

From Digital Media To Student Motivation: Exploring Teacher Practices In Rural Primary School English Classrooms

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Abstract

The integration of digital media in English language teaching has become increasingly important. However, its implementation in rural primary school contexts still faces various challenges. This study aims to explore teacher practices in utilizing digital media and how these practices contribute to students' motivation in English classrooms at a rural primary school. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with English teachers and students in grades 1–6 as participants. Data collection was conducted through direct classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and documentation of learning tools and digital media usage. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that digital technology integration had a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in English learning. Teachers utilized various hardware and software adaptively according to grade level. In lower grades, learning utilized more visual and audio media such as YouTube and Wordwall, while in upper grades, task-based activities were used with the help of Chromebooks and other digital platforms. The use of this technology increased student enthusiasm, active participation, and self-confidence, and also supported the improvement of English speaking and writing skills. However, obstacles remained, such as limited infrastructure, internet network disruptions, and students' readiness to use technology. Teachers try to overcome these obstacles by adjusting learning strategies to suit class conditions.

Keywords: *digital media, motivation in learning English, primary school*

Abstrak

Integrasi media digital dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris semakin penting. Namun, implementasinya dalam konteks sekolah dasar pedesaan masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi praktik guru dalam memanfaatkan media digital dan bagaimana praktik-praktik ini berkontribusi pada motivasi siswa di kelas bahasa Inggris di sebuah sekolah dasar pedesaan. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan guru dan siswa bahasa Inggris kelas 1–6 sebagai partisipan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi langsung di kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru, dan dokumentasi alat pembelajaran dan penggunaan media digital. Data dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknologi digital berdampak positif pada motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Guru menggunakan berbagai perangkat keras dan perangkat lunak secara adaptif sesuai dengan tingkat kelas. Di kelas bawah, pembelajaran lebih banyak menggunakan media visual dan audio seperti YouTube dan Wordwall, sedangkan di kelas atas, aktivitas berbasis tugas digunakan dengan bantuan Chromebook dan platform digital lainnya. Penggunaan teknologi ini meningkatkan antusiasme siswa, partisipasi aktif, dan kepercayaan diri, serta mendukung peningkatan kemampuan berbicara dan menulis bahasa Inggris. Namun, masih terdapat kendala, seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur, gangguan jaringan internet, dan kesiapan siswa dalam menggunakan teknologi. Para guru berupaya mengatasi kendala ini dengan menyesuaikan strategi pembelajaran agar sesuai dengan kondisi kelas.

Kata kunci: *media digital, motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris, sekolah dasar*

INTRODUCTION

English language skills are essential skills that need to be introduced early on, given their role in education, global communication, and access to knowledge. At the elementary school level, English learning must be adjusted to the cognitive and emotional developmental stages of students so that the learning process takes place effectively and enjoyably (Aminovna, 2024). This learning includes four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are interrelated

and need to be developed in a balanced manner. In this context, teachers play an important role in selecting and implementing instructional strategies that support the mastery of these four skills communicatively.

However, in practice, English language learning in elementary schools still faces various obstacles, such as low student interest, limited learning media, and the use of methods that are still monotonous and inappropriate for current developments (Muslimin et al., 2023). This situation indicates the need for a more innovative approach in the learning process. One solution that can be implemented is technology integration, because digital media can help make material delivery more interactive, engaging, and contextual (Iskandar et al., 2022). However, the success of technology implementation depends not only on the availability of devices but also on the teacher's ability to integrate pedagogical, content, and technological aspects in a balanced manner (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). If implemented well, this integration can improve learning effectiveness, create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere, and increase student motivation and enthusiasm in learning English (Hardianti & Rohmah, 2021). This is also related to students' intrinsic motivation, which can increase when basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In today's digital era, teachers are required to have skills in operating and utilizing various digital media as part of the learning process. This demand is increasingly supported by empirical findings that highlight the benefits of digital technology in elementary education. Several studies show the direct advantages of integrating digital tools into English language teaching. Haleem et al. (2022) reported that the use of multimedia in teaching English can improve the quality and effectiveness of learning. Abdullah and Razak (2021) found that digital devices such as projectors and computers not only speed up the delivery of information but also make the learning process more interesting and easier for students to understand. This is further supported by findings that digital platforms such as Zoom, Webex, Telegram, and YouTube provide flexibility in communication and expand access to learning resources, while interactive quizzes such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall enhance student participation (Octaberlina, 2023; Azman et al., 2025).

Previous research has examined the integration of technology in English language learning in rural contexts. Akramuzzaman (2024) revealed that the use of technology in rural EFL classrooms has the potential to improve the quality of learning, but still faces various obstacles such as limited infrastructure, low digital literacy, and lack of teacher training. However, this study focused more on teacher perspectives and the challenges and opportunities in technology implementation, thus not fully discussing how digital media use relates to teacher learning strategies and its impact on student learning motivation in the actual classroom learning process.

