Students' Perception of the Use of Animation in Vocabulary Lessons of 8ᵗʰ Graders of SMPN 1 Atambua

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Abstract

Modern education is challenging since teachers are no longer the main source of information. Teachers are expected to fill the role of parents, friends, and counsellors. To fulfill this expectation, teachers need innovative teaching methods to assist them in going further, including involving assisting tools like interactive Animation to help them. This study examines how animated learning methods impact vocabulary acquisition among students in Atambua using the grounded theory method. Research and focus group discussions revealed that students prefer animated learning for its dynamic approach, enhancing engagement and imagination in vocabulary acquisition through the grounded theory method. The findings underscore how animated learning methods cater to individual learning needs and styles, fostering creativity and critical thinking in vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, animated learning creates a supportive environment for problem-solving and resilience development, emphasizing the importance of embracing challenges for student growth. Overall, this study emphasizes the value of alternative learning methods in creating inclusive and effective educational experiences, preparing students for success in the modern world.

Keywords: Students Perception, Education, Teachers, Animation, Vocabulary Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

In this era, educational methods for children are becoming challenging (Rahmatullah et al., 2022). This provides challenges that have not existed several years ago. In the era of information, teachers are not the main source of information, and standardization of teaching is developing to a new level. In the past, the success rate of teaching was measured only by students' capability. Teachers only had one method of teaching, which was one-way communication: a lecturing method. If the teachers failed to perform, it was because students were not working hard enough or demonstrating commitment to the task. Nowadays, the situation has changed so much are students' failures are no longer only students' mistakes and teachers were accused and became the first actors to take the main responsibility for students' failures (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022; Zheng, 2022).

There is a high expectation towards the teachers. Teachers are no longer an agent of information. Information is available on the internet and they are better than the teacher (Yang, 2022). Teachers are no longer untouchable actors in the educational system in terms of

information. This situation leads us to reflect on the reality that teachers are not obsolete actors, and vice versa; teachers are demanded to go for further evolution so they will still be relevant for today's needs.

Teachers today are going for a new role; they are equipped with a new understanding of their roles. Above all, teachers are expected to fill the gap in how the educational system should be run. This is a turning point, a challenging one since hopes for teachers are growing bigger than before. Teachers will play various roles, and the capability of teachers to understand their new roles will decide how efficient the educational system will be.

There are various roles that teachers are expected to take when they start working as teachers. First, a teacher as a parent for students in school. Parental figures are often absent at home, and teachers can step up to fill this role since most of students' time will be spent with teachers. As parents, teachers are required to invest emotionally heavily in their students. Emotional investment by teachers is expected to grow emotional bonds between teachers and students. These emotional bonds are the ground base of how students feel comfortable and, in the long future, grow healthier in terms of emotional and intellectual context. Teachers are expected to consider students family members rather than objects in their jobs. This is a huge responsibility but, in a way, an interesting challenge for teachers to play a deeper role than their predecessors (Affuso et al., 2023; Yulianti et al., 2022).

Secondly, teachers as a friend of students. Students at certain ages, especially when they are just entering teenagehood, need friends more than ever (Ritonga & Sutapa, 2020). Friendship is the early stage of socialization; students an early age are excited to build friendships and even a form of brotherhood relationship as part of their psychological stages to understand socialization and how important the process is for them so Teachers are expected to fill that role since teachers need to have honest answers from students to help them to know what is going on. Without the ability to be a student's friends, teachers are not informed well about student's need or their emotional stages. This information about students is vital as an assessment part of teachers. This assessment is later can be used by teachers to design their lesson plans or decide the best way to communicate and guide the students for their betterment.

