

Students' Perceptions of Using ChatGPT for English Vocabulary at Eleventh Grade of Fashion Design in SMKN 4 Jambi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the perceptions of 11th-grade Fashion Design students at SMKN 4 Jambi City regarding the use of ChatGPT as a tool for learning English vocabulary. The research employed a qualitative design with interviews as the main instrument, involving 15 purposively selected students as participants. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of students' perceptions and experiences. The findings reveal that most students perceive ChatGPT positively, highlighting its practicality, efficiency, and ability to enhance motivation and learning autonomy. ChatGPT supports vocabulary acquisition through several mechanisms: repetition (behaviorist learning), contextual explanations (cognitivist learning), and elaboration by connecting new and prior knowledge. Students reported increased confidence in using English vocabulary, particularly in written assignments and informal communication. However, challenges were also noted, including initial confusion in formulating prompts and occasional inaccuracies in responses. In conclusion, ChatGPT demonstrates strong potential as an adaptive and personalized language learning tool, especially for vocational-specific vocabulary. To optimize its effectiveness, students require guidance in the prompt formulation and critical evaluation of the information provided.

Keywords: *Students' perceptions, ChatGPT, Vocabulary Learning, English Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a key component in mastering English as a foreign language (EFL). Without adequate vocabulary, learners often struggle to comprehend texts, express ideas, and engage in communication. This issue is particularly significant in vocational schools, where students need to acquire field-specific vocabulary relevant to their expertise. For Fashion Design students, English vocabulary includes technical terms related to fabrics, garments, and design elements. However, many vocational students face difficulties in mastering such specialized vocabulary due to limited resources and lack of authentic exposure.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, offer new opportunities to overcome these challenges. ChatGPT provides contextual explanations, examples, and instant feedback that can support independent learning and motivation. Several studies (e.g., Trinh, 2024; Yıldız, 2023) suggest that ChatGPT helps students improve vocabulary retention and learning autonomy. Yet, the success of AI-assisted learning heavily depends on students' perceptions of the tool. Positive perceptions can foster

motivation and engagement, while negative perceptions may hinder its effectiveness.

This study, therefore, aims to explore students' perceptions of using ChatGPT for vocabulary learning, focusing on eleventh-grade Fashion Design students at SMKN 4 Jambi. The findings are expected to contribute insights into the integration of AI tools in vocational English instruction.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A strong literature review provides a theoretical foundation and justifies the need for the study. By examining definitions, theories, and prior studies, the researcher can position the present work within the broader academic discussion on vocabulary learning and the use of AI-based tools such as ChatGPT. The following section reviews concepts of perception, vocabulary learning theories, the definition and role of ChatGPT in education, and findings from related studies that form the basis of this research.

Theories of Listening

A review of related literature serves as the foundation for any research study, providing theoretical grounding, identifying

research gaps, and contextualizing the study within existing scholarship. In the present research, the review of literature focuses on three main areas: (1) perception and its role in learning, (2) theories of vocabulary learning, and (3) the use of ChatGPT and other AI-based tools in language education. Together, these perspectives create a framework to understand how vocational students perceive ChatGPT as a tool for vocabulary learning.

Perception in Learning

Perception is not merely a passive reception of information but an active cognitive and affective process. Efron (1969) describes perception as the process of organizing and interpreting sensory input to construct meaning. Later research, such as Bartoshuk (2019), emphasized the role of emotions, prior experiences, and individual differences in shaping perception. This aligns with the present study, where students' emotional responses and previous exposure to English learning influence how they interpret and value ChatGPT. For example, learners with prior positive experiences in English classes or informal exposure through media may perceive ChatGPT as more useful and motivating.

Theories of Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning is central to second language acquisition. Tozcu and Coady (2004) argue that vocabulary knowledge strongly correlates with reading comprehension and overall language proficiency. From a behaviorist perspective, repetition and reinforcement play crucial roles; learners acquire vocabulary by repeatedly encountering and practicing words (Heubener, 1965). From a cognitivist perspective, vocabulary acquisition depends on mental processes such as memory, attention, and schema activation (Krashen, 1982). Constructivist and sociocultural theories highlight the importance of meaningful context and interaction, where students actively construct understanding by linking new words to prior knowledge (Moody et al., 2018).

In modern language learning, technology enhances these theoretical approaches by enabling personalized practice, providing contextualized examples, and fostering learner autonomy. Mobile-assisted language learning (Li, 2024) and intelligent tutoring systems have shown positive effects in vocabulary acquisition, demonstrating that digital tools can embody both behaviorist repetition and constructivist engagement.

ChatGPT and AI in Language Education

ChatGPT, an advanced language model developed by OpenAI, represents a shift in how technology supports learning. Unlike static tools such as dictionaries, ChatGPT provides interactive feedback, contextual examples, and explanations that simulate human-like tutoring (Gupta, 2024). However, research also highlights limitations: AI tools may produce inaccurate or overly general responses and reflect biases from their training data (Irigaray & Stocker, 2023).

Several studies have investigated ChatGPT in educational settings. Abd Rahim et al. (2023) found that students perceived ChatGPT as effective for improving writing, while Jannah and Priyanto (2023) reported that learners appreciated its role in enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and motivation. Chen et al. (2023) emphasized that although ChatGPT supports vocabulary learning, students need critical skills to evaluate AI-generated responses. These findings provide strong relevance for vocational education, where students' perceptions of new technologies may determine their adoption and learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology plays a crucial role in shaping the quality and credibility of research findings. A clear and systematic methodological framework ensures that the research objectives are addressed effectively. In this study, the methodology was designed to capture students' subjective perceptions in depth, using a qualitative approach.

