The Secondary Students' Perception on Visual Vocabulary Apps in English Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract

Vocabulary is the basic of learning English as a foreign language that needs English teachers' attention in its teaching and learning process. English teachers are expected to present a fascinating activity in the process of teaching English vocabulary. Concerning English vocabulary teaching and learning in the secondary schools, the use of an interactive and compelling media can benefit the students' vocabulary learning improvement. Visual vocabulary application (apps) is one of an interactive media that is used by the English teachers in vocabulary teaching in the secondary school. Point to that, this present study aims to capture this visual vocabulary apps is perceived by secondary schools. By applying a descriptive qualitative study, the writers involved the thirty-two secondary schools' students to complete the closed-questionnaires. The finding show that visual vocabulary application is perceived positively by the students. They admit that this application is interesting and stimulating for them to learn more on English vocabulary.

Keywords: visual vocabulary apps, vocabulary learning, secondary school students' perception

Introduction

Vocabulary is an important aspect when studying English. Based on Laufer (1997) in Komachali & Khodareza (2012) vocabulary learning is the main point in language learning and language use. Another opinion comes from Hornby (2004) in Setiyawan (2015) states that vocabulary is a combination of many words in the language used by a person. Also, vocabulary is the foundation for building language, which plays an important role in communication. In this case, vocabulary is a combination of words that people use in the language and are used in teaching English.

Vocabulary is a component learned in language learning. According to Rahmadani (2015) without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. No matter how good the student learns grammar, no matter how well the voice is mastered, without the vocabulary to express the words, communication will not happen (Nushi & Jenabzadeh, 2016). From the above statement, it can be concluded that vocabulary learning for students is important to succeed in learning and mastering a language.

Mobile-phones are communication tools that have the ability to search for information, send short messages, videos, pictures, sounds, play music, and for other purposes. Mobile-Phones have become an essential part of everyday life. Mobile-phones consist of iOS and

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Android in that they offer various e-learning applications and are free to download. (Kukulska-hulme & Shield, 2008) states that when students use cellphones, they feel happy while studying and get better results. Based on this statement, it can be concluded that mobile-phones are expected to help students in learning English vocabulary. In learning vocabulary, students need vocabulary applications, for example, "Learning English Vocabulary Applications". This is known as a Visual Vocabulary App.

Visual vocabulary is an English learning application on a mobile phone that uses a fun learning method. The application can be downloaded for free on the Playstore and has been downloaded by more than one million users on the Playstore and has a rating of 4.6. This application has several features such as listening, writing, speaking, and pronunciation exercises to build our vocabulary skills and language skills. This application is offline so it does not require an internet connection. There are many languages to learn such as German, French, Russian, Arabic, Spanish and other languages in visual vocabulary. Learning vocabulary using a mobile application is an effective way to attract students' interest in learning English. Learn English using visual vocabulary apps effectively, easily, and quickly. They will easily understand the process of learning English in class. At this point, the writers are interested in researching the application of visual vocabulary apps as an English teaching media to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

There are some previous studies focusing on the use of visual vocabulary application. The first is a study conducted by Gürkan (2018). The purpose of this study was to determine students' views on the mobile effect of the assisted vocabulary learning application (MAVL) (VocaStyle), which was developed by the writer on the learning process and its effect on vocabulary learning. Data was collected by interviewing participants using a form. The ten participants consisted of five aural learners and five visual learners. The data were then analyzed by thematic content analysis method. The results obtained reveal that the MAVL application is effective, motivating and useful in learning vocabulary. The findings above show that the MALV application can be used in vocabulary learning and can help participants improve vocabulary mastery.

The second is study from Devitasari (2019) focusing on the effectiveness of the visual vocabulary app in learning vocabulary compared to using conventional methods on seventh-grade students at a public junior high school in Semarang. This study used quasi-experimental consisting of pre-test and post-test methods which focuses on writing vocabulary. The pre-test results resulted in a score in the experimental group was 73.13 and the score in the control group was 73.59. The post-test results resulted in a score in the experimental group was 87.66 and the score in the control group was 80.47. These results indicate that the visual vocabulary app has a positive effect in teaching vocabulary. There are significant differences between the two experimental and control groups. It means that students who are taught using visual vocabulary applications get a better increase in vocabulary than students who are taught using conventional methods in teaching vocabulary.

In the same vein, Cabrera-Solano (2019) conducted a study focusing on the effectiveness of using visual vocabulary apps as a metacognitive strategy for learning English as a Foreign Language Vocabulary (EFL). This study uses 42 EFL pre-service teachers aged 18-25 years, who have A1 + Common Level of proficiency of the European Reference Framework (CEFR) and has enrolled in the second semester of an English language program at a private university in Loja, Ecuador. The method used is quasi-experimental approach, pre-test and

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post-test, questionnaires and interviews to collect research dataThe results showed that the use of visual vocabulary apps had a positive effect as a metacognitive strategy to improve EFL learning vocabulary, and students showed a positive attitude when using visual vocabulary in vocabulary learning.

