



TEENAGE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION THROUGH CHATGPT



AULIA SHIRLY CAHYANI
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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial One of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education



By :

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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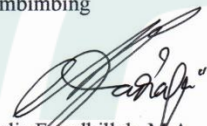
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MOTTO

Que sera-sera, whatever will be, will be.

The future's not ours to see, Que sera-sera.

(Billianne)

Isseo ga isseo, hal su isseoyo

(The writer)



ABSTRAK

Kosakata memiliki peranan penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, karena membantu siswa memahami dan menggunakan bahasa secara efektif, baik dalam komunikasi lisan maupun lisan. Fenomena yang umum terjadi adalah banyak remaja pembelajar bahasa Inggris menghadapi berbagai permasalahan dalam proses pembelajaran, seperti rendahnya motivasi, rasa bosan, dan kecemasan, oleh karena itu, mereka mencari berbagai jalan keluar untuk membantu meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata, salah satunya dengan memanfaatkan kecerdasan buatan (Artificial Intelligent/AI) seperti ChatGPT. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman remaja dalam menggunakan ChatGPT sebagai alat pendukung dalam proses akuisisi kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan pendekatan narative untuk memahami pengalaman siswa selama menggunakan ChatGPT dalam proses akuisisi kosakata bahasa Inggris. Data penelitian ini diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan lembar refleksi diri yang melibatkan siswa SMK sebagai partisipan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memandang ChatGPT sebagai media pembelajaran yang membantu mereka memahami kosakata melalui penjelasan makna kata, contoh kalimat, serta respon interaktif. Selain itu, siswa juga memandang ChatGPT sebagai media pembelajaran yang fleksibel, mudah diakses, dan efisien. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan tantangan dalam penggunaan ChatGPT, seperti keterbatasan penggunaan harian dan respon yang kurang fokus. Secara keseluruhan, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ChatGPT memiliki potensi sebagai alat pendukung proses akuisisi bahasa Inggris yang fleksibel, interaktif, dan mudah diakses dalam mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara mandiri.

Kata kunci: Akuisisi kosakata, ChatGPT, Kecerdasan Buatan (AI)

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary plays an important role in English language learning, because it helps learners to understand and use the language effectively, both in spoken and written communication. As a common phenomenon, many teenage learners face similar challenges in learning English, such as low motivation, boredom, and anxiety. Therefore, they seek various ways to improve their vocabulary mastery, including the use of artificial intelligent (AI) tools such as ChatGPT. This study aims to explore teenage learners' experiencing in using ChatGPT as a supporting tool in the process of English language acquisition. This study employed a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design to understand learners' experiences while using ChatGPT in the process of English language acquisition. This research data were collected through semi-structured interview and self-reflection sheet involving vocational high school learners as the research participants. The findings revealed that participants perceived ChatGPT as a learning mediational tool that helped them understand English vocabulary through word explanations, sentences examples, and interactive responses. In addition, participants also viewed ChatGPT as a flexible, accessible, and efficient learning tool. However, this study also identified challenges in using ChatGPT such as daily usage limitation, and less focused responses. Overall, this findings of this study indicate that ChatGPT has the potential to serve as flexible, interactive, and accessible supporting tool for English language acquisition, particularly in facilitating independent English learning.

Keywords: Vocabulary Acquisition, ChatGPT, Artificial Intelligent (AI)

PREFACE

All praise and gratitude are devoted to Allah SWT for giving endless blessing, guidance, strength, health, and patience so that I could complete this thesis entitled **“Teenage Learners’ Experiences in English Vocabulary Acquisition through ChatGPT.”** This thesis was written submitted to the English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education. This study could be completed with support from many parties. Therefore, on this occasion I would like to extend my gratitude to:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Vocabulary is fundamental component of language learning, as it serves as the foundation for the development of other language skills, such as text comprehension, idea expression, and effective communication. Nation (2013) asserts that the level of language proficiency is primarily determined by the breadth and depth of the learners' vocabulary knowledge. Despite the importance, vocabulary remains a significant challenge in context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Language Indonesia, particularly among teenagers. Astuti et al. (2022) reported that Indonesian senior high school learners encounter various obstacles in learning English, such as low learning motivation, boredom, and anxiety during learning process.