Based on that description, in such a way, teachers are demanded to play the role of counselor. As a counselor, a teacher needs to understand why students do something in a certain way and how teachers can effectively communicate with students. Rather than being considered manipulative processes, teachers face hardship since they are guiding students so they become the best version of themselves. Truthfully, Early childhood psychology presents

unique challenges due to the diverse ways students develop during this critical period (Karakulovich & Sharofovna, 2022; Strathearn et al., 2020). While it is essential to be attentive to each child's individual growth trajectory, excessive caution can inadvertently stifle their potential for exploration and learning. Conversely, being too reckless or neglectful in understanding and addressing their developmental needs can have adverse effects on their overall well-being and future development. Striking the right balance between vigilance and encouragement is crucial in fostering a nurturing environment where children feel supported to explore and expand their capabilities while also ensuring their safety and emotional security. This delicate balance requires a nuanced understanding of child development principles, as well as ongoing observation, assessment, and responsiveness to each child's unique needs and abilities. By navigating this balance effectively, educators and caregivers can help children not only thrive in their early years but also lay a solid foundation for their continued growth and development.

This situation resulted in teachers being questioned about being creative and efficient in teaching. Teaching is no longer about giving information. Going deeper, teaching and educating currently have deeper meanings. Teachers are responsible for helping students understand the materials and master them. Master something and understand something is not similar things. Students can learn information, but they can hardly master it. This situation, for example, occurs in the language class. Students know the grammatical rules, vocabulary, and other linguistic knowledge, but they are not able to apply the skills in real life. Clearly, a new method of teaching is expected to be innovative in helping students reach practical skills. This research seeks to explore a novel approach to teaching by utilizing animated interactive movies as an educational tool. The premise underlying this investigation is the belief that such innovative methods have the potential to captivate students' interest and immerse them more deeply in the subject matter. Animation engage students through interactive elements and visuals, creating a dynamic and immersive learning experience. The hypothesis suggests that the interactive features of these movies will not only attract students to the materials but also increase their engagement and effort in learning the content. Through this research, we aim to uncover insights into the effectiveness of this approach and its implications for educational practice.

This research will adopt grounded theory as its methodological framework. Grounded theory is chosen for its suitability in exploring students' perceptions and experiences throughout the learning process (Budiasih & Nyoman, 2024; Oktay, 2022). By employing this approach,

we aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of how students engage with and respond to the use of interactive Animation in teaching. Grounded theory allows for the emergence of key themes, patterns, and insights directly from the data, without imposing preconceived notions or hypotheses. Through iterative data collection and analysis, we seek to uncover the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching through interactive Animation. Ultimately, this approach will provide valuable insights into the nuances of student learning and inform pedagogical practices aimed at enhancing educational outcomes.

The primary objective of the research is to address the central research question: How do 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Atambua respond to vocabulary lessons using an animated movie? This question serves as the guiding principle for the study, directing the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes. By exploring the responses of students to vocabulary lessons delivered through Animation, the research aims to uncover patterns, themes, and insights that shed light on the efficacy, challenges, and potential benefits of this instructional approach.

METHOD

The research method is a qualitative approach. This aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and the reality observed in qualitative research. Grounded theory seeks to generate theories directly from the data collected, thereby minimizing bias introduced by preconceived theoretical notions. By grounding the analysis in empirical observations, grounded theory aims to produce findings that are firmly grounded in the data and reflective of the lived experiences of the participants.

The population under study comprises 8th-grade students from SMPN 1 Atambua who are engaged in learning new vocabularies through interactive Animation. This specific population was chosen to provide insights into how students at this particular educational level respond to vocabulary lessons delivered through Animation. By focusing on a homogeneous group of students within a specific educational context, the research aims to generate nuanced understandings of their experiences and perspectives.