Based on this, this study focuses on the relationship between digital media use, teacher strategies, and student learning motivation in the context of English language learning in rural elementary schools. SDN 2 Sokong was chosen as the research location because it has begun implementing digital technology in English language learning. Therefore, this study aims to describe in more depth how digital media is used in the learning process and how it contributes to increasing student learning motivation. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more contextual picture of technology-based learning practices in rural elementary schools and serve as a reference in developing more effective learning strategies that are appropriate to students' needs in the digital era.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach at SDN 2 Sokong, with English teachers and students in grades 1–6 as its subjects. Data collection involved direct observation of

learning activities across all classes (grades 1–6), semi-structured interviews with teachers to obtain in-depth information, and documentation of learning tools and digital media used in the learning process. Observations were conducted to directly observe how digital media was implemented at each grade level, while interviews were used to gain more in-depth information regarding teachers' strategies for integrating technology into learning.

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and techniques was conducted, as well as member checking with informants. Through this approach, this study aims to comprehensively describe how digital technology is utilized in English learning in elementary schools and how its use contributes to students' motivation and active engagement in the learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Implementation of Digital Media in English Learning

Based on data from interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that teachers actively utilize various forms of digital technology in English learning at SDN 2 Sokong. This technology utilization includes the use of hardware such as mini projectors, LCDs, sound systems, wireless microphones, and Wi-Fi connections available throughout the school. Furthermore, each teacher has been provided with a laptop or Chromebook to support learning, although the school does not yet have a dedicated space for technology-based learning.

Meanwhile, the software used includes PowerPoint for delivering materials and quizzes, Wordwall for interactive vocabulary practice, Canva as a visual medium, and YouTube videos to engage students, particularly in lower grades. The use of these various media demonstrates that teachers do not rely solely on one type of technology but rather combine various media according to learning needs.

In practice, teachers adapt the use of digital media based on learning objectives, the type of material, and the students' grade level. In the initial stages of learning, digital media is used to attract students' attention, for example through videos or visual displays. In the core stages, media is used to explain material and provide interactive exercises, while in the final stages, it is used for simple assessments.

Teachers stated that the use of digital media helps create a more engaging and interactive learning environment: *"I usually use videos from YouTube or Wordwall to keep students engaged and prevent them from getting bored quickly"*

The Role of Digital Media on Student Motivation and Engagement

The results of study show that the use of digital media has a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in English learning. Based on observations, students appeared more enthusiastic, focused, and actively participated during the learning process. They asked questions more frequently, answered questions, and showed a greater interest in the material being taught.

On several occasions, students even requested that the learning using digital media be repeated in the next meeting. This demonstrates that digital media can create a more enjoyable and engaging learning experience for students. Teachers also observed an increase in student learning motivation when digital media was used:

"When using digital media, students are more enthusiastic and active. They often ask to learn using it again."

In addition to increasing motivation, the use of digital media also has an impact on increasing students' confidence in using English. Lower-grade students are beginning to be able to pronounce and write simple sentences, while upper-grade students show progress in constructing more complex sentences. In terms of engagement, students not only act as listeners but also actively participate in learning activities, such as taking interactive quizzes, discussing in groups, and completing technology-based assignments. Teachers assess students' learning motivation through direct observation and non-cognitive indicators such as engagement, participation, and enthusiasm. Observations show a significant increase since the consistent use of digital media.

Teacher Strategies in Using Digital Media

In implementing digital media, teachers employ strategies tailored to the characteristics and developmental levels of students. In lower grades, teachers primarily use simple, engaging, and interactive media, such as animated videos and digital games. This approach is chosen because students at this stage understand material more easily through visual and audio stimuli. Conversely, in upper grades, teachers begin to direct the use of technology toward more challenging activities, such as sentence construction, text comprehension, and group work using digital devices. Teachers state that these adjustments are important to meet the readiness and abilities of students at each level.

However, the use of technology in learning is not without challenges. One of the main obstacles is limited facilities and technical glitches, such as unstable internet connections and a limited number of devices.

A teacher explained: "*Sometimes the problem is with the internet or limited devices, so we have to alternate using the LCD.*"

Furthermore, students in lower grades still struggle to operate digital devices independently, making learning more effective when the teacher displays media directly to the class. Despite these challenges, teachers continue to strive to optimize the use of technology by adapting learning strategies and maximizing available resources. Teachers also demonstrate flexibility in addressing emerging challenges, such as changing teaching methods or simplifying media usage to suit students' needs.