Language acquisition is particularly crucial for teenagers, as English serves as a global language, key of knowledge, technological future, educational opportunities, and career prospects. Ricketts et al. (2020) explain that during adolescence, abstract, reflective and critical thinking ability begin to develop, allowing teenagers to understand the meaning of words deeply and apply complex communication context. Moreover, the continuous expansion of vocabulary driven by technological, cultural, and scientific development has further increased the complexity of vocabulary acquisition, and making it more challenging for learners. Given these cognitive developmental and challenges, there opportunities for learners to explore innovative applications, including AI-based technology that offer flexible, personalized, and adaptive support vocabulary learning (Zhang & Huang, 2024).

Technological developments, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), have increasingly influenced vocabulary learning process. AI is the integration of computer

programming, machine learning, software, and hardware (Nita et al., 2023). It enables the creation of learning systems that can adapt to individual learners' needs and abilities, allowing them to personalize and adjust their learning strategies (Vall & Araya, 2023). One of the most recent implementation of this new technology is ChatGPT, an innovative text-based chatbot that enables direct interaction between users and technology, much like human interaction (Ngo, 2023). With AI, learners not passively acquire vocabulary through books, or static materials, but also through interaction that trigger deeper understanding. Moreover, AI can provide direct and consistent feedback, helping learners identify errors in words usage and adjust their learning materials to the appropriate level of difficulty (Trinh, 2024).

In the context of English language learning, ChatGPT has identified as one of the AI-based innovation that offer interactive and potentially personalized support for vocabulary learning (Qu & Wu, 2024). Compared to traditional approaches that often rely on one-directional input, ChatGPT enables learners to engage directly through text-based interaction, such as asking about word meanings, requesting usage examples, and practicing sentence constriction using newly learned vocabulary. This form of interaction encourages learners to actively process information and adapt it to their learning experience. This approach not only vocabulary acquisition but also encourages independent learning, as learners can explore language according their own pace and interests.

In line with the role of ChatGPT in English language learning describe in several previous studies, the researcher conducted an initial observation to gain a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon. Based on an initial observation conduct in vocational high school aged 16-17 years old, the researcher found that learners frequently used ChatGPT to learn English vocabulary because of its quick responses and providing detailed explanations. However, some learners also

mentioned certain limitations when using ChatGPT for English vocabulary learning. This preliminary observation reveal that learners' experiences with ChatGPT is vary, highlighting the need for further exploration.

Existing research on AI-assisted language learning has primarily focused on measurable learning outcomes. At the same time, limited attention has been given to how teenager experience and interpret their engagement with tool such as ChatGPT during English vocabulary learning. Addressing this gap, this study brings novelty by shifting the focus from effectiveness-oriented evaluation to a deeper exploration of teenagers' learning experiences, including how they make sense of new vocabulary, adjust their learning strategies, and interpret the adaptive support provided by AI. By positioning ChatGPT as a meditational tool within a reflective and socially mediated learning process, this study offers more comprehensive perspective on how AI technology influences teenagers' vocabulary acquisition within rapidly evolving landscape of modern language use.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the research question formulated for this study is:

How are teenagers' experiences in acquiring English vocabulary through ChatGPT?

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study focus on the experiences of teenage learners in acquiring English vocabulary through the use of ChatGPT, including their perceptions, benefits, and challenges their encounter during the learning process. The scope of this study is limited to teenage learners at secondary school level. It examines ChatGPT solely as a text-based AI tool for vocabulary learning, without addressing other language skills or different technological platforms.

