



Junior High School Students' Perception of the Using Fun Easy Learn Application in Vocabulary Learning

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

EFL Students;
Perception;
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Vocabulary is the most basic element that must be possessed in mastering and developing the four language skills. However, vocabulary acquisition is difficult for many EFL students in Indonesia. Faced with this situation, the role of English teachers is needed to find and implement new and different learning methods or strategies, so that vocabulary learning in the classroom becomes interesting learning for students. The purpose of this study is to explain the perceptions of EFL English students towards the use of a mobile application called Fun Easy Learn application and to find out the students' perceptions about the level of effectiveness of this application in learning English vocabulary in the classroom. The method used in this research is qualitative method. Data collection was done by using questionnaires through Google form then supported by interviews on the topic of students' perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of Fun Easy Learn application. Data analysis was done by frequency calculation and content analysis. This study was conducted in a private junior high school, SMP Al-Hidayah Medan, Indonesia. The participants in this study were 28 ninth grade students (17 boys and 11 girls). The results of data analysis were conducted through frequency calculation and content analysis which resulted in that most of the students' perceptions were happy and satisfied with the use of Fun Easy Learn app in vocabulary learning. Because by using Fun Easy Learn app they find: (1) Motivation; (2) Learning is not boring and stressful; (3) Helps understand and improve vocabulary; (4) Learning can extend the duration of learning time; and (5) Easy to navigate the Fun Easy Learn application. They also expressed the perception that Fun Easy Learn app is effective in learning English vocabulary, the emergence of this perception is because students find the benefits of this app namely (1) Improve memory; (2) Mastery of English vocabulary; and (3) Have an interest in learning English vocabulary. Students who participated generally expressed positive perceptions of the Fun Easy Learn application. Based on the results of this study, the researcher can recommend Fun Easy Learn application as a mobile application that can be used by English teachers as a learning media in English classes.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning that cannot be separated from other aspects. A language learner must be able to master vocabulary to develop language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. A foreign language learner must have a lot of foreign language vocabulary. According to Krashen, vocabulary is the most important element in learning a foreign language (Krashen, 1989). This is because vocabulary and language use have a close

relationship, by understanding vocabulary one can use language, and by using language one can achieve increased vocabulary understanding. This will be very impactful if a student masters vocabulary, by understanding vocabulary comprehensively both in terms of meaning, written and spoken forms. In addition to being an important aspect of language learning, vocabulary also plays an important role in the flow of communication, if there is no communication then there is nothing to communicate (THORNBURY, 2002). Vocabulary is also the basis of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Cameron, 2001). This means that in language learning, whether mother tongue or foreign language, vocabulary acquisition will affect the level of one's language skills. Similarly, a student should have a relatively wide vocabulary (Asyiah, 2017).

Many EFL students around the world feel that learning vocabulary is difficult and time-consuming (Namaziandost et al., 2020). The same problem is also experienced by Indonesian EFL students. Starting from elementary school students to high school students experience difficulties in learning English vocabulary. The level of difficulty that elementary school students experience in learning vocabulary is because they are not used to hearing or using new vocabulary, so they have difficulty maintaining the pronunciation of English vocabulary (Saridevita et al., 2022). In addition, many schools in Indonesia have removed English language subjects from the curriculum (Zein, 2022). This is the cause of many elementary school students who do not know English vocabulary, even though learning English vocabulary or even memorizing it will make it easier for students to learn English at the next level, namely junior high school and high school, they will have difficulty memorizing and pronouncing English vocabulary (Komalasari, 2022). In other words, the lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for Indonesian EFL students to learn English (Al-Khasawneh, 2019). In addition, in Indonesia, precisely in junior high school, students experience a lot of difficulties and failures in learning English due to the various problems they experience such as: pronunciation, spelling, and grammar (Saridevita et al., 2022), no facilities provided, students' inability to understand the meaning of texts or conversations (Hemmati & Asmawi, 2015) and lack of learning strategies and techniques (Asyiah, 2017)(Besthia, 2018)(Rahmatika et al., 2017)(Saputra, 2016). What is a challenge for students is also a challenge for English teachers, because it is the teachers who interact directly with students. In response to the challenges of Indonesian EFL students when learning vocabulary, English teachers are asked to create and transform vocabulary learning from difficult learning to fun learning. (Fithriani, 2018)(Br Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020). This can be done by presenting learning in an interesting way but not separated from the main focus, namely vocabulary learning.

