



Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition through TED Talks in EFL Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of integrating TED Talks into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary plays a vital role in language proficiency, and TED Talks, with their authentic language input and engaging multimodal content, offer a promising tool for vocabulary development. The research employed a quantitative method involving pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate the vocabulary improvement of 15 fifth-semester students from the English Language Education Department at Universitas Serambi Mekkah. The intervention included the use of a TED Talk video titled "Try Something New for 30 Days" by Matt Cutts, accompanied by guided activities. Results revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary, with the mean score rising from 48.33 in the pre-test to 86.00 in the post-test, indicating a 77.93% increase. The findings demonstrate that TED Talks effectively enrich vocabulary by exposing students to authentic language use, diverse topics, and various accents. Additionally, the platform promotes self-directed learning, critical thinking, and listening comprehension. However, challenges such as the complexity of content and limited interactivity were identified. This study underscores the potential of TED Talks as a digital learning resource in EFL contexts and provides recommendations for their effective integration into teaching practices. These findings contribute to the growing body of research on using digital media to support language learning and suggest opportunities for further exploration in this area.

Keywords: TED Talks, vocabulary, EFL student, listening, contextual understanding

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a crucial element that greatly impacts learners' overall language proficiency. The need for effective communication skills, especially in English, has increased strategies to help students develop their vocabulary, which is essential for improving their language skills and boosting their confidence in various communication contexts. Integrating digital media into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons offers a promising approach to meeting these needs.

Cahyati (2024) noted that digital media enhances the educational experience by improving teaching quality and fostering essential 21st-century skills that prepare students for future challenges. Educators can use digital tools to develop dynamic learning environments that capture students' interest and support vocabulary acquisition. This approach not only aligns with contemporary educational practices but also addresses the diverse learning needs of students in a digital age.

Budiman & Syafrony (2023) emphasized that digital media provides flexible learning opportunities, allowing students to access educational materials independently at any time and from anywhere. This flexibility empowers learners to take control of their education and encourages self-directed learning, which is vital for vocabulary development. By utilizing these resources, educators can foster a more personalized learning experience that resonates with today's learners.

Among the various digital tools available, TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) Talks is an educational platform that can aid vocabulary acquisition. TED Talks are a form of public speaking that conveys experiences and provides motivation to listeners. According to Farid (2019), TED presentations are beneficial for learners, as they help improve vocabulary acquisition in addition to enhancing public speaking skills. Through these talks, learners are exposed to the speakers' opinions and experiences, which can stimulate and encourage them to expand their vocabulary and language proficiency. Cyintia and Resy (2023) highlighted that TED Talks offers a wide range of videos with translations across various topics, encouraging discussions that help users



explore ideas and knowledge from different fields. This platform serves not only as entertainment but also as an educational resource for those seeking to expand their horizons and skills.

According to Nurmukhamedov (2017), TED Talks cover diverse subjects such as sports, culture, fashion, politics, and technology, delivered by speakers from around the world in English. This variety exposes students to different accents, vocabulary, and expressions that can be used in English classes engagingly and educationally. Focusing on TED Talks in EFL classrooms allows students to engage with interesting presentation videos to enhance their vocabulary and overall English language skills.

Given this context, the researcher aims to find solutions for improving students' vocabulary through TED Talks. This study will investigate how using TED Talks can enhance students' vocabulary as a learning tool and how students respond to this method in remembering newly learned words. While there is growing research on vocabulary acquisition through various media such as reading and listening, specific studies examining the effectiveness of TED Talks in enhancing vocabulary acquisition within the EFL context remain limited.

2. METHOD

This research used quantitative methods to systematically evaluate the impact of integrating TED Talks on vocabulary improvement. According to Sugiyono (2019), a quantitative research method is a systematic approach that emphasizes collecting and analyzing numerical data to test hypotheses and draw conclusions. This approach is suitable for identifying patterns and measuring changes in variables, making it highly appropriate for this study, which focuses on measuring students' vocabulary improvement before and after the intervention. Quantitative research is particularly beneficial in this study as it allows the researcher to objectively analyze the effectiveness of TED Talks as a teaching tool. By using statistical data, this method provides a clear picture of whether integrating TED Talks in EFL lessons significantly impacts students' vocabulary acquisition.

The population of this study consisted of all students from the English Language Education Department at Universitas Serambi Mekah, representing a diverse group with varying educational, social, and academic backgrounds that contribute to differences in vocabulary knowledge and mastery. From this population, a sample of 15 fifth-semester students was selected from a total of 29 students in that semester. This selection was made to ensure manageability and facilitate in-depth analysis. Fifth-semester students were specifically chosen because they were at an academic stage where they had gained sufficient exposure to English vocabulary acquisition, making them suitable for examining the impact of integrating TED Talks into vocabulary learning.

At Universitas Serambi Mekah, the passing grade ranges from 51 to 100, indicating that students need to achieve a score above 50 to pass. Grasping the assessment system and its threshold values is essential for students to secure satisfactory outcomes in their academic pursuits. By understanding this, students can better concentrate on meeting these criteria and enhancing their performance across all aspects of the evaluation.

The instruments used to collect data in this study were a pre-test and a post-test, aimed at assessing the success rate of English language students. Creswell (2018) described the pre-test as an assessment conducted before a teaching intervention to evaluate participants' initial knowledge or skills, establishing a baseline for comparison. Similarly, the post-test, as noted by Wallen and Fraenkel (2019), measures changes in knowledge, skills, or attitudes after the intervention, providing insights into the effectiveness of the teaching method. Brown (2020) highlighted that post-tests are crucial for evaluating cognitive outcomes and determining whether learning objectives have been met, enabling educators to assess instructional impact effectively.

