

## **Students' Engagement in Learning Vocabulary for Daily Conversations**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Practicing basic vocabulary is essential for students to enhance their fluency in daily English conversations. However, many students still struggle to retain and acquire new vocabulary effectively. In such situations, student engagement plays a crucial role in determining how well vocabulary is learned and applied. This study examines students' engagement when learning vocabulary intended for daily communication. The research followed a descriptive qualitative approach, involving 30 elementary school students. Data were collected using a questionnaire designed with a simplified Likert scale, making it accessible and appropriate for the participants' age and interests. Findings showed that students were generally engaged emotionally; they often felt enthusiastic and enjoyed vocabulary-related activities, especially when these included games or roleplay. Cognitive and behavioral engagement also appeared, although speaking practice still challenged some. Overall, this study discusses the importance of creating learning experiences that encourage students to participate actively. It recommends that teachers use interactive and creative strategies to help students learn vocabulary more meaningfully.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary learning, Student engagement, Daily English Conversation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mastery of vocabulary is a foundational component in acquiring a second language, particularly during the early years of formal

education. Within the framework of English language instruction at the elementary level, vocabulary competence is not merely an academic target but a practical necessity, enabling students to express ideas and engage in meaningful conversations in daily life (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021; Ali, 2021). Basic conversational vocabulary equips learners with the tools to function communicatively in both social and classroom settings (Vujičić, Peić, & Petrić, 2020; Zhou & Wei, 2021). However, vocabulary learning success is influenced not only by instructional design and teaching materials but also by the degree of active learner engagement in the learning process (Firliantama & Rokhayani, 2023; Cerezo et al., 2024).

Engagement, in the context of learning, is a multifaceted construct involving behavioral participation, emotional involvement, and cognitive investment (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021; Mathias et al., 2021). Research has consistently shown that students who are highly engaged tend to perform better and retain language more effectively, especially in vocabulary learning, where motivation and interaction enhance both short-term and long-term memory (Zhou & Wei, 2021; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2019). Nevertheless, many young learners remain passive during vocabulary lessons, often due to repetitive instructional routines, limited interaction, or insufficient contextual learning experiences that connect vocabulary to real-life usage (Haq, 2023; Weerasinghe et al., 2022).

Recognizing these challenges, this study investigates how engaged elementary school students are in learning English vocabulary aimed at daily communication. It also seeks to identify the factors that support or hinder student engagement during vocabulary instruction. Using a quantitative design, structured questionnaires were administered to 30 elementary students to gather data on their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Creswell, 2007; Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017).

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it adds to the growing body of literature on learner engagement in second language acquisition for young learners (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for educators to design and implement more interactive and responsive vocabulary instruction that caters to students' interests and learning styles (Ali, 2021; Brumfit, Moon, & Tongue, 1995). Strategies such as game-based learning, movement-based activities, and augmented

reality tools have proven effective in increasing vocabulary retention and student motivation (Mualem et al., 2018; Haq, 2023; Cerezo et al., 2024).

This study is limited to elementary students learning vocabulary for daily interactions and relies solely on self-reported data through questionnaires. Qualitative instruments like classroom observation and interviews were not employed, which may limit the depth of understanding regarding classroom dynamics (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Despite this limitation, the study provides a foundational reference for future research and classroom practice aimed at improving vocabulary learning and student engagement in early English education.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a quantitative descriptive design with the objective of examining the level of engagement among elementary students in acquiring English vocabulary pertinent to everyday conversational use. The quantitative descriptive approach was selected because it allows for a systematic and objective depiction of phenomena based on numerical data gathered from the participants. As Creswell (2018) highlights, this research design is well-suited for portraying characteristics of a defined population or issue without manipulating variables experimentally.

The study involved 30 purposively chosen elementary students who had previously received English instruction and possessed access to electronic devices necessary for completing the questionnaire online. The survey link was distributed via parents or guardians, enabling students to independently fill out the instrument remotely without direct supervision from educators or the researcher. This approach was implemented considering practical constraints and to foster a comfortable environment encouraging genuine and unbiased responses.

The instrument comprised a set of 10 closed-ended statements measured on a four-point Likert scale, aimed at capturing three core dimensions of student engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. The questionnaire items were adapted from the framework proposed by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), and tailored to align with the comprehension level of elementary school learners. The instrument was presented in the Indonesian language to ensure

clarity and ease of understanding, facilitating autonomous completion by the students.

Collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistical methods. Responses were assigned numerical values corresponding to the Likert scale options, and average scores along with percentages were computed for each engagement dimension. Findings were displayed using tables and graphical representations to enhance interpretability. Based on these results, student engagement was categorized into low, medium, and high levels, thereby enabling a nuanced understanding of their involvement in vocabulary learning both holistically and within each engagement facet.

Although the questionnaire has not undergone formal validation or reliability assessments, its development prioritized relevance and suitability for the targeted age group. Consequently, despite the absence of empirical testing for psychometric properties, the instrument was employed as a practical tool to assess engagement in the context of English vocabulary acquisition for daily communication.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents a summary of the questionnaire data collected from 30 elementary school students, illustrating their level of engagement in the vocabulary learning process for daily conversations. This table aims to provide a clearer picture of how students participate and stay involved during the learning activities.