The fourth study was done by Hashemifardnia (2020) from Islamic Azad University of Iran. In this study, he used the visual vocabulary application to Iranian EFL students to test the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. This study used 42 intermediate EFL students who participated and were divided into experimental and control. The results on the t-test showed that the value of the experimental group was higher than the control group. The results show that the visual vocabulary application has a good effect on learning vocabulary. Another similar study is a study conducted by Tahir (2020) emphazing on the effectiveness of visual vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language Vocabulary (EFL). In this study, 60 students were selected from sub-urban schools in Ipoh and Teluk Intan, Perak. In this study, post-test and pre-test methods were used with independent t-test samples and paired t-tests and used descriptive statistics at the final stage to analyze the results of the study. Paired sample t test results were ($t = -17.85$, $df = 29$, $p < 0.05$) for the experimental group and ($t = -4.85$, $df = 29$, $p < 0.05$) for the control group. From the results obtained, the value of the experimental and control groups increased significantly ($p = .000 *$) in the post-test with a mean difference of 15.62. At this point, it can be confirmed that visual vocabulary can help and improve vocabulary understanding and knowledge.

While the previous studies focused more on the effectiveness of visual vocabulary apps and adult learners, this current study takes the focus on the students' perception on visual vocabulary apps. Further, this study involved secondary school students as the participants in which they are in the starting phase of learning English. Point to that, this present study is trying to capture the students' perception on the implementation of visual vocabulary application in their vocabulary learning and its contribution in students' English vocabulary learning.

Literature Review

Definition of Vocabuary

In the language, there are various important elements that must be mastered, one of which is vocabulary. Based on Nation (2001) "The importance of vocabulary has been ignored, when people begin to realize that learning vocabulary is not a simple thing". In this case, many people do not realize the importance of vocabulary in language, without vocabulary all information in language cannot be used. Another opinions comes from (Linse, 2006 in Devitasari, 2019) vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. It means that vocabulary is a collection of words that are known and used by someone to express an idea.

Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is one of the elements in language that must be mastered. For students who are learning English as a foreign language vocabulary mastery is very important. In English, vocabulary is very necessary in order to receive and provide information properly. According to (Hiebert, 2005) vocabulary is an important element in language and students should be aware of the importance of vocabulary as a first experience in learning language rather than

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grammar or function. From the explanation above, students are required to master vocabulary because it is an important aspect of English which is also the first basic thing that is learned when learning English. Lack of knowledge in vocabulary will make students have problems in English.

Visual Vocabulary Application (Apps)

A mobile phone app is a facility available in mobile-phone that can improve vocabulary knowledge in English. English learning app is available in play store which can be downloaded for free via mobile phone. Learning English using a mobile phone application can facilitate learning because it can eliminate time and place barriers (Subian, 2014; Liu & He, 2014).

Visual Vocabulary App is a mobile application located in the play store that has a rating of 4.6 out of 5 that has been downloaded by more than one million users, there are various features such as, learning how to pronounce a word, flashcard, test, writing, listening, speaking. The app can be downloaded for free through the play store and there are also advertisements that can be purchased. Visual learning tools that contain words and meanings of words in diagram form are very effective when learning a language (Kim & Gilman, 2008; Phillips, 2016). Visual Vocabulary App is an application that uses flashcards as the main learning so that it can make it easier for students to learn vocabulary. This application will help teachers as learning media to develop students' mastery of English vocabulary. This app requires internet connection to operate and the simple interface provides a new experience for students while using this app to improve their vocabulary.

Method

This study carried out descriptive qualitative research design by involving 32 students in a secondary school (SMP Negeri 31 Purworejo). The selection of the participants was based on purposive random sampling. In this case, they are the students whose English teacher had implemented the visual vocabulay application for a semester. In collecting the data, the writers used a closed-questionnaire. This closed-questionnaire was adapted from Fikri (2020). The result of the collected data was analyzed and intepreted descriptively.

Finding and Discussion

A. How to operate the apps

Before using the visual vocabulary application there are several steps to use it, such as:

1. First, to use the application on a mobile phone, the students can download it on Play Store or App Store and install it. After open the application the learners go into the main menu view. The learning experience will be divided into several sections such as "person" or "food" and others.

