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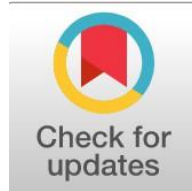
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Stick On Visual Media Cultivates Elementary English Vocabulary Acquisition And Student Engagement

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Abstract

General Background: Vocabulary acquisition constitutes a fundamental pedagogical challenge in primary language education due to abstract instructional methods and limited contextual exposure. **Specific Background:** Integrating concrete instructional tools, such as stick-on visual labels attached directly to physical classroom objects, aligns with cognitive constructivist theories by connecting abstract linguistic concepts with tangible reality. **Knowledge Gap:** While previous empirical studies extensively document quantitative vocabulary retention metrics, qualitative research exploring the subjective pedagogical perceptions and lived experiences of young learners regarding these physical media remains notably limited. **Aims:** This descriptive qualitative research investigates elementary students' perceptions of acquiring English vocabulary through stick-on visual media at primary schools in Sidoarjo. **Results:** Data collected through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews with three fifth-grade students across varying cognitive levels demonstrated overwhelmingly positive pedagogical responses. Learners reported that tangible labels connected words to physical objects, cultivated classroom enjoyment, accelerated vocabulary mastery, and built their confidence in active language use. **Novelty:** The study uniquely foregrounds young learner voices to validate the utility of environmental print labeling, shifting the analytical focus from isolated test scores to holistic student experiences. **Implications:** Educators must strategically integrate environmental visual labels as routine classroom features and apply differentiated instructional scaffolding to support diverse cognitive levels during language acquisition.

Highlights:

- ♦ Tangible stick-on labels successfully translate abstract linguistic concepts into concrete learning experiences for young language learners.
- ♦ Physical environmental labeling directly builds student confidence and drives active vocabulary usage within the classroom.
- ♦ Learner feedback validates the integration of visual environmental tools as a core strategy for language acquisition.

Keywords: Stick-On Visual Media, English Vocabulary Acquisition, Student Perception, Constructivist Theory, Primary Education

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I. Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition remains a fundamental yet challenging aspect of English language learning, particularly for elementary students who often struggle with retention and meaningful engagement. Recent studies confirm that young learners face significant difficulties in mastering new words due to limited exposure, abstract presentation methods, and insufficient contextual understanding [1], [2], [3]. These challenges frequently result in decreased motivation and poor learning outcomes, as students find it difficult to connect words with their meanings without concrete references. To address this persistent issue, educators have increasingly turned to visual media as an effective instructional tool, recognizing that visual aids can bridge the gap between abstract language concepts and students' cognitive abilities. Empirical evidence demonstrates that visual representations such as pictures, flashcards, and interactive media significantly enhance vocabulary retention by providing memorable associations and contextual understanding [1], [2], [4]. Among various visual strategies, stick-on visual media offers a particularly engaging and accessible approach, allowing students to physically interact with vocabulary items while creating meaningful connections between words and their visual representations.

