

DEVELOPING EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH ISLAMIC-INSPIRED AUDIO- VISUAL METHODS

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Abstract: *Early childhood is widely recognized as a critical and sensitive period for language acquisition, particularly in the development of foreign language vocabulary. During this stage, children possess high cognitive flexibility and are more receptive to new sounds, words, and meanings. This study explores the effectiveness of Islamic-inspired audio-visual methods in developing English vocabulary among early childhood learners. By integrating religiously contextualized content, such as Islamic stories, values, and daily practices, with engaging audio-visual media, the learning process is expected to become more meaningful and motivating for young learners. Such integration is assumed to enhance learners' motivation, comprehension, and long-term retention of English vocabulary. Employing a mixed-methods research design, this study involved children aged 4–6 years enrolled in an Islamic early childhood education setting. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to measure vocabulary improvement, while qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and teacher interviews. The findings indicate that Islamic-inspired audio-visual materials significantly improve English vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the use of culturally relevant content supports children's moral development and strengthens their cultural and religious identity. Overall, this study contributes to the field of early childhood education by offering a culturally responsive, engaging, and pedagogically sound approach to foreign language learning.*

Keywords: *early childhood education; English vocabulary; audio-visual learning; Islamic education; language acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary development is a fundamental component of early language learning and plays a crucial role in children's cognitive, communicative, and academic growth. During early childhood, learners experience rapid neurological development, enabling them to acquire new lexical items efficiently through exposure, repetition, and meaningful interaction. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), early vocabulary mastery is particularly important, as it forms the foundation for later language skills such as listening comprehension, speaking fluency, reading ability, and writing development. Early exposure to relevant, engaging, and age-appropriate vocabulary instruction is therefore essential for achieving long-term language proficiency.

Despite this importance, traditional approaches to teaching English vocabulary often overlook the developmental characteristics of young learners, such as limited attention spans, concrete thinking patterns, and a strong reliance on sensory input. Furthermore, many instructional practices fail to consider learners' sociocultural and religious backgrounds, which are especially significant in Islamic early childhood education contexts. Teaching methods that are culturally disconnected may reduce learners' motivation, comprehension, and emotional engagement, ultimately limiting the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition.

In Islamic early childhood education settings, integrating religious values into instructional practices is both pedagogically advantageous and culturally appropriate. Islamic-inspired learning materials—such as prophetic stories, daily prayers, moral teachings, and familiar religious expressions—provide meaningful contexts that closely relate to children's daily experiences. When these materials are combined with audio-visual media, including animated videos, songs, nasheed, and interactive storytelling, they create an engaging and supportive learning environment. Such multimodal instruction not only facilitates vocabulary learning but also strengthens learners' moral awareness and religious identity.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of Islamic-inspired audio-visual methods on English vocabulary development in early childhood education. Specifically, it examines vocabulary gains, levels of learner engagement, and the pedagogical implications of implementing culturally responsive EFL instruction in Islamic educational contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Childhood Vocabulary Development

Early childhood is widely regarded as a critical period for vocabulary acquisition, during which children rapidly absorb new words through interaction, imitation, repetition, and contextualized input. Research indicates that vocabulary growth during this stage is closely linked to overall language proficiency, academic success, oral fluency, and later reading comprehension. Young learners acquire vocabulary most effectively when words are presented in meaningful contexts rather than in isolation. Contextual learning enables children to

associate words with actions, objects, emotions, and experiences, making retention more durable.

Moreover, vocabulary learning in early childhood is deeply influenced by social interaction and cultural exposure. Children learn language not only as a system of symbols but also as a tool for communication within their social and cultural environment. Therefore, instructional approaches that align with learners' backgrounds and experiences are more likely to support effective vocabulary development.

Early Language Education through Audio-Visual Learning

Audio-visual learning methods have been widely recognized as effective instructional tools for young learners due to their ability to integrate sound, movement, and visual stimuli. Multimedia learning theory suggests that children learn more efficiently when information is presented through multiple sensory channels. Visual images help learners recognize meaning, while audio input supports pronunciation and listening comprehension.