Before conducting the study, the researcher provided clear instructions to the students regarding the procedures to be followed during the research. The study was divided into three main stages: pre-test, intervention, and post-test, each designed to evaluate the effectiveness of using TED Talks in improving vocabulary acquisition.

The pre-test was conducted before any intervention to assess the students' initial vocabulary knowledge. The test consisted of 20 questions relevant to the topic of the TED Talk video, including multiple-choice



questions, cloze tests, and synonym identification. The pre-test results served as a baseline for evaluating the impact of the intervention.

The next stage, intervention, involved the use of TED Talks videos. The video details included the title “*Try something new for 30 days*”, the speaker Matt Cutts, and a duration of 3 minutes 10 seconds. During the first viewing, subtitles were provided to help students recognize new vocabulary. After watching the video, students explored the vocabulary introduced in the video and answered questions from the researcher regarding their understanding of the video. Subsequently, the researcher re-screened the same video without subtitles.

The post-test was administered after the intervention to measure students' progress in vocabulary acquisition. The post-test questions were identical to those in the pre-test to ensure a valid comparison. The students' post-test scores were then compared with their pre-test results to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

The hypotheses tested in this study are as follows:

1. H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no relationship between the use of TED Talks (X) and the improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition (Y).
2. H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a relationship between the use of TED Talks (X) and the improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition (Y).

The data were analyzed and interpreted based on the research objectives. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyze the data.

This research methodology aligns with the findings of Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2019), who emphasized the importance of quantitative data analysis in educational research to produce valid and measurable results. Using software such as SPSS helps objectively evaluate score changes and determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, Pallant (2020) highlighted that statistical processing through SPSS enables researchers to identify significant relationships and differences between pre-test and post-test data, providing a strong basis for the interpretation of the study's results.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

The results of paired samples statistical analysis are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Results of Paired Samples Statistical Analysis.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Before	48.33	15	5.563	1.436
	After	86.00	15	5.412	1.397

Based on the data presented in Table 1, this study demonstrates a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for the 15 respondents. During the pre-test, the mean score of the respondents was 48.33, with a standard deviation of 5.563 and a standard error mean of 1.436. These results indicate that before the intervention using TED Talks, the respondents' initial vocabulary acquisition was relatively low. Given the passing grade of 50, it was found that 33.33% of the respondents did not achieve the minimum passing score.

After the intervention through the integration of TED Talks in the learning process, the post-test results showed a significant improvement in the mean score, which increased to 86.00, with a standard deviation of 5.412 and a standard error mean of 1.397. This improvement reflects a considerable enhancement in students'



vocabulary acquisition following the intervention. Furthermore, 100% of the respondents successfully achieved scores above the passing grade during the post-test phase, highlighting the effectiveness of the teaching method.

The difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test was 37.67 points, representing an increase of 77.93% from the initial score. This improvement demonstrates that the use of TED Talks as a teaching tool had a significant impact on the students' vocabulary acquisition. The results not only indicate the effectiveness of the intervention but also underscore how this approach helped students understand, master, and apply new vocabulary in a more meaningful and effective way.

The findings support the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1), which states that there is a positive relationship between the use of TED Talks (X) and the improvement of students' vocabulary acquisition (Y). These results demonstrate that TED Talks, as an instructional medium, can significantly enhance vocabulary learning in the context of English language education.

The results of this study align with recent research emphasizing the effectiveness of digital media, particularly TED Talks, in enhancing vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts. Rahayu et al. (2021) argue that multimedia resources like TED Talks provide rich, authentic language input, exposing learners to diverse vocabulary in real-world contexts, which improves retention and understanding. This aligns with our findings, where students showed significant improvement in vocabulary post-test scores after engaging with TED Talks. TED Talks enhance not only vocabulary but also listening and comprehension skills by providing engaging, context-rich content, which mirrors the increased ability of students to apply new vocabulary observed in our study.

Furthermore, Widodo and Susanto (2022) discussed how TED Talks foster self-directed learning, allowing students to independently explore new vocabulary, which was evident in this study's methodology. The intervention encouraged students to interact with the material both with and without subtitles, promoting active vocabulary learning. Putra et al. (2024) also highlighted the cognitive load theory, suggesting that the multimedia nature of TED Talks, combining both visual and auditory cues, supports better processing and retention of new vocabulary. The substantial improvement in students' scores supports this theory, as the diverse learning modalities helped students retain and understand new words more effectively.

Collectively, these findings support the integration of TED Talks as an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The digital platform not only provides authentic, context-rich language input but also promotes self-regulated learning and reduces cognitive load, all of which are critical for improving vocabulary proficiency in EFL learners.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the significant impact of integrating TED Talks into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. The pre-test and post-test results show a marked improvement in students' vocabulary proficiency following the intervention, with a 77.93% increase in mean scores. These findings align with recent research indicating that digital media, particularly TED Talks, provides rich, authentic language input that enhances vocabulary retention and comprehension. By incorporating TED Talks into the learning process, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that not only boost students' vocabulary but also foster essential 21st-century skills such as self-regulated learning and critical thinking. The results of this study suggest that TED Talks are an effective tool for improving vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts and offer valuable insights for educators seeking innovative methods to support language learning.

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The researchers hope that the findings of this study will be beneficial to the academic community and contribute positively to the advancement of knowledge in this field. The researcher hopes that this work will inspire further exploration and discussion, serving as a valuable reference for future studies.

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