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## The Use of Contextual Media for Elementary School English Class

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### Abstract

*The use of contextual-based learning media is expected to enhance student engagement in the learning process, especially in English language learning at elementary schools. This research was conducted to analyze the use of contextual-based learning media in English language learning at one of the elementary schools in Bangkalan. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, obtained from the interview, observation, and documentation from teacher and students. The research findings indicate that the school uses learning media in the form of flashcards and PowerPoint in English language subjects. The use of this learning media has been contextual by combining lesson materials with concrete examples in real life. These media are effective in enhancing students' enthusiasm, engagement, activity, and understanding of English lesson material.*

**Keywords**– *Learning media, contextual, elementary school English*



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## **1. Introduction**

English as a lingua franca is important for students to learn (Rao, 2019). Teachers need to provide the best preparation so that they have good English language skills (Zein, 2017). In the Merdeka Curriculum, English language learning is designed to help students communicate in everyday life. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of learning that is relevant to students' needs and provides flexibility for teachers to design all learning activities using or developing various models, methods, strategies, and materials needed, including utilizing learning media in English language subjects (Ajoke, 2017).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, English language learning is designed to help students communicate in everyday life. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of learning that is relevant to students' needs and provides flexibility for teachers to design all learning activities using or developing various models, methods, strategies, and materials needed, including utilizing learning media in English language subjects (Kemendikbud, 2024).

Ilmiah & Siliwangi (2020) mention that learning media is used to convey messages of material or basic concepts so that learning runs effectively and efficiently, makes students feel comfortable and motivated, and helps them participate in learning activities and understand the material, thereby achieving the set learning objectives.

However, before using learning media, there are factors in the selection of learning media that need to be considered. Abidin (2016) mentions the factors in question, including the learning objectives to be achieved, the characteristics of the students or target audience, the type of learning stimuli desired, the background or environmental conditions, local conditions, the extent of coverage to be served. Teachers need to consider these factors when selecting media to achieve the desired learning conditions, namely in accordance with the established learning objectives, active student involvement, alignment with the students' situations and needs, and a more effective and efficient learning process.

The use of contextual-based learning media can be one of the suitable media choices for students with learning styles that require real-life examples

rather than just listening to theory. This contextual-based learning media can take the form of videos, simulations, interactive games, images, or texts combined with contextual concepts. The contextual concept referred to is the subject matter linked to real-life situations or the daily experiences of students (Aprilia et al., 2017). Linking experiences will make it easier for students to remember the material being taught because they have experienced it themselves. As Dewey believed that experience is the best learning for students (Sikandar, 2015). In addition, teachers will receive feedback and learning will be more engaging for students through the provision of learning experiences. (Anggraini & Saputra, 2023; Zhou & Wu, 2024).

In English language learning, the use of context-based learning media can help students correlate new concepts with their original objects (Zhou & Wu, 2024). Santiana et al. (2024) provide an example of virtual reality (VR) learning media that can help students practice English in the context of real-world situations. VR creates a realistic environment, allowing students to imagine as if they were in the actual place. Supported by research conducted by Liu and Zhao (in Cahyani, 2024), it was found that VR can improve students' English pronunciation skills and provide an immersive learning experience. Another example is the multimedia application developed by Ayuningtyas et al. (2018) which can help students learn the names of animals in English by providing visualizations through images and animations.

Learning media is created to provide broader opportunities for students so that they can interact with the environment both directly and indirectly. Contextual-based learning media can facilitate teachers in creating a real environment for students beyond the limitations of teachers in presenting the original objects. Helping students process new information naturally and deeply. Thus, contextual-based learning media is necessary to create effective learning, both for teachers in delivering English language learning materials and for students in understanding the given material.

The research was conducted to determine the implementation and student responses to the use of contextual-based learning media at one of the elementary

schools in Bangkalan. By understanding the use of contextual-based learning media at the school, it is hoped that it can serve as a reference in developing relevant learning media.