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- *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, which is appropriate for exploring students' experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2012). Unlike quantitative methods that focus on measurable variables, qualitative research emphasizes meaning-making processes and the richness of participants' voices. By using interviews and thematic analysis, the researcher was able to uncover patterns of attitudes, motivations, and challenges in students' use of ChatGPT.

Setting of the Research

The research was conducted at SMKN 4 Jambi, specifically in the eleventh-grade Fashion Design classroom. As a vocational school, SMKN 4 Jambi emphasizes applied skills for the fashion industry, making English vocabulary highly relevant for students' future careers. This setting provided a unique context where ChatGPT could be evaluated not only as a language learning tool but also as a means of supporting field-specific vocabulary.

Participants

The participants consisted of 15 students selected purposively from the eleventh-grade Fashion Design class. Purposive sampling ensured that participants had prior experience using ChatGPT in their learning process. The inclusion criteria were: (1) students who had engaged with ChatGPT in classroom or independent study, and (2) students with varying levels of vocabulary proficiency. This allowed for diverse perspectives, ranging from those who were highly confident in English to those who struggled with vocabulary.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews balance flexibility and consistency: the core questions provide structure while allowing students to elaborate on their experiences. The interview guide

contained 11 main questions, covering themes such as initial impressions of ChatGPT, its role in vocabulary memorization and comprehension, confidence in using new vocabulary, motivation, and domain-specific effectiveness.

Data Collection Procedures

Three techniques were used to ensure triangulation and validity:

1. **Observation:** The researcher observed students' interactions with ChatGPT during learning activities. This helped identify patterns in how students accessed and responded to the tool.
2. **Interviews:** In-depth interviews were conducted individually, allowing students to describe their perceptions openly. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and verified with participants when necessary.
3. **Documentation:** Notes, class records, and students' examples of ChatGPT usage were collected to support the analysis.

- *Data Analysis*

Data analysis followed the framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014):

1. **Data Reduction:** Organizing raw data from interviews and observations, identifying relevant segments, and categorizing them into emerging themes.
2. **Data Display:** Thematic organization of findings, grouping students' perceptions into categories such as benefits, challenges, motivation, and application.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** Interpreting the patterns, connecting them to theoretical perspectives, and verifying consistency across participants to ensure credibility.

This systematic analysis allowed the researcher to produce a detailed and reliable description of students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in vocabulary learning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from interviews with eleventh-grade Fashion Design students at SMKN 4 Jambi regarding their perceptions of using ChatGPT for English vocabulary learning. Before describing the results, it is important to note that the findings are organized thematically to reflect the main areas of perception: students' initial reactions, their learning experiences, their motivation and confidence, and the strengths and weaknesses of ChatGPT as perceived by them. The results are then discussed in relation to relevant theories and previous studies to provide a deeper interpretation.

The interviews revealed several key themes:

1. **Initial Perceptions**
Most students felt comfortable and supported when first using ChatGPT, though a few experienced initial confusion in formulating prompts.
2. **Impact of Previous Learning Experiences**
Students who had prior exposure to English (through music, movies, or textbooks) adapted more easily to ChatGPT.
3. **Confidence**
Students reported increased confidence, particularly in writing assignments, social media captions, and informal discussions, though some remained hesitant in speaking due to accent concerns.
4. **Vocabulary Learning Strategies**
ChatGPT supported memorization through repetition, quizzes, and contextual examples. Students highlighted that explanations were often clearer than traditional dictionaries.
5. **Motivation and Engagement**
Most students described ChatGPT as motivating and enjoyable, appreciating its instant feedback and accessibility. A minority preferred traditional face-to-face methods.
6. **Independent Learning**
ChatGPT encouraged self-study beyond the classroom. Many students used it to explore new words for personal or academic purposes.
7. **Domain-Specific Vocabulary**
Students acknowledged ChatGPT's effectiveness in explaining fashion-related

vocabulary, though occasional inaccuracies and overly general explanations were reported.

DISCUSSION

The findings align with previous research (e.g., Jannah & Priyanto, 2023; Chen et al., 2023), confirming that students view ChatGPT as a supportive and practical tool for language learning. From a theoretical standpoint, ChatGPT embodies multiple learning theories:

- Behaviorism: through repetition and practice.
- Cognitivism: via contextual examples and elaboration.
- Constructivism: by allowing learners to actively construct knowledge through interactive engagement.

Nevertheless, challenges such as limited digital literacy, inaccurate responses, and over-reliance on AI tools indicate that effective use requires teacher guidance and critical evaluation skills. This echoes Ryan and Deci's (2020) notion that intrinsic motivation is maximized when students feel competent and autonomous but still supported.

CONCLUSION

This study explored students' perceptions of using ChatGPT as a vocabulary learning tool in a vocational education context. The results show that students generally perceive ChatGPT positively, appreciating its practicality, accessibility, and interactive features. It enhances vocabulary acquisition by providing repetition, contextual understanding, and connections to prior knowledge.

Students also reported increased confidence and motivation, particularly in writing tasks and independent study. However, limitations such as initial confusion, occasional inaccuracies, and repetitive responses were identified. These suggest that ChatGPT should be used as a complementary tool rather than a sole resource.

Overall, ChatGPT demonstrates strong potential as an AI-assisted vocabulary learning tool, especially for domain-specific contexts like fashion design. To maximize its benefits, students need guidance in prompt formulation and critical evaluation of responses, while teachers should integrate AI tools into a blended learning framework.

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