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Figure 1.1 Booting Screen   *Figure 1.2 Home Screen*

2. Next, after entering the main menu, students will see several topics to choose from. After selecting a topic, several options will appear, such as flashcards, text, writing, listening, speaking, and tasks. To learn vocabulary Learners can choose flashcards. Then students can choose a subtopic about what material will be studied.
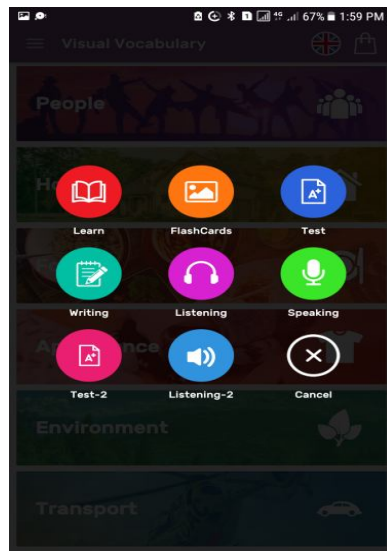
Figure 1.3 Menu Option   *Figure 1.4 Menu Choosing Topic*

3. Finally, there will be some images of about 30-40 flashcards images from the select subtopic. The images flip up will appear the meaning of the images. When all the images show the reader can proceed to the test stage to check the vocabulary skills or return to the home page menu.

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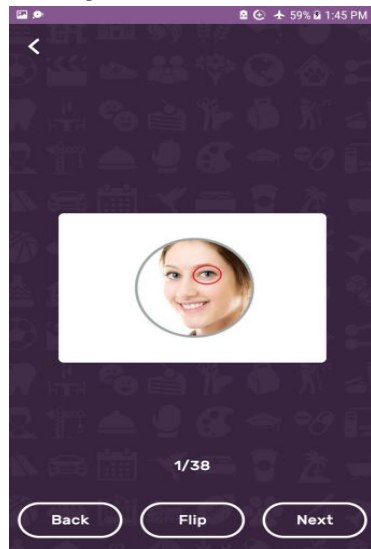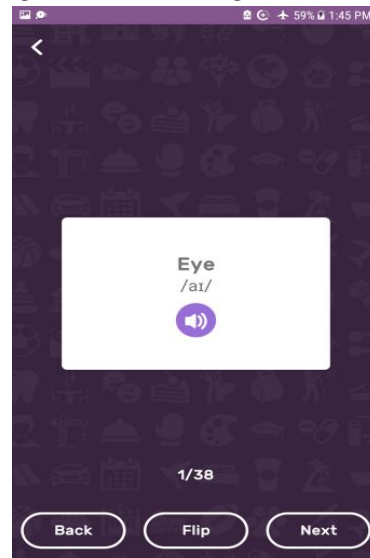August 7, 2021

Figure 1.5 Flashcard   *Figure 1.6 Meaning the Flashcard*


Those are some steps to operate visual vocabulary apps to get new words. This app is very easy to use at home or outdoors. This app also does not require an internet connection so it can be used anytime and anywhere. Each progress is automatically saved in this app.

B. The Analysis of Questionnaires

The questionnaire is used to get data about students' perception after using Visual Vocabulary app as media learning. The numbers of questions in the questionnaire are 30 items. The writer provided a closed-ended questionnaire. The data can be seen in the following graphs and descriptions:

1. Student's interest

Graph 1. Students' interest
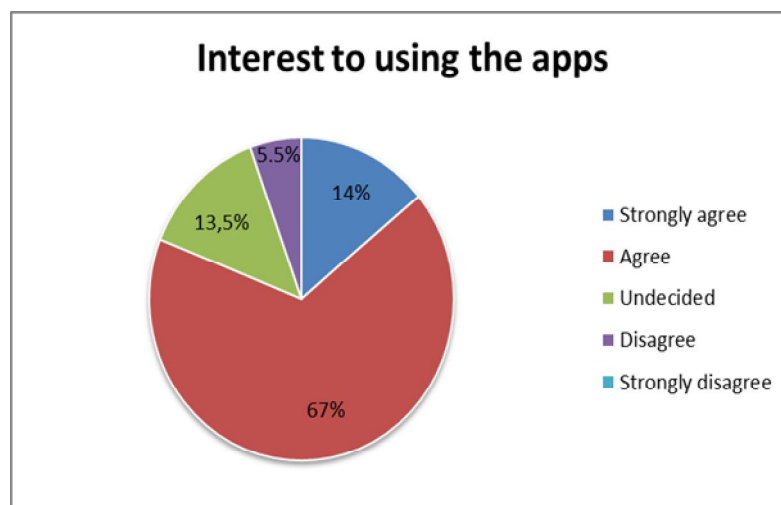
From the diagram above, there are 67% agree that they are interested in using the app, three statements were found to be positive, they respond by agreeing with the statements that the app is improving, motivated, and helps them to learn new words.