Building upon these visual learning principles, stick-on visual media emerges as a particularly innovative and practical application that combines tangible interaction with visual representation. Stick-on visual media, which consists of adhesive stickers featuring illustrated images alongside their corresponding English vocabulary labels, represents a concrete form of environmental print that can be directly attached to real objects in the learning environment [5]. By labeling everyday classroom objects such as chairs, tables, doors, and windows with these illustrated stickers, students repeatedly encounter vocabulary in authentic contexts, creating direct word-object associations through daily exposure. This approach aligns fundamentally with constructivist learning theory as proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through learner interaction with their physical and social environment [5], [6]. Piaget's cognitive constructivism posits that learners build understanding by actively engaging with concrete materials and experiences, while Vygotsky's social constructivism highlights the importance of cultural tools and meaningful contexts in cognitive development [5]. In this framework, stick-on visual media functions as both a physical learning tool and a mediating artifact that bridges the gap between abstract language concepts and tangible reality, enabling elementary students to construct vocabulary knowledge through repeated, contextualized encounters within their immediate learning environment.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of environmental print and object labeling strategies in promoting vocabulary acquisition among young learners. Studies have shown that children who engage with environmental print, including labeled objects in their learning environment, demonstrate significant gains in letter recognition, word reading, and print motivation compared to traditional methods [7], [8]. The physical labeling of everyday classroom objects creates multiple daily exposure opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning, enabling students to encounter target words in meaningful, authentic contexts through natural environmental interactions [9]. Research utilizing augmented reality applications that add virtual labels to physical objects has revealed enhanced vocabulary retention and learner engagement, suggesting that connecting words directly to their referents facilitates stronger mental associations [8], [10]. Furthermore, environmental print interventions have been found to sustain vocabulary gains over extended periods, with children maintaining improved letter knowledge and word recognition skills months after initial exposure [7]. Despite these documented benefits regarding the effectiveness of stick-on visual media and environmental print labeling in vocabulary learning, research examining elementary students' perceptions of this learning approach remains remarkably limited. While existing studies have primarily focused on measurable learning outcomes such as vocabulary test scores and retention rates, there is a notable gap in understanding how students themselves perceive and experience learning through stick-on visual media, including their attitudes, preferences, and subjective assessment of its usefulness in their vocabulary acquisition journey.

Understanding student perception becomes critically important in this context, as learner perspectives serve as a fundamental determinant of educational innovation success and sustainable implementation. Research consistently demonstrates that students' perceived usefulness and attitudes toward learning tools significantly influence their engagement, adoption intention, and ultimate learning outcomes [11], [12]. When students perceive an instructional method as beneficial and relevant to their learning needs, they exhibit higher levels of motivation, active participation, and willingness to integrate the approach into their regular learning practices [13]. Moreover, student perception functions as a reliable predictor of educational technology acceptance, with performance expectancy, defined as learners' belief that a particular tool will enhance their learning effectiveness, emerging as the most influential factor in determining adoption success [12]. In the case of stick-on visual media, understanding how elementary students perceive this concrete, tactile approach to vocabulary learning is essential for several compelling reasons. First, children's positive perceptions can amplify the inherent benefits of visual learning by increasing their intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement with the learning material [11]. Second, student feedback provides invaluable insights into the practical effectiveness and potential limitations of stick-on visual media implementation, enabling educators to refine their instructional strategies based on actual learner experiences rather than assumptions [14]. Finally, investigating student perception acknowledges learners as active participants in their educational journey, recognizing that their voices and experiences should inform pedagogical decisions and innovation adoption in elementary English language classrooms.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the identified research gap by investigating elementary students' perceptions of learning English vocabulary through stick-on visual media, examining their attitudes, experiences, and subjective evaluations of this tangible learning approach. By foregrounding student voices and perspectives, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into how young learners perceive the integration of physical, illustrated labels in their vocabulary acquisition process. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research question: "What are students'

perceptions of learning English vocabulary through Stick-On Visual Media in Primary Schools in Sidoarjo?"

II. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain comprehensive understanding of elementary students' perspectives regarding stick-on visual media in enhancing English vocabulary learning [15], [16]. The descriptive qualitative method was selected because it allows researchers to capture rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and viewpoints using natural, straightforward language without requiring extensive theoretical abstraction [17]. This approach is particularly well-suited for exploring educational phenomena where the focus lies in understanding participants' lived experiences rather than generating new theories or testing hypotheses [18].

Three fifth-grade students from one elementary school in Sidoarjo were selected as research subjects using purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberate selection of information-rich participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives [19]. The students represent three distinct cognitive levels to ensure diverse perspectives: Student A (LS), low cognitive level, male, age 11, average score 68, demonstrates shy learning behavior requiring visual support; Student B (MS), medium cognitive level, male, age 10, average score 78, exhibits moderate classroom participation; and Student C (HS), high cognitive level, female, age 11, average score 88, displays high activity and curiosity. This purposive selection ensures comprehensive examination of how visual media supports vocabulary acquisition across different learning abilities [20].

