurship*, 5(2), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.30588/jmp.v5i2.164>
- Kartono, T. (2024). The role of social media in building consumer trust in product. 2(2), 8–17. <https://doi.org/10.56457/kompartemen.v2i2.641>
- Kholipah, P. D., Ali, H., & Untari, D. T. (2023). Dengan loyalitas konsumen sebagai intervening (Studi Pada Universitas Bina Kara Raya 1). 2(November), 3392–3411. <https://doi.org/10.55681/economina.v2i11.979>
- Kinanthi Astuti, Lukitaningsih, H. (2021). Word Of Mouth, dan Brand Image Terhadap Minat Beli. 9(1), 53–62. <https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v9i1.439>

- Murwanto, H., Indriana, D., Lestari, T., Eknomi, F., Semarang, U., Equiry, B., & Pelanggan, L. (2023). Reblinding dan upaya peningkatan loyalitas pelanggan. 21(1), 30–39. <https://doi.org/10.26623/slsi.v21i1.6125>
- Nirwana. (2023). The Influence of Consumer Behavior Perspectives and Types of Consumers in Purchasing Decision Making. 6(1), 402–406. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmfs/v6-i01-45>
- Philip Kotler, K. L. K. (2014). *Marketing Management, Millenium Edition*. Custom Edition for University of Phoenix.
- Putra, Y. P., Purwanto, H., & Sulistiyowati, L. N. (2022). Kualitas produk dan persepsi harga terhadap keputusan pembelian melalui minat beli sebagai variabel intervening. *Pendahuluan*, 6(1), 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.21067/mbr.v6i1.6952>
- Risdwiyanto, A., & Kumiyati, Y. (2015). Strategi Pemasaran Perguruan Tinggi Swasta di Kabupaten Sleman Yogyakarta Berbasis Rangsangan Pemasaran. *Jurnal Maksipreneur: Manajemen, Koperasi, dan Entrepreneurship*, 5(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.30588/jmp.v5i1.142>
- Salsabila, H. F. (2021). Pengaruh iklan media sosial, electronic word of mouth, dan persepsi kualitas terhadap keputusan pembelian Effect of social media advertising, electronic word of mouth, and perceived quality on purchasing decisions. 18(4), 722–732. <https://doi.org/10.30872/jat.v18i4.9789>
- Shandra, E., Relivado, D., Purba, L. F., & Chaniago, S. (2025). Exploring the Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth, Consumer Experience, and Trust on OVO Application Adoption: A Case Study of Medan Petisah Community. 2(1), 85–95. <https://doi.org/10.64276/jobic.v2i1.50>
- Sita, K., Hapsari, A., & Warmika, I. G. K. (2021). Peran customer trust memediasi pengaruh customer experience terhadap positive word of mouth (Studi Pada Konsumen Cat Café Sanur) / Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Udayana (Unud), Bali, Indonesia. 10(11), 1076–1095. <https://doi.org/10.24843/EJMUNUD.2021.v10.i11.p02>
- Sohail, R. B., & Author, C. (2024). Audience Perceptions of News Media Trustworthiness in the Digital Age. 5(1). [https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2024\(5-I\)47](https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2024(5-I)47)
- Zulfikar, I. (2022). Building a Strong Brand: Marketing Strategy to Increase Brand Awareness and Consumer Loyalty. 1(4), 280–284. <https://doi.org/10.56403/nejesh.v1i4.79>