Based on the above phenomenon, the important thing that English teachers must do is to find learning media that can be applied as a support for vocabulary learning. There are many classic media that teachers can provide in supporting learning, but teachers are also required to adapt and be creative in developing learning activities, one of which is the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). ICT has contributed in assisting teachers in organizing learning activities to achieve learning objectives (Kee, 2014)(Khaloufi & Laabidi, 2017)(Widiananda et al., 2023). Foreign language learning combined with technology can have a significant impact on the achievement of their foreign language skills (Agnesyasiregar et al., 2022)(Alakrash & Razak, 2019).

The use of technology in the classroom, especially foreign language learning, is highly dependent on the development of technology itself. Currently, the development of technology used to support learning is not only computer-based, but has developed or transformed into a mobile-based device known as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). MALL was first coined by Chinnery in 2006 as an advanced theory of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language

Learning) theory (Enayati & Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2020). In its development, the main concept of MALL development is the implementation of mobile devices and instruments in it for foreign language learning. With the development of MALL, it has become an attraction for educational actors, especially teachers, as a technology that can improve methods, approaches, and strategies in language learning (Fithriani, 2021). MALL has the main characteristics that can support learning, namely creating a foreign language learning process that is more personalized, spontaneous, contextual, informal, and can be done anywhere (Widiananda et al., 2023). Many learning support applications can be accessed on mobile devices and functioned as MALLs, such as the Hello application, ELSA Application, EWA Application, Duolingo, etc. One of them is the Fun Easy Learn application. One of them is the Fun Easy Learn application.

Fun Easy Learn application is a vocabulary learning application that has user access to learn foreign languages with the mother tongue as the initial language. The app has graded levels ranging from the lowest level of word recognition with 500 words to the highest level of 1000 words. Especially for English speakers, this app has version 6.4.2 for Android, where all titles, instructions and translations are in English. The app has several features, namely at the top of the main screen users can select language courses and word and sentence levels, as well as check notifications received. At the bottom, there are four options: Learn (which lets the user choose whether he/she wants to learn the current word or sentence), you (which directs the user to the Review and Favourites options), Statistics (where the user's progress can be tracked) and More (includes several options and settings). In the center of the Learning screen, users can find large icons with topics: when a topic is selected (e.g., Describing people), several subtopics will appear (e.g., Characteristic 1; Physical State; Feelings); when a subtopic is selected, several exercises will appear. Each subtopic - which corresponds to a short lesson - generally consists of 4-5 words or sentences. Overall, the free version of the course includes about 460 words and 350 sentences (Castelo, 2022). This app was released in 2013, but began to be used frequently after the inclusion of the MALL app as a learning medium. The app has frequent system updates, and was last updated on January 18, 2024. Fun Easy Learn application is designed in the form of interesting game-based learning. In Rathiga's research in 2017, Fun Easy Learn English app was found to be an effective tool to motivate students and improve their vocabulary retention. The engaging features of the app were credited with increasing students' motivation and facilitating easier recall of English words. Once we are introduced to a vocabulary through writing, audio and pictures, then our memory will be tested through the games provided such as word matching, word completion and others that can make all students' sensory organs move, thus helping students learn a foreign language easily and comfortably.