Indicator	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1. Experience satisfaction when learning new English vocabulary.	30%	66,7%	0%	6,7%
2. Using simple English vocabulary for daily conversations.	36,7%	56,7%	6,7%	10%
3. Able to pronounce several words in English fluently.	10%	70%	16,7%	6,7%
4. Enjoy learning vocabulary when it is conducted through games, songs, or stories.	43,3%	50%	0%	10%
5. Enjoy it when teachers create enjoyable activities during English vocabulary learning.	26,7%	66,7%	3,3%	6,7%
6. Actively participate when the teacher involves students in games or singing activities to learn vocabulary.	13,3%	76,7%	3,3%	6,7%
7. Able to remember many English vocabulary words that are often heard.	13,3%	73,3%	6,7%	6,7%

8. Often repeat or memorize English vocabulary at home.	13,3%	66,7%	13,3%	6,7%
9. Desire to learn more English vocabulary in order to speak English more fluently.	36,7%	50%	3,3%	10%
10. Recognize the importance of vocabulary learning as a key factor in developing English speaking skills.	26,7%	66,7%	0%	6,7%

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire regarding students' engagement in learning English vocabulary for daily conversations, several important aspects can be analyzed to describe how students respond to this learning process. The following is a detailed discussion related to each statement in the questionnaire:

**1. Satisfaction experience when learning new vocabulary**

A total of 96.7% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt satisfied when learning new vocabulary. This indicates that vocabulary learning provides an enjoyable experience and motivates students to continue learning. Such satisfaction is crucial because, according to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004), positive experiences can enhance student engagement and interest in learning.

**2. Use of simple English vocabulary for daily conversations**

Most students (93.4%) like the use of simple vocabulary relevant to daily activities. Vocabulary that is easy to understand and frequently used helps students feel that the material is useful and facilitates their communication. However, about 10% of students disagreed, which may indicate difficulties or lack of understanding of the vocabulary.

**3. Ability to pronounce several English words fluently**

Around 80% of students reported being able to pronounce several English words fluently, yet 23.4% experienced difficulties. This suggests that although most students are confident in pronunciation, there is still a group that requires more support in phonetic training and pronunciation practice to improve their speaking ability.

**4. Enjoyment of learning vocabulary through games, songs, or stories**

As many as 93.3% of students enjoy learning vocabulary through interactive media such as games, songs, and stories. This enjoyable learning method is effective in increasing students' motivation and

engagement, as well as helping them remember new vocabulary more easily.

**5. Enjoyment when teachers create enjoyable learning activities**

About 93.4% of students feel happy when teachers conduct interesting learning activities during vocabulary lessons. This shows the important role of teachers in creating a conducive and enjoyable learning atmosphere to keep students motivated.

**6. Active participation when teachers involve students in games or singing**

Approximately 90% of students actively participate when invited to play games or sing during vocabulary lessons. This indicates that activities directly involving students can increase engagement and make the learning process more interactive.

**7. Ability to remember vocabulary frequently heard**

Around 86.6% of students report being able to remember many vocabulary words they often hear. This highlights the importance of consistent repetition and exposure to vocabulary to facilitate students' memorization and mastery of new words.

**8. Frequency of repeating or memorizing vocabulary at home**

About 80% of students state that they often repeat or memorize vocabulary at home, although approximately 20% do not do this regularly. Developing independent study habits is very important to strengthen vocabulary mastery and support successful language learning.

**9. Desire to learn more vocabulary for speaking fluency**

As many as 86.7% of students show a high motivation to learn more vocabulary to speak English more fluently. This desire is an important indicator of intrinsic motivation supporting long-term learning processes.

**10. Awareness of the importance of vocabulary learning for speaking skills**

About 93.4% of students acknowledge that vocabulary mastery is a key factor in developing English speaking skills. This awareness is very positive as it shows students' understanding of the crucial role vocabulary plays in effective communication.

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire data, it can be

concluded that the majority of elementary school students demonstrate positive engagement in learning English vocabulary for daily conversations. Generally, students feel satisfied and enjoy the vocabulary learning process, especially when it is conducted through enjoyable methods such as games, songs, and stories. They also prefer simple vocabulary that is relevant to daily life, which facilitates practical application in real communication.

Furthermore, although most students are able to pronounce several English words fluently and remember vocabulary they frequently hear, some students still experience difficulties with pronunciation and maintaining consistency in independent study outside the classroom. This indicates the need for special attention to phonetic training and reinforcement of learning habits at home.

Students' motivation to expand their vocabulary to improve speaking fluency is also relatively high, and they possess good awareness of the importance of vocabulary mastery in developing English speaking skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that effective vocabulary learning should consider enjoyable learning experiences, relevant materials, as well as support in pronunciation practice and fostering independent study habits.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that elementary school students tend to display a high level of enthusiasm and involvement in learning English vocabulary intended for daily conversational use. The majority of students express enjoyment and satisfaction with the learning experience, particularly when vocabulary lessons incorporate interactive and entertaining elements such as games, songs, and storytelling. These approaches not only enhance the learning environment but also support students' interest and active participation. Additionally, the application of simple, contextually relevant vocabulary appears to facilitate comprehension and enables students to utilize their language skills more confidently in everyday interactions.

Despite these positive outcomes, a subset of students still encounters challenges, especially in accurate pronunciation and maintaining consistent vocabulary practice at home. These findings underscore the importance of targeted phonetic support and the promotion of independent learning strategies to help students reinforce their vocabulary acquisition outside the classroom setting.

The study also highlights that students possess a strong intrinsic motivation to broaden their vocabulary base as a means to improve their spoken English fluency. Furthermore, they demonstrate a clear understanding of the pivotal role vocabulary plays in effective communication. Therefore, for vocabulary learning to be truly impactful, instructional practices should integrate engaging, learner-centered activities with repeated exposure, consistent reinforcement, and opportunities for meaningful practice both in and beyond the classroom. This comprehensive approach is essential for fostering long-term language development and communicative competence (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

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