The research utilized stick-on visual media consisting of vinyl stickers measuring 5 cm × 7 cm containing clear pictorial representations alongside English text labels, attached to twelve classroom objects including door, window, table, chair, whiteboard, cupboard, ruler, fan, shelf, speaker, wall, and projector. Data were collected through semi-structured interview guidelines adapted from Fauzan [21], covering five adjusted themes: assisting in understanding learning materials, making the learning process more engaging and enjoyable, enhancing vocabulary mastery, encouraging confidence and active vocabulary use, and identifying challenges and suggestions. Observation sheets were employed to document student interactions and vocabulary usage patterns. In-depth semi-structured interviews lasting 10-15 minutes each were conducted with all three students at the conclusion of Week 4, carried out in Bahasa Indonesia to accommodate student comfort levels and tailored to suit each student's cognitive abilities. Participatory observation was conducted over four weeks (May 2024) with four sessions (one per week, one hour each) to investigate students' interactions, usage patterns, and behavioral modifications.

Data were analyzed using content analysis following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, which consists of three iterative stages conducted simultaneously with data collection [22]. First, data reduction involved transcribing all interviews verbatim (approximately 4 pages), applying thematic coding, and filtering relevant information from observations and documentation. Second, data categorization organized findings into coherent themes including initial responses, vocabulary recognition, motivation, learning effectiveness, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Third, data interpretation synthesized results to answer the research question while emphasizing students' perspectives on stick-on visual media as learning aids.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation techniques combining both source and method approaches [23], [24]. Source triangulation was implemented by comparing data obtained from three students representing different cognitive levels, allowing researchers to examine consistency and variations across diverse participant perspectives [25]. Method triangulation was applied by cross-verifying findings from semi-structured interviews with observation data. Specifically, interview responses regarding students' perceptions of stick-on visual media were systematically compared with observational records of their actual classroom interactions, vocabulary usage frequency, and behavioral patterns during learning activities. This cross-verification process involved analyzing interview transcripts alongside observation field notes to identify convergence or divergence between what students reported and what researchers directly observed, thereby strengthening the credibility and reliability of research findings [26].

III. Findings and Discussion

A. Findings

Students' Perceptions of Learning English Vocabulary Through Stick-On Visual Media

The researchers categorize student perceptions into five sections based on the interview data collection process.

1) Assisting in Understanding the Learning Materials

Students indicated that stick-on visual media facilitated their comprehension of English vocabulary. This perception is evident in the following statements:

"Yes, Ma'am. The pictures are cute, so I know that 'table' means meja and 'chair' means kursi. But sometimes I still forget when the words are long." (LS)

"Yes, Ma'am. The pictures really help. When I see the sticker on the 'door', I immediately know it means pintu. So I'm not confused anymore when the teacher asks." (MS)

"Yes, absolutely, Ma'am. When there are pictures and words on the actual objects, I understand quickly. I can memorize because I see them every day and know their meanings." (HS)

The direct attachment of illustrated stickers to classroom objects enabled students to establish concrete connections between English words and their physical referents, making abstract vocabulary more tangible and comprehensible. Students across all cognitive levels reported that learning vocabulary became significantly easier when stickers were placed directly on classroom objects, as they could simultaneously observe the object while reading its English label.

2) Making the Learning Process More Engaging and Enjoyable

Students expressed positive emotional responses toward the learning experience facilitated by stick-on visual media. Their perceptions are reflected as follows:

"It's fun, Ma'am. The classroom becomes lively and I like seeing the colorful stickers." (LS)

"It's enjoyable, Ma'am. The lesson doesn't become boring like usual. I'm happy when there are word-finding activities in class." (MS)

"It's really fun, Ma'am! I really like learning like this because I can see, read, and play while learning. So I don't feel sleepy and want to keep learning English." (HS)

These statements are further supported by students' agreement that stickers made lessons more attractive through visual appeal and interactive elements. The colorful, animated illustrations transformed the classroom environment into a vibrant learning space, stimulating students' interest and maintaining their attention throughout English lessons.

3) Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery

The use of stick-on visual media demonstrated positive effects on students' vocabulary acquisition and retention. This impact is illustrated through the following perceptions:

"I memorized 'table', 'chair', and 'door', Ma'am. But for long words, I still find them difficult." (LS)

"I learned many, Ma'am. There are 'window', 'wall', 'blackboard', and 'floor'. Now I know all their meanings." (MS)

"I memorized many, Ma'am. There are 'door', 'cupboard', 'wall', 'whiteboard', and 'floor'. When I see the objects, I immediately remember the words in English." (HS)

Students confirmed that the daily exposure to labeled objects significantly aided their vocabulary memorization, with higher cognitive level students demonstrating more extensive vocabulary acquisition. The repetitive visual encounters with stick-on labels created automatic word-object associations, enabling students to recall English vocabulary spontaneously when encountering labeled items in their classroom environment.

4) Encouraging Confidence and Active Use of Vocabulary

Students reported varying levels of confidence in actively using the learned vocabulary in communicative contexts. These perceptions are expressed as follows:

"A little, Ma'am. Sometimes I'm afraid of speaking incorrectly." (LS)

"Yes, Ma'am. Now I dare to say simple words like 'table' and 'door'." (MS)

"Yes, Ma'am. Now I'm more confident to speak in English because I already know the meanings and how to use them. So I'm not afraid of making mistakes anymore." (HS)

While confidence levels varied according to cognitive abilities, students generally demonstrated increased willingness to use English vocabulary actively. Higher cognitive level students exhibited particular confidence in constructing simple sentences such as "The window is big" or "I clean the board every day," indicating that stick-on visual media not only supported vocabulary recognition but also encouraged practical language production.

5) Identifying Challenges and Suggestions

Students identified specific difficulties encountered during the learning process and offered constructive suggestions for improvement:

"The difficult ones are long words, Ma'am, like 'cupboard' and 'whiteboard'." (LS)

"Sometimes I still forget words like 'eraser' and 'floor', Ma'am." (MS)

"The most difficult are words that are rarely used, Ma'am, like 'projector'." (HS)

Students acknowledged that longer, multi-syllable vocabulary items posed greater memorization challenges despite visual support. For enhancement suggestions, Student A proposed enlarging the pictures for better visibility from the back of the classroom, Student B recommended using brighter colors for improved readability, while Student C suggested adding example sentences beneath the words to demonstrate contextual usage, indicating students' metacognitive awareness of their learning needs.

B. Discussion

This study investigated elementary students' perceptions of learning English vocabulary through stick-on visual media in primary schools in Sidoarjo, revealing overwhelmingly positive perceptions across five dimensions: understanding learning materials, engagement and enjoyment, vocabulary mastery, confidence and active use, and identification of challenges. Students across different cognitive levels consistently reported that stick-on visual media facilitated vocabulary comprehension by creating direct, tangible connections between words and physical objects in their immediate learning environment. The visual-tactile nature of the materials enhanced student engagement, transformed the classroom atmosphere into a vibrant learning space, and significantly improved vocabulary retention through repeated daily exposure to labeled objects. These findings align remarkably well with both Piaget's cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, providing robust theoretical grounding for stick-on visual media as an effective vocabulary learning tool. According to Piaget's constructivist framework, learners actively construct knowledge through direct interaction with concrete materials rather than passively receiving information [6]. The stick-on visual media embodies this principle by requiring students to physically engage with labeled objects, transforming abstract English vocabulary into tangible, manipulable learning materials. Furthermore, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of cultural tools and artifacts as mediators of cognitive development [27], with stick-on visual media functioning as both a physical tool and semiotic mediator that bridges the gap between abstract language concepts and tangible reality. The concept of scaffolding, derived from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, is manifested in how stick-on visual media provides graduated support for learners at different cognitive levels, Student A (LS) demonstrated basic vocabulary recognition with continued support needs, Student B (MS) showed increased confidence in using simple vocabulary independently, while Student C (HS) exhibited advanced sentence construction abilities, all benefiting from the same visual scaffolding adjusted to their developmental readiness [28].