The research employs qualitative data collection methods such as focus group discussions, interviews, and observations. These methods allow researchers to engage directly with students, eliciting their perspectives, experiences, and attitudes towards vocabulary learning using Animation. Through open-ended questioning and participant observation,

researchers can capture rich, in-depth data that provide valuable insights into the students' learning processes and outcomes.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data follows the principles of grounded theory, involving systematic coding, categorization, and interpretation of the collected data. By iteratively comparing and contrasting data points, researchers identify emergent themes and theoretical concepts that help explain the students' responses to vocabulary lessons through Animation. This iterative process of data analysis allows for the development of a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

In summary, the grounded theory approach used in this research enables researchers to explore how 8th-grade students from SMPN 1 Atambua respond to vocabulary lessons delivered through Animation. By closely examining the students' experiences and perspectives, the research aims to generate insights that contribute to our understanding of the effectiveness and challenges associated with this instructional approach, ultimately informing educational practice and policy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Following the initial vocabulary learning session and the assessment of pretest and post-test results, it becomes evident that there are significant differences in the outcomes. To delve deeper into these findings and gain insights into the factors contributing to the varying levels of performance, the next step is to conduct a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In this FGD, students who have demonstrated high levels of performance in the vocabulary tests will be invited to participate. The objective of the FGD is to gather qualitative data that can provide an understanding of the students' learning experiences, strategies employed, and perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching methods utilized during the session. By engaging with these high-performing students in a collaborative and open discussion, the research aims to uncover valuable insights that can inform the refinement and optimization of future vocabulary learning sessions. Additionally, the FGD will offer a platform for students to voice their perspectives, preferences, and suggestions, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment in the learning process.

After transcribing the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the next step in the research process is to conduct open coding. This involves systematically analyzing the transcript to identify and label discrete concepts, themes, and patterns that emerge from the data. Each

segment of the transcript is examined, and relevant codes are assigned to capture the essence of the participants' responses (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022; Qureshi & Ünlü, 2020).

During the open coding process, codes are generated without predefined categories or restrictions, allowing for a flexible and exploratory approach to data analysis. This initial phase helps to uncover a broad range of ideas and perspectives expressed by the participants.

Once the open coding process is complete, the research progresses to axial coding. Axial coding involves organizing and connecting the initial codes into more structured categories and relationships. This step aims to establish links between different codes, identify overarching themes, and develop a more coherent theoretical framework.

Through axial coding, the researcher identifies key concepts that are central to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. These concepts are then grouped together based on their relationships and interactions, forming a network of interconnected ideas. By iteratively refining and consolidating the codes through axial coding, the research gradually builds a theoretical framework that elucidates the underlying processes, dynamics, and mechanisms at play within the data. This framework provides a deeper understanding of the research topic and serves as a foundation for further analysis and interpretation.
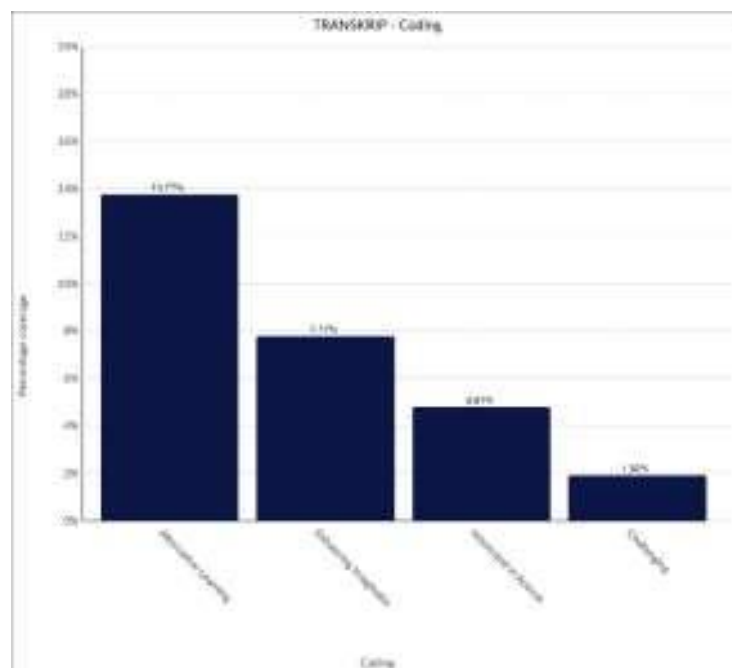

Figure 1. Coding Process Proceded by Nvivo

Based on the coding process, the key coding, which is alternative learning, is the number one reason students from Atambua favor the animated learning process. Students

believed that animation helps them cope with the boringness and monotonous learning process due to the lack of variation methods. There are several comments to reflect what happened to the student. Here is the list:

> "Oh, I have! There's something magical about learning new words while being whisked away on an animated adventure. It's like embarking on a quest for knowledge with our favorite characters by our side," (Maria, 8th Grader).