Previous research has been conducted related to increasing students' vocabulary with the MALL method as a learning medium. Many applications are involved by researchers to apply the MALL method, including the use of the Fun Easy Learn application. First, Abdullah, M (2019) entitled "Increasing Student Vocabulary Using the Fun Easy Learn English Application". The design used in this research is pre-experimental to find out whether the Fun Easy Learn application can improve students' vocabulary, especially students of SMPN 4 Gorontalo grade VII-8. The results showed that the pre-test average score was 12.7 and the post-test average score was 17.3. This means that the Fun Easy Learn English application can improve the vocabulary of students in grade VII-8 of SMP N 4 Gorontalo. In addition to the above research, this application is also often used in improving the vocabulary of other languages besides English such as Arabic (Mokoginta et al., 2022)(Hayatunnisa, 2024)(Faizul Haq, 2021). And there is also research on increasing German vocabulary (Safira & Afifah, 2021). Based on the above research, it can be seen

that the previous research was research that focused on whether or not there was an improvement in students before and after using this Fun Easy Learn application. Therefore, researchers want to conduct research related to students' perceptions of the use of the Fun Easy Learn application as a learning media in vocabulary learning. By formulating the title of this research as follows "Perception of Junior High School Students towards the Use of Fun Easy Learn Application in Vocabulary Learning".

Thus, the purpose of this study is that the researcher will conduct further research to find the perceptions of grade IX junior high school students related to the effectiveness and usefulness of Fun Easy Learn application as a vocabulary learning media in the classroom. This research is expected to provide benefits to students in using the MALL method and the application of Fun Easy Learn application to help improve vocabulary in English learning. Likewise, the benefits to English teachers, this research is expected to help English teachers in finding vocabulary learning strategies through interesting and technology-based learning media for students in order to foster students' talents in mastering English. Based on this background, the researcher conducted a study by directing the question namely: How do junior high school students perceive the usefulness and effectiveness of Fun Easy Learn app for English vocabulary learning?.

B. METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. Qualitative methods are methods suitable for investigating people's perspectives, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (Pathak et al., 2013). Furthermore, this study was conducted in one of the private junior high schools in Medan, Indonesia, namely SMP Al-Hidayah Medan. The participants involved in this study were 28 students consisting of 11 female students and 17 male students. The selection of participants in this study was determined by purposive sampling technique, purposive sampling is determining the sample based on a specific purpose with the conditions that must be met (Arikunto, 2010). Researchers chose junior high school students with the consideration that students have a tendency to play with gadgets and are easily bored with classical / monotonous learning. In this case, the researcher felt suitable to apply the Fun Easy Learn application and conduct research with junior high school students as the object of research. This study used questionnaires and interviews as instruments for collecting data from participants. The questionnaires were distributed to students through Google form and direct interviews with students on the topic of the usefulness and effectiveness of Fun Easy Learn application in learning English vocabulary. Data from the questionnaires were managed based on data collection, data analysis conducted by calculating frequency and content analysis, data interpretation, and writing the research results (Creswell, 2012). The questionnaire consisted of 8 questions that had been prepared to obtain information from the students' perspective regarding the effectiveness and usability of the Fun Easy Learn app in English classes. Some possible answers that can be given by students are Yes/No, strongly agree/agree/don't know/disagree/strongly disagree, and short answer. After the questionnaire is administered, the researcher will conduct an interview regarding how the students perceive when using Fun Easy Learn app to improve vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary recall, and engagement of this app in English class. Figure 1 explains the data collection process.

