

Enhancing Student Vocabulary through the Use of the PowToon Application

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Abstract

Vocabulary mastery is crucial for effective language acquisition, enabling learners to comprehend spoken and written words and articulate their thoughts. The PowToon application, with its engaging animated videos, offers an immersive and clear learning experience. This is particularly beneficial for English learners, where proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing is vital. This study investigates the impact of the PowToon application on enhancing students' vocabulary. Utilizing a quantitative approach with a Quasi-Experimental Design, data were gathered through observations and tests. The analysis was based on descriptive statistics. The sample comprised 52 tenth-grade students at Tunas Pelita High School. The experimental group, which used PowToon, had a pretest average of 36.19 compared to the control group's 38.40. However, post-tests revealed a score of 82.31 for the experimental group and 71.70 for the control group, indicating a more significant vocabulary improvement in the PowToon cohort. The findings confirm that the PowToon application positively affects vocabulary acquisition. The research underscores PowToon's potential to enhance students' comprehension, spelling, and pronunciation of English vocabulary, ultimately bolstering their overall learning outcomes.

Keywords: PowToon application, English, learning, students, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language, widely adopted by many countries as their primary mode of communication (Maduwu, 2016). To compete on a global scale, mastering English is indispensable, emphasizing the importance of fluency for students (Wardana, 2023). In Indonesia, English is classified as a foreign language, a classification that holds true in numerous educational settings worldwide (Derakhshan & Shirmohammadi, 2015; Sondakh & Sya, 2022; Copland et al., 2014). The essentiality of

English for future endeavors underscores its significance for students (Sya & Helmanto, 2020).

In high school curricula, English vocabulary is a mandatory subject (Graddol, 2010). However, mastering vocabulary poses challenges for many, with students often struggling to grasp it effectively (Sucandra et al., 2022). A strong vocabulary foundation is crucial for proficient language acquisition (Susanti, 2002; Holidazia & Rodliyah, 2020). Without it, one might find it challenging to communicate effectively in a foreign language (Marice, 2017). Comprehensive vocabulary knowledge equips students with better listening and reading comprehension skills, facilitating clearer expression in both spoken and written forms (Safitri et al., 2023). The consequences of a weak vocabulary foundation can lead to communication barriers, given that vocabulary stands central to transmitting information and ensuring the correct interpretation of linguistic meanings (Meidariani & Meilantari, 2018).

During observations at Tunas Pelita High School in Binjai, initial data revealed numerous students expressing challenges in English learning, encompassing areas like vocabulary writing, pronunciation, and the extensive memorization required. Many perceived the learning journey to be lengthy and arduous. Predominantly, teaching methods employed were traditional, with teachers focusing on book readings, spoken drills in class, and routine practice exercises. Sucandra et al. (2022) pinpointed that a primary factor hindering students' English vocabulary mastery is the suboptimal use of teaching media. Ineffectual media selection, coupled with passive student participation, renders the learning experience monotonous and tedious, diminishing its appeal and effectiveness. Ashar, as cited in Hidayati et al. (2012), posited that teachers must proactively innovate and introduce captivating learning media, which would catalyze positive student engagement and foster an enhanced learning interest, particularly in English.

Diverse and enjoyable techniques can facilitate English vocabulary learning (Safitri et al., 2022). Utilizing short stories as learning material has proven to be effective in amplifying vocabulary (Pardede, 2011). A significant portion of students display a preference for listening to short stories (Lepaludier & Laurent, 2008). Their unique attributes make them apt for reading comprehension exercises (Ghasemi, 2011), and they serve as valuable aids for educators (Ghasemi & Hajizadeh, 2011). Their adaptability extends across varying educational levels and classes (Upreti, 2012; Ceylana, 2016). As Al-Dersi (2013) asserts, the introduction of short stories in English learning is a joyous experience for students, an observation further corroborated by Parvareshbar's (2016) study on the impact of short stories on vocabulary acquisition in Iranian EFL contexts. However, the predominant medium for short stories remains print. To maximize their potential and allure for vocabulary enhancement, presenting short stories as animated videos can make the learning experience more immersive and engaging.

