Digital Media To Improve Children's English Pronunciation: A Case Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published: March 2023 Volume: 1 Issue: 1 **KEYWORDS** *Digital Media, Pronunciation, Children's English Pronunciation.*	Media gives children the opportunity to access any English-related contents to watch, listen to, and read. The easy access to media support children's ability in learning a foreign language. By applying a qualitative approach, this paper aims to examine how media support children's English pronunciation. The data were obtained from interviews and pronunciation tests. The results show the use of digital media improves children's English pronunciation. The level of progress in English pronunciation accuracy is supported by the length of time children are exposed to digital media with English content. The inaccuracies in the pronunciation of English words are caused by pronunciation habits in their mother tongue (Indonesian). It is concluded that the critical age and the appropriate length of exposure to digital media with foreign language content greatly determine the ability to pronounce English words as a foreign language.

Introduction

Over the years there are a lot of things that change and developed by humans to help them do activities easier and more efficiently. One of them is technology. Various different technologies, such as television, handphone, laptop, and PC, have been invented or upgraded in order to fulfill the modern

needs and demands in societies. Technology facilitates people of different ages to do specific purposes like working or doing assignments. It can also be used as a tool in acquiring or learning new abilities, for example, language learning. Technology supports a new way of language learning. Before technological advancement, children used to learn foreign languages without the use of digital media. For example, learning English as a foreign language does not involve direct or indirect interactions with native speakers. Learning in schools only involves local teachers and limited learning media. This results in students' difficulty pronouncing English words correctly. Lack of availability in native speaker models results in students' less correct English pronunciation. Their pronunciation is heavily influenced by the pronunciation in their mother tongue.

Children aged 4 to 14 years need more stimulus in learning. In this range of age, children have the capacity to learn more and absorb more knowledge. The development of information and entertainment technology with digital platforms can support children's progress in learning English. Digital shows facilitate children to see the role models of native English speakers. it supports children's ability to imitate native speakers. Digital shows with English content are the parents' choice in developing their children's English skills.

This paper aims to examine how digital media, as a learning tool, improves Children's English pronunciation skill. Previous research has proven that digital media (entertainment) supports the cognitive development of children at a critical age (Linuwih and Trihastutie, 2020). Children who are exposed to digital media (entertainment) with English content, such as songs and nursery rhymes gain improvement in their grammar, vocabulary, and ability in pronouncing English words (Alefeshat, 2019). Watching TV programs supports children's second-language acquisition (Alghonaim, 2020). Playing games and watching people playing games through streaming apps like YouTube increase their vocabularies (Postic, 2018). Gaming apps also improve English learners' pronunciation ability (Nurhayati, 2015).

The study of the accuracy of pronunciation is important because pronunciation is one of the most crucial aspects of becoming a native speaker-like. Pronunciation can have an effect on the conversation with

another person. Correct pronunciation can help people easily understand what is said and to be able to give a relevant response. Wrong pronunciation may cause miscommunication, therefore learning the correct pronunciation is very necessary for foreign speakers.

Method
This current study is descriptive. The data were obtained from interviews and pronunciation tests. It involves a single participant, 8 years old, in the third grade. The participant is an Indonesian and has been exposed to digital media with English content since at age of 4 intensively. A test was conducted to examine the participant's English pronunciation ability. During the test, the participant was asked to pronounce the words related to the vocabulary the participant usually learns through streaming apps, television channels, and gaming apps. The vocabulary test materials consist of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs that often appear in children's books such as *Chemistry Lab Mysteries, Fun Laboratory Tools! Chemistry for Kids – Children's Analytic Chemistry Books, Good Pirate*. Following the pronunciation test, an interview with the participant's guardian was conducted via zoom to explore the process of learning.

Discussion
The result shows that the participant mispronounced 5 out of 20 words. Some of the words failed to be pronounced correctly. These words are difficult to pronounce because of the different pronunciations of groups of letters in the participant's mother tongue. The participant pronounced these words as how they are spelled out. The result is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Pronunciation Test Result

Vocabulary	Pronunciation
Crazy (adj.)	Correct
Laboratory (n.)	Incorrect
Jump (v.)	Correct
Watching (v.)	Correct
Island (n.)	Correct

Birthday (n.)	Correct
Charming (adj.)	Correct
Found (v.)	Correct
Dangerous (adj.)	Correct
Happily (adv.)	Correct
Quickly (adv.)	Incorrect
Colorful (adj.)	Correct
Bone (n.)	Correct
Difficult (adj.)	Incorrect
Pirate (n.)	Correct
Loves (v.)	Correct
Early (adv.)	Correct
Bored (v.)	Correct
Immediately (adv.)	Correct
Tonight (adv.)	Incorrect

The participant used American English pronunciation. This corresponds to the content of digital media the participant is exposed to. The participant was very responsive to the test. the ability to pronounce words correctly is supported by the experience of viewing digital shows for a very long time. The accumulated viewing experience is stored in the child's memory and issued in the correct pronunciation of words according to the pronunciation of native speakers that are often heard.

The process of the child's learning experience is formed from the length of time watching. The participant has been exposed intensely to game channels, *Roblox* and *Mobile Legends*, and has spent one to two hours daily getting involved in these interactive games with foreign players since at four years old. The surrounding situation also supports the participant to actively use English in daily life. The power of children's memory to store foreign languages is also supported by cartoons. The participant has been exposed to Disney cartoons since his critical period.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the critical age and the appropriate length of exposure to digital media with foreign language content greatly determine the ability to pronounce English words as a foreign language. Second language acquisition in children is also supported by the environment such as family and friends. A supportive environment can provide feedback on the process of learning foreign languages in children. The accumulated learning experience through digital media will be more productive when it gets immediate feedback rather than delayed feedback.

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