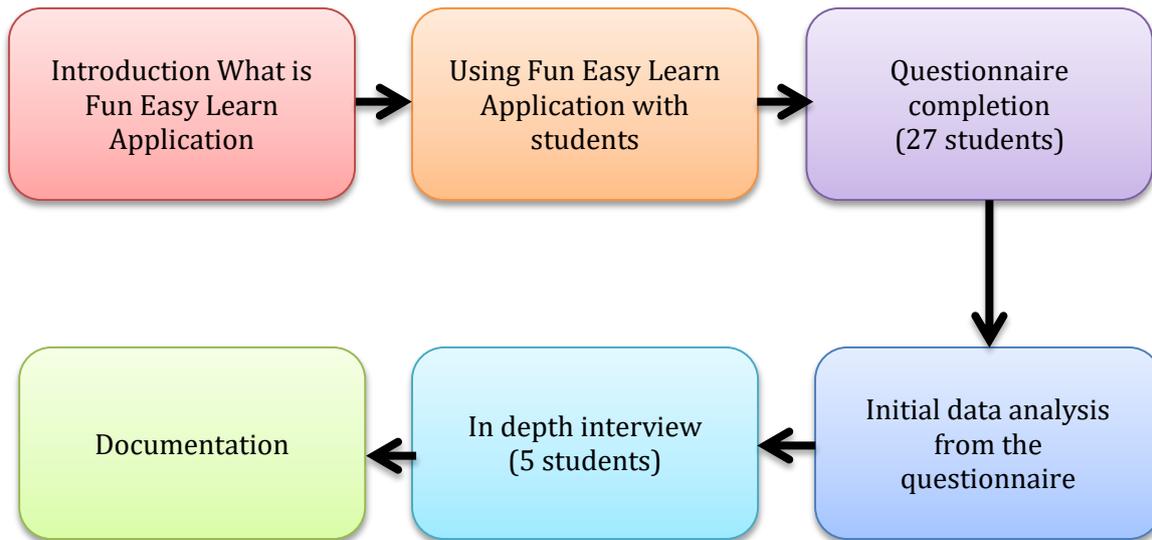


Figure 1. Overview of the Prosedure of the Study

Based on Figure 1, it is known that the research procedure was carried out by the researcher first making observations of English learning activities in the classroom. The researcher found students' difficulties in knowing and remembering vocabulary. So the researcher wanted to apply vocabulary learning by involving applications. Then the researcher asked the students about Fun Easy Learn application. Although the benefits of Fun Easy Learn app for vocabulary learning are well known (as mentioned earlier), there are potential barriers. Students may not be aware of the app and are used to relying on Google Translate for vocabulary definitions. This highlights the need to introduce the Fun Easy Learn app and promote its advantages over simple translation tools. This made the researcher feel it was important to introduce the Fun Easy Learn app to the students first. So this study was conducted in several stages.

The first stage is the introduction of the application by the researcher who acts as a teacher to the students. A direct introduction can be done by showing the Fun Easy Learn app and guiding students to download the app on the Play Store. This simple approach easily introduces the app and facilitates exploration by students. After the students download the app, the teacher introduces the features in the app, which include recognizing vocabulary, mentioning vocabulary and repeating vocabulary by playing games: guess the word, guess the picture, fill in the blank letters, etc. In the second stage, the researcher involved Fun Easy Learn app in every English vocabulary lesson and used this app to memorize and increase students' vocabulary. This second stage was conducted for two months with two meetings per week. This second stage was conducted both in the classroom and outside the classroom. To keep students engaged during the lesson, the class used games as "boredom breakers" at the beginning and interspersed the games throughout the learning process. This strategy effectively addressed potential boredom and revived students' interest when their focus began to wane.

In the third stage, after the teacher felt that the students were familiar enough with the app, already knew its usefulness and felt whether or not the app was effective in learning English vocabulary. Then the teacher began to conduct research related to students' perceptions of the effectiveness and usefulness of the Fun Easy Learn application, by providing questionnaires through google form and asking students to answer the questionnaire. After the researcher obtained the results of the questionnaire distributed to students, the researcher then analyzed the data by calculating the frequency which can be seen directly with the questionnaire data table.

The next stage that researchers did was to conduct interviews as a form of triangulation of methods, namely comparing data in different ways. In this stage, the researcher asked 5 students who volunteered to conduct interviews. The results of the interview were analyzed through content analysis techniques. Furthermore, researchers saw the similarity of the results obtained based on questionnaires and interviews, so with this the next step that researchers did was to present the research data.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Perceptions On Vocabulary Learning Using Fun Easy Learn App