## **2. Method**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Creswell (2014) in (Roosinda et al., 2021) qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding problems from a number of individuals or groups within a social environment to create a comprehensive picture, which is then presented in a series of words, providing detailed data from specific sources. The focus of this research is to describe the use of contextual-based English learning media at one of the elementary schools in Bangkalan. (S1). The subjects of the research chosen are students from grades I-VI and English teachers.

The data collection technique used is data triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation). Interviews were conducted with the English teachers at the school to understand the use of contextual-based learning media in the classroom, with the aim of understanding the use of learning media from the students' perspective, such as experiences, preferences, needs, engagement, and challenges during the use of learning media. The researcher acts as the interviewer and the English teacher as the interviewee. Observation is conducted as a second supplementary data source, where the researcher observes the teaching media used during the learning process to understand the implementation of the teaching media, including its usage, quality, and student responses. Documentation is carried out to complement the data with photos taken while the teacher is teaching using the teaching media.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

Observations were conducted to determine which learning media are used in the English subject at (S1) from grades I-VI. The results obtained show that the learning media used are flashcards and PowerPoint. Below are the

observation results related to the use of these two media and the students' responses to them:

### ***The Use of Learning Media***

#### ***Flashcard***

The teacher at (S1) uses flashcards to help students remember English vocabulary with the aid of real images. The flashcards used by the teacher only contain images without written descriptions, intended so that students can remember the names of the objects first without immediately seeing the written text as assistance. This method will strengthen the students' memory before they receive confirmation from written explanations.

The use of flashcards in learning begins with the teacher showing pictures to the students, then naming the objects, and the students will repeat after the teacher. For example, the material being taught is about food names. The teacher will show one of the food pictures, for example, meatballs, then ask the students what the name of the food shown by the teacher is, "What is the name of this food?" The students will answer in Indonesian, "Bakso!" Then the teacher will say the name of the food in English, "Bakso in English is meatball," and the students will repeat after the teacher, "Meatball!" It continues like that until all the flashcards are shown. In addition to learning about food names, students learn about the use of the word "like/s" such as "Do you like noodles?", "I like tea", or "She/he likes coffee". Students learn vocabulary and grammar in one session. Students are also given the opportunity to use flashcards in groups to ask and answer each other, making the learning process more active and involving all students.

The use of these flashcards has been adjusted to include content familiar to the students, such as rice, noodles, meatballs, fried rice, fried chicken, tea, and coffee, which the students often encounter. Thus, students will find it easier to apply that vocabulary in their daily lives when they are asked about their favorite food or drink because they are already familiar with those foods and drinks. In addition, the conversation dialogues used are simple, teaching how to use the vocabulary "like," which means to like, with just one or two dialogues.

### *PowerPoint*

The teacher will use PowerPoint when more written explanations and larger images are needed, for example, in the lesson on parts of the house. The teacher provides images of the garage, living room, bedroom, bathroom, dining room, and kitchen. The teacher also includes written explanations for each image so that students can recognize how to write them. Additionally, students also learn about room positions, such as behind and beside. The teacher will provide a floor plan image and include written descriptions like "the bathroom is behind the bedroom."

From these observations, the researcher found that the learning media used by the teacher was contextual. This is evident from the use of images of various rooms. These images are tailored to the students' everyday environment and experiences. For example, in describing the dining room, the teacher added elements that students recognize, such as a dining table, chairs, and plates that are commonly found in their home dining rooms. By displaying images that resemble real rooms, the teacher strives to make learning more relevant and easier for students to understand, especially in grasping English concepts related to room names and positions.

### ***Students' Responses to Learning Media***

#### *Flashcard*

Observations were conducted to determine students' responses to the use of learning media. When the teacher used flashcard learning media, the students appeared enthusiastic in following the entire learning activities from start to finish. Students focus on paying attention when the teacher shows pictures and names them in English, follow the teacher's speech, answer when asked, and are able to actively discuss according to the teacher's instructions. They are able to demonstrate good cooperation and understanding of the material being discussed.

Flashcards can be an effective learning tool to improve elementary school students' English language skills (Zulaini et al., 2023). Flashcards are picture cards that can be accompanied by words or phrases that can be added to provide additional information about the object. Flashcard media can help improve many

aspects, including memory development, independence training, and vocabulary enhancement. (Alvita & Airlanda, 2021). Proven by research conducted by Astuti et al. (2024) that the use of flashcards as an effective learning medium is utilized in English language learning. Flashcards help students significantly improve their mastery of new vocabulary.