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There are 14% of students strongly agree, 5.5% students disagree and 13.5% of them are undecided by using this app to improves their vocabulary. This calculation shows that they are interesting to the app and has a positive effect on students' motivation in the process of learning vocabulary.

2. Content of the apps

Graph 2. Content of the app

Content of the apps

0%
8,8%   12,7%
18,1%
60,4%

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
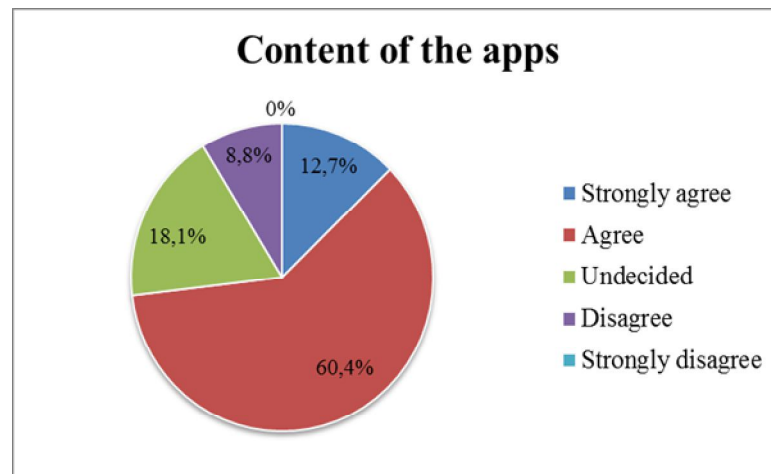
Based on the diagram above, most students agree, 60.4% agreed and 12.7% strongly agree if the material in this app is easy to understand and to use. Such as flashcards are attractive, themes or topics are up to date, vocabulary easy to understand, suitable for beginner, and sounds easy to hear. 18.1% feel undecided if the content in this app can help students to develop vocabulary. 8.8% of them disagree. It shows that the content in this application facilitates them in understanding and practicing to improve their vocabulary mastery.

3. Layout of the Apps

Graph3. Layout of the app

Layout of the apps

0%
11%   8%
16%
65%

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
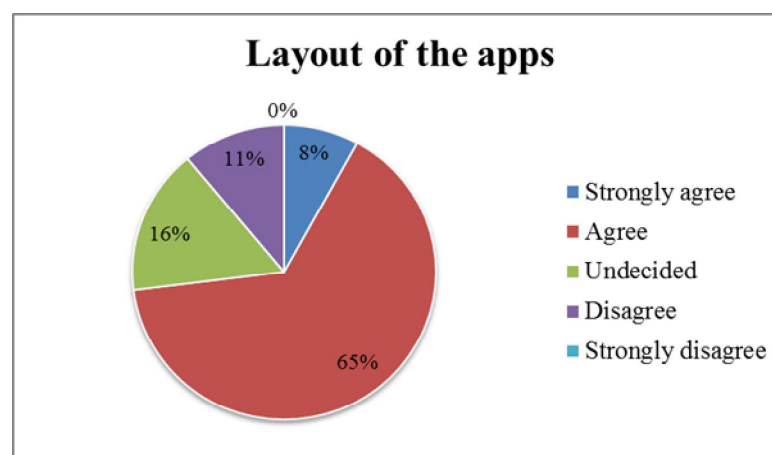
Based on the diagram above, most students agree that the layout display by the app is interesting such as the screen display colorful, readable fonts, and clear

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flashcards but they also agree that if frequent advertising often appears and disturbing, there are 65% agree, 8% strongly agree, 16% undecide and 11% of them disagree they assume flashcards were not clear, visible navigation display screens that were difficult to use. It shows that the app has an interesting layout but with weaknesses. The app needs to fix such as advertising and images on flashcards are made clear.

C. The contribution of using the apps

Based on questionnaires that have been shared with students, this app shows contributions to develop student vocabulary. The first is the app helps students to improve their vocabulary mastery in EFL. The second is the app enhances their vocabulary and motivates them to learn English vocabulary. The third is the app facilitates students in remembering vocabulary also practice the material in daily life.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, it can be infered that visual vocabulary application is perceived positively by secondary school students. This application is regarded an intersting and compeling media for students in learning English vocabulary. The use of visual vocabulary apps helps the students in maintaining their English learning better. Their adaptive phase of technology use in their learning does not impact their English vocabulary learning. The fact shows that they are motivated and encouraged more when this visual vocabulary application is implemented in English vocabulary teaching and learning. These facts implies that the use of visual vocabulary application in English vocabulary learning is beneficial for students in the secondary school. However, it is still essential to explore the other factors influencing the use of visual vocabulary application and English vocabulary learning. The other variables such as students' technological competence, internet availability, parents' support need to be investigated more whether they have an impact on the use of visual vocabulary application and English vocabulary learning.

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