In language education, audio-visual materials such as songs, animations, and videos have been shown to improve memory retention, word recognition, and pronunciation accuracy. For young learners, these materials also enhance motivation and attention, transforming language learning into an enjoyable and interactive experience. Audio-visual instruction is particularly effective in vocabulary learning, as it allows children to repeatedly hear and see new words used in meaningful contexts.

Religious-Based and Culturally Appropriate Education

Culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the importance of aligning instructional strategies with learners' cultural and religious identities. In Islamic education, integrating religious values into learning materials not only supports academic development but also fosters moral growth and emotional engagement. Previous studies suggest that incorporating religious content into early education strengthens learners' motivation and promotes positive character development, such as honesty, respect, patience, and empathy.

When language instruction reflects students' cultural and religious values, learners are more likely to feel comfortable, confident, and emotionally connected to the learning process. This emotional connection enhances motivation and facilitates deeper learning, including vocabulary acquisition.

Islamic-Inspired Audio-Visual Materials

Islamic-inspired audio-visual materials, such as animated Islamic stories, nasheed (Islamic songs), and value-based cartoons, offer contextualized linguistic input that is both familiar and meaningful to young learners. These materials present vocabulary in natural, repetitive, and engaging ways, allowing children to acquire language implicitly. In addition to linguistic

benefits, Islamic-inspired audio-visual content reinforces moral values and spiritual awareness, making language learning holistic and purposeful.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of Islamic-inspired audio-visual methods on English vocabulary development.

Participants

The participants consisted of 30 children aged 4–6 years enrolled in an Islamic early childhood education institution. All participants had limited prior exposure to English and shared similar educational and cultural backgrounds.

Instructional Materials

The instructional materials included Islamic-inspired audio-visual content, such as animated English videos featuring Islamic themes, English nasheed with repetitive vocabulary, and visual flashcards integrated into video-based storytelling.

Procedure

The intervention was conducted over an eight-week period, with three instructional sessions per week. Each session consisted of vocabulary introduction, audio-visual viewing, guided repetition, and interactive activities such as singing, role-playing, and question-and-answer sessions. Vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure learning outcomes. Classroom observations and teacher interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to measure vocabulary gains, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns of learner engagement and responses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Vocabulary Improvement

The study's findings showed that when Islamic-inspired audio-visual training was used, children's English vocabulary achievement significantly improved. All participants showed discernible improvements in their pre-test and post-test scores, suggesting that the instructional intervention had a beneficial impact on vocabulary development. As they were more adept at

recognizing and remembering the English vocabulary items taught during the classes, learners demonstrated significant progress in word recognition. Additionally, following repeated exposure to audio-visual stimuli, children were able to pronounce English words more confidently and accurately, demonstrating gains in pronunciation accuracy.

Furthermore, students demonstrated enhanced ability to use vocabulary in appropriate contexts. Children were able to comprehend not just the words' forms but also their meanings and practical applications through audio-visual presentations that integrated language into Islamic stories, songs, and everyday moral situations. Deeper vocabulary acquisition was aided by this contextualized learning since students were able to link words to moral principles, behaviors, and imagery. These results imply that early childhood learners' vocabulary acquisition can be successfully aided by audio-visual education based on significant cultural content.

Learner Engagement

Throughout the use of Islamic-inspired audio-visual materials, observational data gathered during the educational sessions showed consistently high levels of learner engagement. When religious stories, vibrant pictures, animated visuals, and nasheeds were used in classrooms, children showed excitement and inquiry. By mimicking gestures or facial expressions shown in the videos, responding to teacher cues, and repeating language loudly, many students engaged in active participation. This enthusiastic participation shows a favorable emotional reaction to the educational exercises. Interestingly, when the audio-visual content included well-known Islamic themes, characters, and stories, engagement levels were especially high. Because of the content's familiarity, students seemed to feel at ease and enjoy themselves, which encouraged them to participate without reluctance. Children showed excitement over repeated viewings, stayed focused for extended periods of time, and showed a readiness to drill language both individually and in groups. These findings demonstrate how culturally appropriate audio-visual materials may sustain young learners' focus and encourage active engagement, both of which are critical components of successful early language acquisition.