> "It's like our favorite characters become our companions in the journey of learning. I remember watching a movie where the characters used words I'd never heard before," (Budi 8th Grader).

Besides alternative learning skills, the transcript shows students feeling like they are in a magical world. Their imagination has been activated, and they are happy with this sensation. Kids are visual creatures with free minds (Blakh et al., 2021; Mosina, 2020). The nature of their free minds is part of the process of growing their brains. Imagination helps them explore any possibility. At first, kids are unable to separate logic from creativity. Simultaneously, they are facing difficulties in understanding logic and emotion. However, parents do not need to worry. If they are concerned about this situation, it is very understandable. Yet, this natural process is actually a natural way for kids to be their entire selves, find their characteristics, and determine what kind of person they are comfortable being. Mixing imagination and memorizing process is actually a healthy process for kids since this system does not force students to be totally logical, something that is against their nature, but in a way, introduces what logic is in a fun way that fits with their natural brain development. Pushing students to be logical every time will hamper the part of the brain that harvests creativity. Creativity is equally important for children in developing the ability to solve problems.

The reflection on their imagination are reflected on several comments. Here is the list of their comments:

> "It's like our favorite characters become our companions in the journey of learning. I remember watching a movie where the characters used words I'd never heard before. Each new word felt like a treasure waiting to be uncovered," (Maria, 8th Grader).

> "There's a certain allure to the notion of weaving learning seamlessly into the fabric of entertainment," (Rani,8th Grader).

A more interesting point is that students like challenges. Challenges become the fourth focal point in the coding process. Several comments reflect the student's perception of their appetite for challenges.

> "Instead of feeling intimidated, I felt a surge of curiosity. I paused the movie, grabbed my

trusty dictionary, and embarked on a journey of discovery," (Maria, 8th Grader).

"There's a certain thrill that accompanies unraveling the mysteries of language within the colorful tapestry of animated storytelling. It's like unearthing hidden treasures in the midst of an epic quest," (Budi, 8th Grader).

Problem-solving tendencies in children are natural for them. This is part of human evolution; children hardly survive various challenges without the capability of enjoying challenges. Surely, the challenges children face in real life are related to real threatening situations. In animals, it can be tracked to tigers or lion's cubs who are playing hunting among themselves (Khalid et al., 2020; Lee-Cultura et al., 2022; Menkel-Meadow et al., 2020; Treffinger et al., 2023). This is the same process for humans, and students love challenges since nature designed them to treat challenges as an enjoyable part of their lives.

Surely, nature designed humans as perfectly as possible. Humans will love challenges from an early level to the hard ones with more risks. Animation with games are perfect instruments for kids since they will face relatively medium-level challenges with minimum risks before slowly facing harder and harder challenges every time (Chen et al., 2021; Dutta et al., 2020). The traditional teaching methods cannot give kids such enjoyable challenges. They will get bored throughout lesson plans since instructional methods are against their nature. The instructional method puts students in a position where they lose their independence. Naturally, people are independent creatures and do not want to be restricted even in an educational system. Teaching is not a top-down system. Yet, in Asian culture, the top-down system has been used for years (Chen et al., 2021; Kertati et al., 2023). The top-down system has successfully made students who are doing well as workers, but only in a short time when information is limited, and teachers are perceived as the main resource of information. However, the existence of a top-down system will eventually meet its end. The main reason why the top-down system is no longer relevant is that information is available without the teachers. Teachers should consider different approaches to finding new roles in this current situation. The teacher's role would be the student's partner while being a parental figure to students. Teachers need to understand the nature of students and no longer rely on instructional methods. The instructional method will only be efficient in the past but not relevant today. Based on the definition of open coding, we can later process it into an axial coding process.