Mayer (2005) defines video as a multimedia component, an instructional method representing both words (spoken or printed text) and images, which can include illustrations, photographs, animations, or videos. Animated videos, as categorized by Harrison and Hummell (2010), span various types, from 2D and 3D animations to motion graphics, typography videos, stop-motion sequences, and whiteboard animations. Among the software available for producing these animated videos, one stands out for its utility in English vocabulary instruction: PowToon.

PowToon, a web-based application, offers an array of features, including cartoons, graphics, and animations, fostering the creation of engaging visual presentations (Semaan & Ismail, 2018; Lestari, 2020; Suhendra, 2018; Anggita, 2021; Pangestu & Wafa, 2018). Its accessibility to a wide audience, including educators and students, coupled with a user-friendly interface and comprehensive features like handwriting and cartoon animations, versatile transition effects, and an intuitive timeline setup, make it particularly attractive (Kholilurrohmi, 2017; Adkhar, 2016). PowToon's character-driven narratives help elucidate material for students. By blending visual and auditory elements into captivating animated content, the platform enhances the learning experience. Wulandari et al. (2020) commend PowToon's vibrant design, inclusive of colorful backgrounds, animated images, and an option to integrate music, which collectively enhance the appeal of learning. Furthermore, PowToon users can effortlessly share their creations on platforms like YouTube (Pais & Nogués, 2017).

Furthermore, previous studies have indicated that PowToon, when utilized as a learning medium, positively influences academic outcomes (Suhendra et al., 2016; Wulandari et al., 2020) also found that the PowToon platform significantly affects the end results of the educational process, proving beneficial and appropriate for student use. Yuliantini (2021) demonstrated that PowToon can bolster students' English competencies, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. This observation aligns with Suyanti et al. (2021), who suggested that PowToon serves as a viable alternative in online education, motivating students effectively. Lativa et al. (2020) emphasized that lessons delivered via the PowToon application are perceived as tangible, lucid, and more comprehensible by students. Evidently, animations anchored in PowToon have a pronounced positive impact on fostering students' interest in learning.

Given the aforementioned insights, this study investigates the influence of the PowToon application on enhancing vocabulary among students at Tunas Pelita High School. The primary objective is to ascertain the impact of PowToon on the vocabulary acquisition of English students at Tunas Pelita High School. The guiding hypothesis posits a favorable effect of PowToon's usage on amplifying students' comprehension at Tunas Pelita High School.

METHOD

This study adopted a quasi-experimental framework with an emphasis on quantitative data analysis. As highlighted by Creswell (2014), the essence of quantitative methodologies is the systematic gathering, assessment, and synthesis of research findings. Expanding on the nuances of experimental designs, Woodrow (2014) underscores various modalities, singling out the one-group pretest-posttest configuration as one such model. In this vein, Susanti (2010) delineates the structure of this design: a study begins with a baseline assessment (pretest), follows with the application of a designated treatment or intervention, and culminates in a concluding assessment (posttest) to gauge the intervention's efficacy.

This study was conducted with a total of 52 students from grade X at Tunas Pelita Binjai High School. Participants were selected through random sampling, with 20 students from class X A designated as the control group and the remaining 32 from class X B as the experimental group. The data collection process incorporated three main methodologies:

observation and learning outcome tests. During the observation phase, the research team observed the teaching methodologies adopted for English vocabulary in both classes. Subsequently, an innovative approach was introduced to the experimental class: the use of animated videos via the PowToon platform, focusing on short stories to enhance vocabulary.