Students' answers in the questionnaire about using Fun Easy Learn app were used to answer the research questions. This study shows positive results for students who use Fun Easy Learn app for vocabulary learning. The students reported that they felt motivated, engaged and stress-free during the learning process thanks to the features of the app. In addition, students also said that by using the app they were able to learn vocabulary supported by visuals that helped them understand the vocabulary so some students said that they were able to stay with the learning longer. They also felt that the Fun Easy Learn app was easy to navigate and interesting for students to use. The findings from the survey on the usability of Fun Easy Learn app are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Data

| NO | Questionnaire | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Idea | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | I feel motivated to learn vocabulary with Fun Easy Learn app? | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 46,4% | 53,6% |
| 2 | Learning with Fun Easy Learn app makes vocabulary lessons boring and stressful | 0,0% | 0,0% | 3,6% | 67,9% | 28,6% |
| 3 | I learn vocabulary visually | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 25,0% | 75,0% |
| 4 | learning vocabulary with Fun Easy Learn app makes me able to do learning for a long time | 0,0% | 0,0% | 32,1% | 50,0% | 17,9% |
| 5 | how would you rate this app for helping you understand and improve new vocabulary | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 64,3% | 35,7% |
| 6 | how easy do you think it is to navigate (control the Fun Easy Learn app) | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 50,0% | 50,0% |
| 7 | I think Fun Easy Learn app makes vocabulary learning more interesting | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 46,4% | 53,6% |

Based on the table of student questionnaire results related to the usability of the Fun Easy Learn application, the researcher found several important things that students produced after using the Fun Easy Learn application. Some of these important things are:

a. Motivation

Based on the results of the student questionnaire, it was found that students are more motivated to do vocabulary learning with the help of Fun Easy Learn application. The student questionnaire obtained 46.4% agree and strongly agree 53.6% for this motivation result. This shows that the app is able to raise students' awareness about the importance of knowing English vocabulary, so they are re-motivated to learn, understand and memorize English vocabulary and know when and where the vocabulary should be spoken. The researcher found that the reason students are motivated in learning vocabulary is because this application is part of a new strategy that the teacher found in teaching and learning English vocabulary.

b. Learning is not bored and stressful, because it is supported by pictures and illustrations (Visual)

For the questionnaire assessment about the learning that is done does not make boredom and stress, the results obtained are 3.6% for no idea, 67.9% for agree and 28.6% for strong agree. Seeing the results of this questionnaire, the researcher took the initiative to ask again what might make students agree that this Fun Easy Learn application is not boring and not stressful. In their study, researchers investigated the effectiveness of visual learning aids, including pictures and audio, for vocabulary acquisition. Their findings were overwhelmingly positive, with 75% of participants strongly agreeing that visual elements enhance the learning experience. These participants reported increased enjoyment and reduced feelings of boredom and stress during the learning process.

c. Helps understand and improve vocabulary

During the teaching and learning process, the students enthusiastically listened to the teacher explaining the vocabulary lesson using Fun Easy Learn app. So that students are interested in doing vocabulary learning with Fun Easy Learn app. The results show that Fun Easy Learn app can increase students' interest in learning vocabulary rather than using traditional methods or strategies. This can be seen from the students' questionnaire data which shows that 64.3% of students agree that Fun Easy Learn app helps students to improve and understand new vocabulary. Even 35,7% of the students strongly agreed with the statement that Fun Easy Learn helps to improve and understand new vocabulary.

d. Learning can extend the duration of learning time

The questionnaire also asked about whether or not Fun Easy Learn app can increase students' learning time. Because if students feel bored while learning then with a learning duration of two JP will feel very long. The researcher primarily focused on whether students, while using the Fun Easy Learn app, were more inclined to spend extended periods on it. Analyzing the collected data, the researcher found mixed results: 32.1% of students stated "no idea," indicating an inability to form an opinion about the app's ability to increase engagement. 50.0% agreed with the statement, suggesting the app holds potential for extended engagement. 17.9% strongly agreed, signifying a clear preference for the app and its ability to extend learning duration. These findings reveal a diverse range of viewpoints regarding the app's effectiveness in promoting longer usage. While a significant portion agrees or strongly agrees, a substantial number remain uncertain about its impact.