Combining learning and playing is an effective method of teaching students due to its ability to engage their natural curiosity and sense of fun. Educators can create dynamic and enjoyable experiences that stimulate active participation and exploration by integrating playful

activities into the learning process (Gocen & Aydemir, 2020; Haleem et al., 2022; Timm & Barth, 2021). This approach enhances retention by tapping into multisensory experiences and encouraging students to experiment and problem-solve. Furthermore, playful learning fosters creativity, teamwork, and emotional development as students collaborate, express themselves, and regulate their emotions in a supportive environment. By making learning relevant to students' interests and experiences, playful learning promotes long-term retention and cultivates a lifelong love of learning. Overall, combining learning and playing empowers students to become active, motivated learners with essential skills for success in both academic and real- world contexts.

Teachers are increasingly expected to embody a high degree of flexibility in their approach to education (Liu et al., 2020; Sudarmo et al., 2021). This entails delivering curriculum content and understanding their students' diverse needs and learning styles. A pivotal aspect of this flexibility lies in crafting lesson plans that are adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs of learners. Educators can tailor their strategies by keenly observing student engagement and comprehension levels to ensure that all students are effectively learning. This adaptability is crucial in preventing student disengagement or demotivation that may arise when lesson plans fail to resonate with their individual needs. By embracing flexibility, teachers can create an inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.

In the evolving landscape of education, the role of teachers extends far beyond traditional teaching procedures. As we look to the future, educators are increasingly expected to possess a deep understanding of not only academic content but also their students' physical and psychological development. This comprehensive understanding allows teachers to tailor their instructional approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners at various stages of development. Moreover, it underscores the importance of the emotional connection between teachers and students. Teachers can create a supportive and nurturing environment where students feel valued, understood, and empowered to thrive by forging strong emotional bonds. These emotional connections lay the foundation for more effective and efficient learning outcomes, as students are more likely to engage actively, take risks, and persist in the face of challenges when they feel emotionally connected to their teachers. Therefore, in the long run, the ability of teachers to bond with students emotionally is not just a supplementary aspect of education but a fundamental component for fostering holistic growth and academic success.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and focus group discussions, several key insights have emerged regarding the effectiveness of alternative learning methods, the significance of imagination in learning, and the importance of embracing challenges in education. In Atambua, students have preferred animated learning primarily because it offers an alternative to traditional teaching methods. They find it to be a more engaging and dynamic approach, especially in learning vocabulary. Animation stimulate students' imagination, creating a sense of wonder and excitement that enhances their learning experience. Furthermore, students preferred challenges, viewing them as opportunities for growth and discovery rather than obstacles to be avoided.

These findings underscore the importance of understanding students' individual needs and learning styles. It is essential for educators to acknowledge the diversity in student learning styles and recognize that alternative methods, like animated learning, can effectively accommodate various preferences and abilities. Through the adoption of alternative methods like animated learning, teachers can establish a more inclusive and engaging learning environment that values and involves all students. The role of imagination in learning is paramount and plays a crucial part in enhancing the educational experience.

The role of imagination in learning is paramount and plays a crucial part in enhancing the educational experience. Imagination allows students to explore new ideas, concepts, and possibilities. It stimulates creativity and critical thinking, essential skills for success in the 21st century. Animated learning taps into students' natural inclination towards imagination, providing them with a rich and immersive learning experience that goes beyond traditional textbooks and lectures.

Additionally, the willingness to embrace challenges is crucial for students' academic and personal growth. Challenges provide opportunities for students to develop resilience, problem-solving skills, and perseverance. Animated learning, with its interactive and problem-solving elements, offers students the chance to overcome challenges in a supportive and stimulating environment.

In conclusion, educators must actively embrace and implement alternative learning methods, including animated learning, to address the diverse needs and preferences of students. By embracing imagination, challenges, and alternative approaches, teachers can create a more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning experience for all students, ultimately preparing them for success in the modern world.

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