For the test phase, a multiple-choice test was administered to both classes. This instrument was designed to gather both pretest and posttest data. Class X A, the control group, was exposed to conventional PowerPoint presentations based on short stories, while class X B, the experimental group, utilized PowerPoint presentations enriched with short story animations. The goal was to ascertain any notable differences in vocabulary enhancement between the two teaching methods. Upon completion of data collection, a comparative analysis of pretest and posttest scores was undertaken. Descriptive statistical analysis was the chosen method for evaluating the data, helping determine if a significant impact was observed between the two instructional methodologies. All statistical computations were facilitated using the SPSS version 26 software.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this investigation, a descriptive statistical approach was employed, utilizing both a pretest and a posttest administered to the participating classes. The pretest, conducted prior to any intervention, assessed the initial vocabulary proficiency of both the control and experimental class students. This assessment featured a set of questions tailored to gauge students' vocabulary mastery. Participants had a 90-minute window to complete the test, with materials provided, including the question set and an attendance register. This phase of the study took place in person at SMA Tunas Pelita Binjai.

Following the interventions - which comprised PowerPoint presentations and traditional lectures for class X A (control class) and Powtoon-based animated instructional media for class X B (experimental class) - a posttest was conducted. Both classes were exposed to the same animated content based on a short story. The primary objective of this post-test was to discern the potential efficacy of Powtoon animation videos in augmenting English vocabulary acquisition among students in the experimental class.

Concluding the teaching session, students tackled questions curated by the researcher, mirroring those from the pretest, within the same 90-minute timeframe. To synthesize and compare the performance data from both the pretest and posttest for the control and experimental classes, analyses were conducted using the SPSS version 26 software.

The pre-test Results of the Control Class and Experiment Class

This test is carried out on May 20, 2022, for X grade A, with total of 20 students for the control class and X grade B, with total of 32 students for the experiment class. The results of the pretest in the control class and experiment class. Based on statistical calculations from the SPSS program with the version 26 are obtained in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Description of pretest results data for experiment class and control class

Class		Statistic	Std. Error
Experiment	Mean	36,19	2,933
	Median	36,00	

	Variance	275,190	
	Std. Deviation	16,589	
	Minimum	12	
	Maximum	60	
Class		Statistic	Std. Error
Control	Mean	38,40	2,834
	Median	42,00	
	Variance	160,674	
	Std. Deviation	12,676	

Based on the table, the mean pretest for the control class is 38.40 from the ideal maximum test score of 90. This shows that the initial ability level of students in the control class is 38.4%. Furthermore, the median for the control class is obtained at 42. It means that 50% of the control class students scored under 42, with the highest score being 54 and the lowest score being 18. The mean pretest for the experiment class is, 36.19 from the ideal maximum score of 90. It shows the initial ability level of students in the experiment class is 36.19%. Furthermore, the median for the experiment class is 36. It means that 50% of the experiment class students' scores are under 36, with the highest score being 60 and the lowest score being 12. When it is seen from the standard deviation score in the control class is 12.676 and the experiment class is 16.589. it can be said that the pretest score in the experiment class is more varied. Characteristics of the comparison of results in the control class and the experiment class can be seen from the average score that are achieved. The difference in percentage for the pretest score between the control class and the experiment class are 6.11%. Difference of pre-test score between the control class and the experiment class can be seen in Figure 1 below:

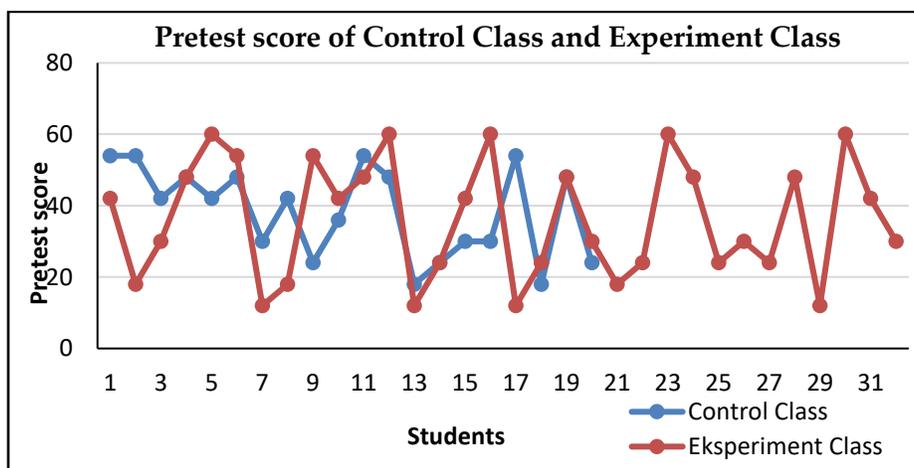


Figure 1. Line diagram of the difference between the pretest score for the control class and the experimental class