Cultural and Moral Integration

The integration of language learning with cultural and moral education was successfully assisted by Islamic-inspired audio-visual materials, according to data collected from teacher interviews and reflective observations. When vocabulary training was incorporated into religious contexts that children were already familiar with, such as prophetic stories, everyday Islamic rituals, and moral precepts, teachers noted that vocabulary instruction became more relevant. As a result, acquiring vocabulary happened organically and comprehensively rather than as discrete word memorization.

Teachers saw favorable behavioral results in students in addition to language advantages. Youngsters were able to link English terminology to moral principles like gratitude, kindness, honesty, and respect. This integration matched the objectives of character education that are frequently highlighted in Islamic educational environments with language training. As a result, using Islamic-inspired materials improved vocabulary learning while also strengthening learners' moral awareness and sense of cultural identity, which aided in their overall personal growth.

The results of this study align with sociocultural theories of language acquisition, which highlight the significance of relevant input, social interaction, and cultural context in the learning process. Through the use of Islamic-inspired audio-visual techniques, the teaching strategy encouraged language development by giving students a scaffolding that was recognizable to their culture. Children felt at ease and inspired to study in this welcoming and inclusive learning environment, which was made possible by the alignment of language instruction with learners' cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, the findings corroborate the multimodal learning hypothesis, which contends that information delivered through a variety of sensory channels—such as visual and aural modes—improves learning. Learners were able to comprehend and recall language more efficiently thanks to the combination of sights, sounds, narration, and contextual narrative. This effect was further reinforced by the incorporation of Islamic-inspired content, which gave the learning process significance and relevance.

Overall, the study shows that an effective pedagogical approach for expanding English vocabulary in early childhood EFL situations is Islamic-inspired audio-visual training. Teachers can foster not only language growth but also engagement, motivation, and character development by honoring learners' identities and incorporating cultural and moral values into language training. These results highlight the value of multimodal and culturally sensitive methods in early childhood language instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic-inspired audio-visual instructional methods are highly effective in developing English vocabulary among early childhood learners. The integration of culturally and religiously meaningful content with engaging audio-visual media provides young learners with a supportive and familiar learning environment that facilitates vocabulary acquisition. By presenting English vocabulary through Islamic stories, songs, animations, and visual representations, learners are able to understand, recognize, and retain new words more effectively. The use of audio-visual media also supports correct pronunciation and contextual understanding, which are essential components of early language development.

In addition to improving vocabulary outcomes, Islamic-inspired audio-visual instruction significantly enhances learner motivation and engagement. Young learners demonstrated increased enthusiasm, attention, and active participation during lessons that incorporated

multimedia materials aligned with their cultural and religious background. This heightened level of engagement allows children to interact more confidently with the English language and reduces anxiety often associated with foreign language learning. As a result, the learning process becomes enjoyable and meaningful rather than repetitive or mechanical.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the important role of cultural and moral integration in early childhood education. Islamic-inspired materials not only support language learning but also contribute to the development of positive character values such as honesty, respect, kindness, and gratitude. Vocabulary learning occurs naturally within meaningful moral contexts, enabling children to internalize both linguistic knowledge and ethical principles simultaneously. This holistic approach aligns language instruction with broader educational goals commonly emphasized in Islamic early childhood institutions.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that culturally responsive audio-visual instruction should be considered a valuable and effective strategy in early childhood EFL contexts, particularly in environments where cultural and religious identity plays a central role in education. Educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to incorporate Islamic-inspired multimedia resources into early English programs to maximize learning outcomes. Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of this instructional approach on overall language proficiency, as well as to investigate the potential of integrating digital interactive technologies, such as educational applications and gamified learning platforms, to further enhance vocabulary development and learner engagement.

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