The current findings strongly corroborate previous research on visual literacy in English language learning while extending understanding into the specific domain of stick-on visual media and student perception. Fauzan et al. [21] found that visual literacy assists students in understanding learning materials, makes the learning process more engaging, and enhances vocabulary mastery, findings that mirror the present study's results across all three dimensions. Similarly, Budiharto et al. [29] and Kaya [30] reported that visual literacy with pictures effectively motivated students and significantly improved their language skills, aligning with the present study's findings regarding enhanced engagement and active vocabulary use. However, the present study makes a distinctive contribution by focusing specifically on student perception rather than solely on measurable learning outcomes. While previous research has predominantly examined vocabulary test scores and retention rates [1][8], this study privileges student voices and subjective experiences. This focus is particularly significant because students' perceived usefulness and attitudes toward learning tools significantly influence their engagement, adoption intention, and ultimate learning outcomes [11][12]. The overwhelmingly positive perceptions documented in this study suggest high likelihood of sustained engagement and long-term effectiveness. The findings yield several important practical implications: educators should integrate stick-on visual media as a routine classroom environmental feature rather than a temporary teaching aid [9]; stick-on labels should be strategically designed with attention to word length, visual clarity, and supplementary contextual information [5]; and the variation in confidence levels across cognitive levels indicates that stick-on visual media should be complemented with differentiated instructional strategies that provide additional scaffolding for lower-performing students while offering enrichment opportunities for advanced learners.

Several limitations constrain the generalizability of this study's findings. The small sample size (three students) and single-site design limit transferability to broader populations and diverse educational contexts. Future research should employ larger, multi-site samples representing various socioeconomic backgrounds and educational settings to enhance external validity. The four-week implementation period may not capture long-term effects on vocabulary retention or potential novelty effects; longitudinal studies tracking student perceptions over extended periods would provide valuable insights into sustained effectiveness. This study relied exclusively on self-reported perceptions through interviews, which are susceptible to social desirability bias. Future research should employ mixed-methods designs combining perception data with objective vocabulary assessments and classroom observation records. The study did not systematically compare stick-on visual media with alternative vocabulary learning approaches, preventing definitive conclusions about relative effectiveness. Comparative experimental studies contrasting stick-on visual media with traditional flashcards or digital vocabulary applications would clarify its unique pedagogical value. Finally, the research focused exclusively on elementary students' perceptions without examining teacher perspectives, parental viewpoints, or administrator considerations. Future research should adopt a more holistic stakeholder approach, investigating how teachers perceive the feasibility and effectiveness of stick-on visual media, and exploring whether having students design their own stick-on labels enhances ownership, motivation, and learning effectiveness [31].

IV. Conclusion

This study makes significant contributions to understanding elementary students' experiences with stick-on visual media for English vocabulary learning, addressing a notable gap in existing literature that has primarily focused on measurable outcomes rather than learner perspectives. By foregrounding student voices, this research demonstrates that stick-on visual

media is not only pedagogically effective but also experientially valued by young learners, creating a compelling case for its integration into elementary English language classrooms. The findings provide robust empirical support for constructivist learning theories, illustrating how tangible, environmentally embedded learning tools can facilitate vocabulary acquisition through active, repeated engagement with meaningful materials. The overwhelmingly positive student perceptions across different cognitive levels suggest that stick-on visual media offers an inclusive, accessible, and engaging approach to vocabulary instruction that accommodates diverse learning needs while maintaining high student satisfaction. As elementary educators continue seeking effective, evidence-based strategies for English vocabulary development, this study offers both theoretical justification and practical encouragement for implementing stick-on visual media as a foundational component of the language learning environment, transforming ordinary classroom objects into powerful cognitive tools that mediate vocabulary acquisition and enhance student engagement.

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