The post-test results of control class and experiment class

This test was carried out on May 21, 2022, for X grade A, with total of 20 students for the control class, and X grade B, with total of 32 students for the experiment class. Based on statistical calculations from the SPSS program with the version of 26 are obtained in the Table 2 below:

Table 2. The result of posttest score for the experiment class and control class

Class		Statistic	Std. Error
Posttest Experiment	Mean	82,31	,675

	Median	84,00	
	Variance	30.738	
	Std. Deviation	5.544	
	Minimum	72	
	Maximum	90	
Posttest Control	Mean	71,70	1,921
	Median	72,00	
	Variance	73,800	
	Std. Deviation	8,591	
	Minimum	60	
	Maximum	84	

Based on the table, the mean posttest for the control class is 71.70 from the ideal maximum test score is 90. It shows the final ability level of students in the control class is 71.7%. Furthermore, the median for the control class is 72. It means that 50% of the control class students get a score of 72, with the highest score of 84, and the lowest score of 60. The mean posttest for the experiment class is 82,31 from the ideal maximum score is 90. It shows that the final ability level of students in the experiment class is 82. 31%. Furthermore, the median for the experiment class is 84. The highest score is 90 and the lowest score is 72. The standard deviation score for the control class is 8.591, and the experiment class is 5.544. then it can be said that the score for the control class is more variable. The difference in posttest scores between the control class and the experiment class, it is shown in the Figure 2 below:

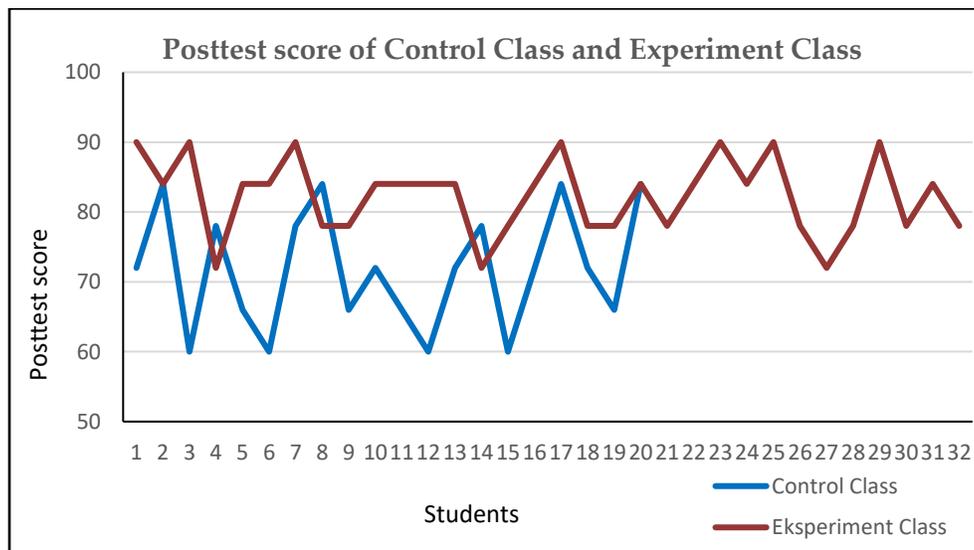


Figure 2. Line diagram of the differences between the post-test score for the control class and experiment class

The Comparison in Learning Impact to the Control Class and Experiment Class

Characteristics of the comparison of posttest results can be seen from the average score in the control class is 71.70, while in the experiment class is 82.31. It shows that there is a difference in the post-test results between the experiment class and the control class are which are 10.61 points due to the influence of using PowToon. The difference of the posttest results between the experiment class and control class are presented in Figure below:

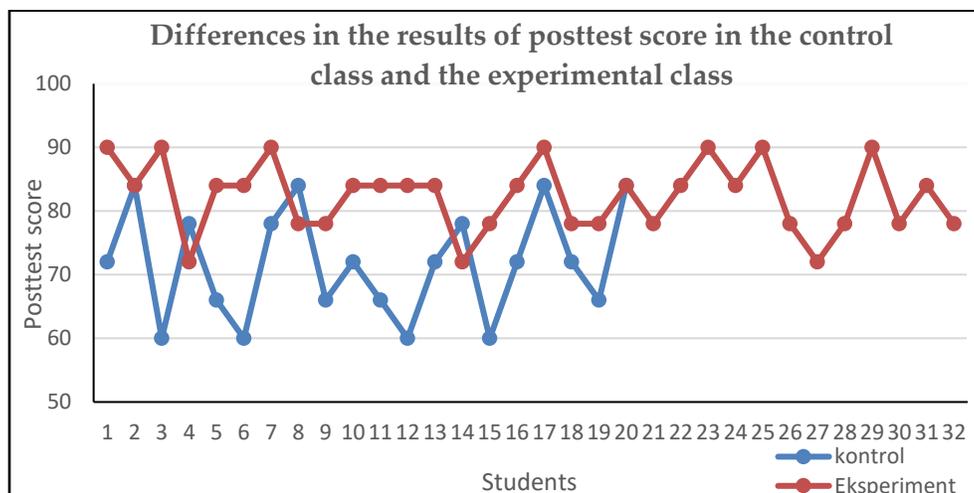


Figure 3. Differences in the results of posttest score in the control and the experiment class

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Normality Test

A normality test is needed for further hypothesis tests. Anormality test aims to test whether the data is normally distributed or not. The normality test is carried out by the software SPSS Statistics with version 26 with the One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov Test analysis technique with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The distribution of data is declared normal if the arithmetic significance (sig.) is greater than the α .

Table 3. A Test of Normality Posttest Score for Experiment Class and Control Class

	Class	Statistic	Do	Sig
Pretest	Experiment	,145	32	,083
	Control	,176	20	,107
Posttest	Experiment	,147	32	,078
	Control	,146	20	,200

In the normality test assessment for the pretest and posttest data, the significance values for both the control and experimental groups were carefully examined to understand the data distribution. For the **pretest** phase, the data from the **experimental group** revealed a significance value of 0.083. This value, being slightly above the 0.05 threshold but below 0.1, places the data on the cusp of normality. On the other hand, the **control group** presented a clearer picture with a significance value of 0.107, affirming that the data adheres closely to a normal distribution. As for the **posttest** results, the experimental group's data hovered near the borderline of normality once again with a significance value of 0.078. Conversely, the control group's posttest data was comfortably within the confines of normal distribution, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.200. In summary, while the control group consistently exhibited data patterns resonating with a normal distribution for both pretest and posttest stages, the experimental group's results bordered on the edge of normality, warranting a cautious interpretation.

Homogeneity Test

A homogeneity test is needed for further hypothesis tests. The homogeneity test aims to test whether the sample has the same initial score or not. Meanwhile, the homogeneity test is carried out with the help of software SPSS Statistics with version 26 with the One-Way Anova analysis technique with a significance level is $\alpha = 0.05$. The data is declared to have the same variance (homogeneous) if the statistical significance (sig.) is more than the score α .

Table 4. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest	Based on mean	3,963	1	50	,062
	Based on median	3,979	1	50	,062
	Based on median and with adjusted df	3,979	1	49,963	,062
	Based on trimmed mean	3,995	1	50	0,61
Posttest	Based on mean	.940	1	50	.345
	Based on median	.516	1	50	.482
	Based on median and with adjusted df	.516	1	67,435	.485
	Based on trimmed mean	.830	1	50	.374

For the **homogeneity test** results, both pretest and posttest data underwent a series of evaluations to ensure consistency across the datasets. In the **pretest** evaluation, when comparing based on the mean, median, median with adjusted degrees of freedom, and the trimmed mean, we observed significant values hovering around 0.062. Specifically, the Levene Statistic produced values of 3.963, 3.979, 3.979, and 3.995, respectively, for each criterion. These values, being slightly above the 0.05 benchmark, suggest that the variance among the groups is moderately homogeneous, demanding a nuanced interpretation.