DISCUSSION

The use of digital media in English learning makes a significant contribution to creating a more interactive and engaging learning experience for elementary school students. Media such as YouTube, Wordwall, PowerPoint, and Canva not only serve as learning aids but also significantly increase student attention and engagement. Improving the quality of learning interactions through digital media has been widely discussed in previous literature, where the use of multimedia in English learning has been shown to improve the quality and effectiveness of learning (Haleem et al., 2022). This demonstrates that technology plays a broader role than simply a tool, as it can influence how students engage in the learning process. In this context, technology is not merely a learning complement but also acts as a medium capable of transforming classroom dynamics to become more active and student-centered (Parveen & Ramza, 2024).

The effectiveness of digital media use is determined not only by the type of technology used, but also by how it is managed in the learning process (Abdullah and Razak, 202). The flexible use of digital media indicates that the success of technology integration depends more on the teacher's ability to adapt its use to learning needs. In practice, teachers play the primary decision-making role in determining technology use strategies in the classroom. This can be linked to the TPACK framework developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler, which emphasizes the

importance of teacher competence in integrating technological, pedagogical, and content aspects in a balanced manner. Thus, the effectiveness of technology in learning is more influenced by pedagogical strategies than by the sophistication of the devices used (Iskandar et al., 2022).

Differences in digital media use across grade levels indicate that learning needs to be adjusted based on students' cognitive developmental characteristics. This variation in approach leads to the principle that the learning process cannot be treated uniformly, as students' thinking abilities develop gradually. Jean Piaget explained that children's cognitive development progresses through distinct stages, each with its own unique way of thinking and information processing abilities (Piaget, 1952). Adapting learning strategies based on this developmental stage is also supported by research by Sobirovich and Makmudjanavna (2022), which shows that the use of technology-based cognitive challenges can improve elementary school students' critical thinking skills. Therefore, learning effectiveness will be more optimal if the media and strategies used are aligned with students' cognitive developmental levels, including the selection of appropriate digital media (Azman et al., 2025). Therefore, adapting learning media to students' cognitive characteristics is a crucial aspect in technology-based learning design.

This situation also increases students' motivation to learn, demonstrated through enthusiasm, active participation, and confidence in using English. Digital media provides a space for students to engage directly in learning through interactive and exploratory activities. This involvement plays a crucial role in building students' intrinsic motivation, especially when they feel capable and confident in completing learning tasks (Hafidurrahman & Dwiaryanti, 2024). This can be explained through the Self-Determination theory developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, which emphasizes that a sense of competence and active involvement are crucial factors in increasing students' motivation to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Thus, the relationship between digital media use, teacher strategies, and student motivation is a crucial aspect in determining learning effectiveness. Previous studies (Abdullah & Razak, 2021; Haleem et al., 2022; Octaberlina, 2023; Azman et al., 2025) generally emphasized the role of technology and the various challenges in its implementation in the classroom. However, these findings demonstrate that the success of technology integration is not solely determined by the technical aspects of media use but is also significantly influenced by how teachers design and implement learning strategies in the classroom. In other words, pedagogical factors play a more crucial role than simply the presence of technology itself. Therefore, the use of digital media needs to be accompanied by adaptive and contextual learning strategies to optimally impact student motivation and engagement in the learning process.

However, the implementation of digital media still faces various obstacles, such as limited facilities, internet network disruptions, and a limited number of devices. This situation indicates that technology integration in rural schools is still influenced by external factors that are not fully supportive. This finding supports the research of Akramuzzaman (2024), which highlighted similar challenges in the context of EFL learning in rural areas. However, teachers' ability to adapt indicates that these limitations do not completely hinder technology implementation, as long as learning strategies are tailored to existing conditions.

On the other hand, the use of technology in this study still focuses on adjustments based on grade level, not leading to individualized differentiated learning. This suggests an opportunity to develop more personalized learning strategies by utilizing technology more optimally. This approach has the potential to increase learning effectiveness because it allows teachers to tailor methods and media to each student's learning needs.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the integration of digital technology in English learning at SDN 2 Sokong has a positive impact on student motivation and engagement. Teachers actively utilize various hardware and software that are tailored to grade levels, where lower grades use more visual and audio media such as YouTube and Wordwall, while upper grades are directed to task-based activities and exploration using Chromebooks and other digital platforms. The results of the study revealed that the use of technology increased students' enthusiasm, participation, and confidence, and made a real contribution to improving their speaking and writing skills in English. Although there are still challenges in terms of infrastructure, limited devices, and students' readiness to use technology independently, teachers are able to overcome these obstacles through adaptation strategies based on grade levels. Thus, technology-based learning in rural elementary schools such as SDN 2 Sokong has great potential to support 21st-century learning, as long as it is supported by the availability of facilities, teacher training, and appropriate implementation strategies. This study confirms that digital technology is not only a tool, but can also be a catalyst for improving the quality of learning and student learning motivation at the elementary school level.

SUGGESTION

Future research is recommended to employ more diverse designs and involve broader participants and contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, future research could explore the use of digital media with different approaches and examine its impact on aspects of English language learning in greater depth and specificity.

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