e. Easy to navigate the Fun Easy Learn app

Researchers also asked students' perceptions related to navigating the Fun Easy Learn application. Based on the results of the student questionnaire, the researcher got the

results of 50% agreeing and the other 50% strongly agreeing about the ease of accessing or navigating the application. The researcher also realized that navigating the Fun Easy Learn application is easy and this is one of the reasons why the researcher chose this application to be used in junior high school student learning. This can be seen when we will access this Fun Easy Learn application we must download it first on the Play Store, then we will be asked to log in, the next thing is there will be a menu that we can choose which contains categories (subtitles) for vocabulary. And in the end the student will be directed to the vocabulary with the category that has been selected.

2. Students' Perception About The Effectiveness Of Fun Easy Learn Application In Learning English Vocabulary

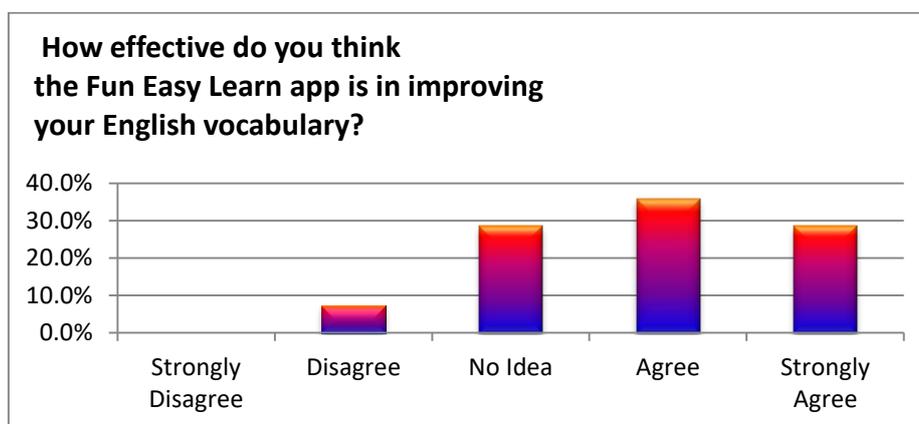


Figure 2. The Frequency Questionnaire Data

After finding research answers related to the use of the Fun Easy Learn application, the next finding in this study which aims to answer the research question is the students' perception of the effectiveness of the Fun Easy Learn application in learning English vocabulary. Based on the graph above, it can be seen that students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Fun Easy Learn application with a percentage of: 28.6% students strongly agree, 35.7% students agree, 28.6% don't know, 7.1% disagree and 0% strong disagree. The result of this study shows that students have felt the effectiveness of vocabulary learning involving Fun Easy Learn app. Fun Easy Learn app helps students learn new words and be able to understand and master them. The acquisition of this perception of effectiveness is produced by students based on the following points:

a. Improving memory

The results of this study, based on interviews conducted by researchers to students, show that Fun Easy Learn application can help students improve memory in vocabulary learning. Students prefer vocabulary learning by using the method applied by Fun Easy Learn app, namely: remembering vocabulary by looking at the picture and listening to the audio, then testing our memory of the vocabulary with a game involving the vocabulary. "I am a difficult person to memorize vocabulary, especially with the method given I have to memorize a pile of vocabulary written on the board, it makes it difficult for me to memorize vocabulary. But when I was asked to look and listen to the vocabulary in the Fun Easy Learn app, it helped me improve my memorization of the vocabulary." (interview, quote No. 1).

b. English vocabulary mastery

The next thing that becomes the basis for the effectiveness of Fun Easy Learn app is that according to students, learning vocabulary with this app can increase their knowledge of English vocabulary so that slowly they are able to master the vocabulary and things related to the vocabulary such as when is the right time to use the vocabulary or even who is the right subject to express the vocabulary. This can be seen from the following quote: "I think the Fun Easy Learn app introduces me to new vocabulary as well as how to use it properly. So that I not only know the meaning of the vocabulary but also know the meaning, time and purpose of its use". (interview, quote No 2).

c. Have an interest in learning English vocabulary

Finally, Fun Easy Learn app is able to generate students' interest to learn vocabulary happily. This can be seen from the questionnaire data on motivation, many students feel re-motivated to learn vocabulary after the teacher involves Fun Easy Learn app in the lesson. This clearly shows that the app appeals to students. "I like this app much more than I have to memorize vocabulary like the method applied in the previous vocabulary learning. With this app I know the vocabulary in a way that is fun for me and makes me no longer have difficulties in vocabulary learning". (interview, quote No. 3).