#### *PowerPoint*

According to Sukiman (2011) (in Oktaviana et al., 2022), Microsoft PowerPoint is a presentation application program released by Microsoft Corporation. Rusman defines PowerPoint as software designed with features that can easily combine various types of media into an attractive presentation package that can be displayed to an audience. PowerPoint can be an interesting choice for visual learning media because teachers can modify colors, images, photos, and even add audio and video, making the learning process interactive. PowerPoint will help teachers present material visually to students on a large scale, so students can see the same material without the teacher having to create media one by one. (Muthoharoh, 2019)

Based on the research conducted by (Oktaviana et al., 2022), the use of PowerPoint as a learning medium can significantly improve students' speaking skills because it provides visual experiences and interactions that make learning more engaging and relevant. In line with the observed results, the use of PowerPoint by the teacher is able to attract student enthusiasm and participation. Students actively engage in learning by answering and asking questions and following the instructions given by the teacher. They are also able to remember, convey, and apply information in the form of assignments well.

From both learning media, namely flashcards and PowerPoint, they have a positive effect on English language learning. Flashcards are effective for training memory skills and stimulating student engagement. Meanwhile, PowerPoint offers visual support to clarify concepts. However, the variation of learning media in (S1) still needs to be improved to optimize student learning outcomes. From the observations obtained, the learning media created by teachers are those derived from instructions in the teaching materials. In other words, if the teaching

materials do not mention that teachers should create learning media, then the teachers do not make it. Relying on instructions from the teaching materials as a guide for creating learning media is not wrong, but this limitation can hinder teachers from providing innovative and new learning opportunities to students. Teachers play a central role in creating dynamic and engaging learning experiences. By innovating, teachers can adjust learning media to be more relevant to students' needs and create a creative and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Innovation in learning media not only enriches the variety of learning but also can enhance students' interest and motivation with new and engaging elements. This becomes increasingly important considering that each class has unique characteristics that may not be fully accommodated by the standards in teaching materials. (Dani et al., 2023), Therefore, teachers need to view the instructions in the book as a basic guide, not as a limitation for creating learning experiences.

Another observation obtained is that the teacher has not yet asked for feedback from the students. Although student enthusiasm during learning can be an initial positive indicator, directly asking for feedback from students is equally important to ensure the effectiveness of the learning media used (Rahman, 2014). Direct confirmation through reflection at the end of the lesson allows teachers to gain deeper insights into what students are feeling, such as the difficulties faced by students and aspects that need improvement.

In addition to optimizing and improving the quality of learning media, according to Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) (in Rahman, 2014) reflection activities also have a positive psychological effect on both students and teachers. By actively involving students, teachers can create a learning environment that ensures students feel engaged and meets their needs. Requesting feedback also supports the professional development of teachers. Teachers can continue to learn and innovate based on student feedback, making the learning process more effective and relevant in each session.





**Picture 1.** The teacher demonstrates the flashcard to the students

#### **4. Conclusion**

Learning media play an important role in the teaching and learning process; teachers can use learning media as an aid to create a more interactive learning environment and support students' conceptual understanding. Contextual learning can provide meaningful experiences for students because it relates to their daily lives; the provision of familiar content will help them understand the material, especially in English language learning. The use of contextual-based learning media will help students develop their language skills.

The research results show that English teachers at (S1) use learning media in the form of flashcards and PowerPoint in English language teaching. The teachers use these media to help students develop their English skills, especially in vocabulary mastery and daily conversation. The results of the observations conducted show a positive response from the students; they are more enthusiastic and actively participate in the learning process.

However, the variation of learning media used by the teacher is still lacking, and the teacher's ability to create media is still limited to guidelines in books, so the teacher needs to innovate and develop other learning media to make the learning activities more varied and meet the needs of different student

characters. In addition, teachers also need to seek feedback or conduct reflection activities to ensure the effectiveness of the learning media used..

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