1.4 Operational Definition

To avoid potential misunderstanding, the following definitions are provided to clarify the key terms used in this study:

- a. Sociocultural Learning Theory : Sociocultural learning theory emphasizes that an individuals' cognitive development occurs through social interactions and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).
- b. English Vocabulary Acquisition : Vocabulary acquisition is a gradual process that requires repeated exposure and meaningful use of words, enabling learners to develop both receptive and productive English vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2013).
- c. ChatGPT : ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence system developed by OpenAI which allows the users to comprehend and generate text responses comparable to human (Ngo, 2023).

1.5 Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate teenagers' experiences in using ChatGPT as a vocabulary learning tool, particularly in terms of the perceived benefits, challenges, and perceptions that emerge during the learning process. The study also aims to understand how these learning experiences are shaped through interaction with ChatGPT in supporting vocabulary learning.

1.6 Significance of the Study

- a. Theoretical : This study contributes to the sociocultural learning theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) integrated into English vocabulary acquisition by applying sociocultural theory in the context of AI-based interaction.
- b. Empirical : This study provides new qualitative evidence on how teenagers experience English vocabulary acquisition through ChatGPT.
- c. Practical : This study offers insight for teachers, and learners on how ChatGPT can be effectively integrated into language learning.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Findings

This study was conducted to explore teenage learners' experience in utilizing ChatGPT as a tool for vocabulary acquisition. The study also sought to understand how the participants perceived the benefit and challenges using ChatGPT as English vocabulary acquisition tool. Based on the findings of the study, the three of participants perceived ChatGPT as a supportive tool that assisted them in understanding and acquiring English vocabulary. Through its immediate feedback feature, they used ChatGPT to obtain word explanations, examples, and interactive feedback for their learning outcomes. ChatGPT also perceived as a language learning aid that support participants in vocabulary acquisition by providing scaffolding and facilitating their ZPD during learning process.

However, despite the various conveniences offered by ChatGPT, participants also experienced several challenges during its use. One of the main challenges is daily usage limitation, which affected their learning strategies and interrupted their interaction with ChatGPT during vocabulary learning process. Furthermore, responses that sometimes less focused could reduce their' concentration and learning motivation. Nevertheless, participants continue to perceive ChatGPT as an accessible, practical, and efficient learning tool. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that ChatGPT has the potential to serve as a flexible, interactive, and accessible tool that support learners in developing their English Vocabulary acquisition.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on findings of the study, several recommendations are addressed to teacher, learners, and future researchers regarding the use of ChatGPT in the process of vocabulary acquisition and English language learning.

5.2.1 For English Teacher

Teachers may utilize ChatGPT as a supportive mediational tool into process of English vocabulary learning, particularly to assist learners in improving their understanding of vocabulary, words nuances, synonym, and antonyms. The use of ChatGPT may also serve as an alternative tool to promote a more flexible and students-centered learning environment. However, teachers still need to provide guidance and supervision to ensure that learners use ChatGPT wisely and obtain the relevant information to the learning material. In addition, teachers should help learners understand that ChatGPT's function in learning process as mediational supporting tool, rather than a replacement for the teacher's role.

5.2.2 For Learners

Learners may utilize ChatGPT as an additional English learning tool to support the vocabulary acquisition process, such as finding word meanings, gain explanation, learning synonyms and antonyms, also practicing vocabulary independently. The use of ChatGPT may help learners flexible in learning process, because it personalize to their individual learning pace and needs. Nevertheless, learners still need to adopt critical approach when using ChatGPT by double-check the information provided and avoiding excessive dependence on the technology during learning process.

5.2.3 For Future Researcher

Future researcher is expected to further explore the use of ChatGPT in other aspects of English language learning competencies. In addition, future researchers may involve a larger number of participants with more diverse backgrounds in order to obtain broader findings. Future researchers may also employ different research design, to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of ChatGPT on the process of English language learning.