In contrast, the posttest homogeneity assessment painted a clearer portrait of the dataset's consistency. When tested against the mean, median, median with adjusted df, and trimmed mean, the significance values were notably higher than 0.05, ranging from 0.345 to 0.485. With Levene Statistic values of 0.940, 0.516, 0.516, and 0.830, respectively for each criterion, it was evident that the variances between the groups in the posttest phase were quite homogenous.

Results of Initial Ability Analysis of Experimental Class and Control Class Students

The initial ability of students in the experimental class and control class has differed significantly that is (α) 0.05. if the resulting independent samples t-test has a p-value or sig. 2-tailed is greater than 5% (0.05) then students have the same initial ability.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test of PreTest Experiment Class and Control Class

		Pretest	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal Variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	3,963	
	Sig.	,052	
t-test for Equality of Means	T	,510	,542

df	50	47,846
Sig. (2-tailed)	,612	,590

For the **pretest** phase using the independent sample test, the research first assessed the variances' equality between the groups. Utilizing Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, a value of $F=3.963$ was recorded, leading to a significance value of 0.052. As this value hovers closely around the conventional 0.05 significance threshold, it necessitates a consideration of both conditions: when equal variances are assumed and when they are not. When presuming equal variances, the t-test for equality of means resulted in a t-value of 0.510 with 50 degrees of freedom, culminating in a significance level of 0.612. On the other hand, when not assuming equal variances, the t-value slightly increased to 0.542, but with an altered degree of freedom value of 47.846, leading to a very similar significance level of 0.590. Moreover, both of these significance values, being much greater than the 0.05 benchmark, suggest that there's no significant difference between the means of the control and experimental groups during the pretest phase.

Hypothesis test

The level of change in student learning outcomes after treatment is seen as the difference in the average score of the pretest results between the scores before treatment (pretest) and scores after treatment (posttest). The results of the posttest are used to determine the difference in the scores in the two classes after receiving treatment. The data that has been collected is then analyzed with the SPSS program with the version of 26.

Table 6. The Difference in The Average Score of The Control Class and Experiment Class

Class group	Pretest	Posttest	Difference in the average score
Experiment	36.19	82.31	46.12
Control	38.40	71.70	33.30

A comparative analysis was carried out to ascertain the difference in the average scores between the experimental and control groups. At the onset, during the pretest phase, the experimental group scored an average of 36.19, slightly lower than the control group's average score of 38.40. However, a notable shift was observed in the post-test results. The experimental group exhibited a marked improvement, with their average score surging to 82.31. In contrast, the control group achieved a post-test average score of 71.70.

When examining the difference in average scores from pretest to post-test, the experimental group manifested a significant increase of 46.12 points. In comparison, the control group's enhancement was 33.30 points. This evident disparity underscores the differential impact the two teaching methodologies had on the two groups, with the experimental group benefitting more markedly.

Table 7. An Independent Samples Test to The Posttest Gain Score

		Gain Score	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levenes's test for equality of variances	F	,554	
	Sig.	,460	
t-test for equality of means	T	2,663	2,715
	Df	50	43,034

Sig. (2-tailed)		,010	,009
Mean difference		12,523	12,513
Std. error difference		4,699	4,608
95% confidence interval of the difference	lower	3,074	3,219
	Upper	21,951	21,806

Based on the results of the learning impact analysis presented in Table 7, it is obtained sig.(2-tailed) on the t-test = 0.010 < 0.05, indicating that there are differences in the results of mastery vocabulary in the short story material for learning English which is taught by using animation video learning media based on PowToon with the students that are taught without using animation video learning media based on PowToon with a significant level is 5%. It means that the average learning outcomes of students who are taught using animation video based on PowToon are better than the average learning outcomes of students who are taught without using animation video based on PowToon.