Prior to the implementation of the Fun Easy Learn app, interviews with students indicated a feeling of boredom and disinterest in learning English vocabulary. This changed dramatically after the app was introduced. Students reported increased interest and enjoyment, attributing it to the engaging nature of the app and the improvement from memorizing vocabulary that the teacher wrote on the board. The app fosters a more active learning environment where students feel directly involved in the learning process. Furthermore, based on the results of the questionnaires and interviews that the researcher tested, students verified the researcher's hypothesis that Fun Easy Learn app can increase students' interest in learning English vocabulary. In addition, this Fun Easy Learn app increases students' motivation in participating, enjoying and being interested in acquiring English vocabulary. In this study, the use of Fun Easy Learn app was proven to be effective to motivate EFL students, specifically junior high school students, to acquire new English vocabulary and be able to expand it so that it will increase the percentage of students' English language mastery. Based on the qualitative research, the students had the perception that using Fun Easy Learn app as a media or tool in learning English vocabulary, in this study resulted in an increase in vocabulary mastery, improved memory and created their interest in using Fun Easy Learn app as a new method applied by the researcher who acted as an English teacher. The results of the students' questionnaire showed that 67.9% of the students felt happy and comfortable with the Fun Easy Learn app as a medium for learning English vocabulary. The students also confirmed that learning vocabulary by involving Fun Easy Learn app can eliminate boredom and stress when learning English vocabulary.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, the conclusion of this study is that the researcher found the majority of students gave positive perceptions towards the application of Fun Easy Learn in English language learning for EFL students in Indonesia, especially for junior high school students. The students gave positive perceptions because after two months of application, they were able to improve their memory skills resulting in good vocabulary memorization. With good memory, the students are more motivated to be enthusiastic in every English vocabulary learning in class,

they also no longer feel bored and stressed when learning vocabulary in class. The researcher summarized that 67.9% of students' perceptions are happy and satisfied with the use of Fun Easy Learn app in vocabulary learning. Because by using Fun Easy Learn app they find: (1) Motivation; (2) Learning is not boring and stressful; (3) Helps to understand and improve vocabulary; (4) Learning can extend the duration of learning time; and (5) Easy to navigate the Fun Easy Learn app. They also stated 28.6% of students strongly agree, 35.7% of students agree that Fun Easy Learn app is effective in learning English vocabulary, the emergence of this perception is because students find the benefits of this app namely (1) Improve memory; (2) Mastery of English vocabulary; and (3) Have an interest in learning English vocabulary.

This research also shows that Fun Easy Learn app is one of the effective apps for English teachers who want to replace learning media in memorizing students' English vocabulary, but English teachers should also pay attention to the obstacles that are likely to occur. Especially for this application, the researcher stated that there are more benefits than drawbacks. There are several benefits of using this Fun Easy Learn app, one of which is that it makes learning interesting and makes students like the class. This can be seen from the students' enthusiasm and motivation that they show with positive perception towards Fun Easy Learn app. Despite the positive results, this study has limitations to generalize the results and also provide opportunities for further research. These limitations are: First, the number of samples of this study is relatively small, further research can be done by increasing the sample so that it can produce better research results. Second, this study was conducted in only one class and with a period of 2 months. Future research can present a larger student population and for a longer period of time. Third, the research instruments carried out in this study only include questionnaires and interviews to assess students' perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of the Fun Easy Learn application in learning English vocabulary, the research needs to apply an initial test and a final test so that it can see a significant increase or decrease in English vocabulary development.

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