Furthermore, to see the effectiveness of the animation video learning media based on PowToon, it can be known by the Normalized N-Gain test. The effectiveness criteria in this research refers to the average normalized Gain score, which is at least in the medium category.

Table 8. An Average Normalized Gain Value

Class group	Average score		Gain	N-Gain (%)	Category
	Pretest	Posttest			
Experiment	36.19	82.31	46.12	85.72	High
Control	38.40	71.70	33.30	64.54	Medium

Table 8. shows that the experiment class N-Gain is in the high category (N-Gain < 70), while the control class N-Gain is in the medium category (30 N-Gain ≤ 70). Based on the results of the N-Gain test, it can be concluded that the increase in student learning outcomes who are taught by using animation video based on PowToon is higher than students who do not use animation video based on PowToon. In other words, animation video learning media based on PowToon is more effective in improving vocabulary mastery results in English for learning short story material when it is compared to learning media that have been used by the teachers.

Based on the posttest scores and statistical test results obtained, it can be said that learning using PowToon learning media has proven to be efficient and has an effect on increasing vocabulary in English learning. The use of PowToon is able to attract students' attention in the learning process. Because PowToon supports a learning process that requires a real depiction of abstract material concepts (Sari & Ganing, 2021). The various animations provided on PowToon will attract students' attention to focus more and understand learning.

Moreover, based on the results obtained, several facts were found, namely, the packaging of material in the form of animated videos and good relationships between teachers and students will influence improving learning outcomes. Apart from that, the use of PowToon interactive media in learning will influence the increase in vocabulary in English in line with research (Trina et al., 2017), which stated that learning using PowToon

animated video media was considered more fun and helped students better understand the material.

The results before and after given media treatment in the experiment class and control class are the Experiment class has the average score of the pretest is 36.19 while in the control class is 38.40, where the difference in the pretest is 2.21 points and the average score from posttest in the experiment class is 82.31 while in the control class it is 71.70, where the difference in the pretest score is 10.61 points. The data that has been obtained shows that there is an improvement in student learning outcomes after using animation video learning media based on PowToon. The results of the analysis of test data (t-test) in the posttest after us learning media based on PowToon show a significant difference. The t-test score is 0.010 (1%), it means that in this research, it shows that the p-value or probability value (sig.2tailed) the posttest result is smaller than the alpha score (5%), which has the impact that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected and it can be concluded that there are differences in the results of mastery vocabulary in the short story material for learning English which is taught by using animation video learning media based on PowToon with students being taught without by using animation video (Laksmi, 2021) learning media based on PowToon.

This is because the experimental class focuses more on paying attention to the material presented in video form so that students are more active. This is because the many animations available in PowToon are able to attract students' attention in the learning process (Asra, 2020). In line with research (Arumningtyas et al., 2020) which proves that by using PowToon media the learning process becomes less boring so that students pay more attention and students are also active in question-and-answer activities.

CONCLUSION

Through a detailed analysis of the gathered data, it becomes clear that the use of PowToon as an educational tool significantly impacts learning outcomes. Initially, the experimental class, which utilized PowToon, posted an average score of 36.19. This was slightly below the control class's average of 38.40, representing a minor difference of 2.21 points. However, after the teaching phase, the posttest scores showed a considerable gap. The experimental class scored an average of 82.31, outperforming the control class's 71.70 by a noteworthy 10.61 points. This evidence underscores the positive influence of PowToon (Yuliati, 2020) in enhancing vocabulary mastery among students at Tunas Pelita High School in Binjai.

Considering the evident advantages of PowToon, educators should seriously think about incorporating it into their teaching methods. Integrating such digital tools can significantly improve students' capabilities in essential English language skills, such as writing, listening, and understanding vocabulary nuances. As the realm of education continues to merge with technological advancements, it becomes imperative for teachers to adapt and harness innovative platforms that cater to modern students' learning styles. Future research efforts could also focus on exploring the motivational aspects of using tools like PowToon, broadening the investigation beyond just performance indicators.

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