The Exploration of Students' Perceptions of Using the EWA Application for Learning English Vocabulary at SMA Negeri 15 Padang

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Article History	Abstract
Published: 2024-08-09	This research aimed to explore students' perceptions of using the EWA application as a learning media in learning vocabulary. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to depict the experiences of the research subject. The research participants were 32 senior high school students of eleventh in 2023/2024 the academic year. The data were collecting by using questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that majority of students had positive perception in using the EWA application for learning vocabulary. In addition, students felt interested and motivated in learning English, especially vocabulary, because it provides exciting pictures, video, and games that makes they enjoy using it anytime and anywhere. Besides that, the data revealed that students encounter challenges with their internet connection while using the application. Therefore, teachers and schools play a crucial role in helping students utilize their educational application such as EWA as learning media in the process of learning English vocabulary. It was recommended for students to be able in utilizing EWA inside or outside the classroom and for next researcher can utilize the EWA app in other language skills through a wider sample.
Keywords: *Students' Perceptions, EWA Application, Learning Vocabulary*	

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, the basic thing that learners must develop is the ability to understand vocabulary. If they do not have a good vocabulary, students will have difficulty learning English. Vocabulary mastery is considered to be one of the key factors that determine whether or not English learners succeed (Rambe & Pahlevi, 2022). It is essential to learn English vocabulary to be successful as a professional (Amirul, Susilawati, & Wardah, 2023). The reason vocabulary studied first is

because vocabulary does not have the rules like grammar (Syafawani, 2023). Also acquiring knowledge of vocabulary is crucial for mastering reading writing, speaking, and listening (Afna, 2018). By mastering the vocabulary, learners will be more understand every word used for our reading; they can use some vocabulary to produce sentences or texts, they can express or convey something to other people, and also understand the conversation or English song. Therefore, people who want to improve their English skills have to learn more vocabulary.

Although vocabulary is important, there are still some problems or difficulties in understanding and mastering it. One of the most difficult things for any student to do while studying a foreign language is to become proficient in vocabulary (Afna, 2018). A study by Afidah & Machfudi (2022) showed that students find it difficult to pronounce words and choose the correct meaning of the words, they still get confused when using a word or even if they have an idiomatic expression. Typically, textbooks and teacher-given vocabulary are the only one ways that students expand their vocabulary during classroom lessons. When students come across numerous unfamiliar vocabularies in a text, they ask teacher to clarify their definitions and usage. Students also struggle to come up with ideas for writing and to put sentences together.

Furthermore, these problems are serious and students have many difficulties because students still learn from memorization. Learning by memorization is learning that only tries to remember new information without assimilating new knowledge with concepts that already exist in the cognitive structure and learning by memorizing three to four times is most effective for remembering vocabulary in English. Sometimes student will feel bored when they have to memorize many times and need a new innovation for learning. According to Glassman & Opengart (2016), most researchers agree that creativity and innovation are the main things that determine the success or failure of a person or organization. Based on researchers observation conducted during teaching practice at SMA Negeri 15 Padang, students' mastery of vocabulary was unsatisfactory. By having a limited vocabulary, the students will find difficulties in mastering vocabulary. It can be seen when learning English by displaying various texts, many students do not understand the meaning of each word. The difficulty of students acquiring English language proficiency can be found in various educational institutions, including senior high school.

Apart from the lack of vocabulary mastery, students are also faced with a lack of knowledge about the use of technology in learning English. They only rely on books and teachers who explain the material in class. Learning English, especially vocabulary, is not enough to learn from school, but it can be supported by technology. To overcome this, it is highly suggested to have technology support for learning media. One of the technologies that can support learning vocabulary is using EWA application. The EWA application is an interesting application for learning English that can inspire and foster students' positive attitudes in developing English language skills (Tiang-uan, 2022). This application is an application that has a unique method where this application provides topic-based online courses, short movies, story books, and games.

Some previous scholars have researched the use of applications to learn English especially vocabulary such as Duolingo application, Hello English, and

Cake. Amirul et al., (2023) investigated students Perception toward the Use of Duolingo for Vocabulary Learning. The study's finding showed that students' perceptions of using Duolingo as a tool for learning English vocabulary were generally favourable and nearly all students concurred that using the Duolingo application to study English had many positive effects. Besides, Nurtriyanto (2020) studied student's perception towards incorporation of Hello English in vocabulary learning. To the findings, it demonstrated that the process of learning vocabulary by using the Hello English application can make students motivated to continue learning English. Furthermore, Wahyuni et al. (2022) identified students' perceptions of the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary. According to the findings and discussion, the results indicated that the students' perceptions of the Cake application as a vocabulary-learning tool have the same agreement and eventually helped them to improve their vocabulary mastery.

In this context, based on the phenomenon observed at SMA Negeri 15 Padang and building on the work of previous researchers, the researcher is interested in exploring students' perception of learning English vocabulary using the EWA application because students see it as a modern, good, and exciting media that is appropriate for today when they have access to the internet and technology.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a descriptive qualitative as the research design to depict the experiences of the research subjects. Qualitative research is research that uses a naturalistic approach in a special context to identify significant or comprehend phenomena in a certain environment (Hollstein, 2015). The purpose of this study is to explore the students' perception of using the EWA application for learning English vocabulary. The participants of this study are grade eleventh students at SMA Negeri 15 Padang who had downloaded and experienced using the EWA application for learning vocabulary with purposive sampling technique to choose the sample. The researcher applied the descriptive method because the data were described in detail.

The researchers collected data from questionnaires and interview. The researchers provided questionnaire with 20 questions that adopted by (Kurnianto, 2023) and an interview with 7 questions adapted from Maharani (2023). This study employed a Google Form for the online questionnaire who had distributed to students using WhatsApp group. The researchers utilized a four-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. After gathering the data with the questionnaires, the researchers also conducted face-to face interview who had been chosen to gather incomplete research data.

After collecting data, the data was analysed by the researchers using various steps, including data reduction that has been collected by documented the data took into account all the evidence supporting the research results, and eliminated everything that was not necessary and gathered information on the subject by focusing on the most important facts. Then, the researchers displayed the data where the data have presented as a collection of organized facts to make inferences and gather further data. The final step is to draw conclusions and provide suggestions for

the research result based on the data analysis. The researcher concluded and supported it by examining the significant topic related to the research problem.
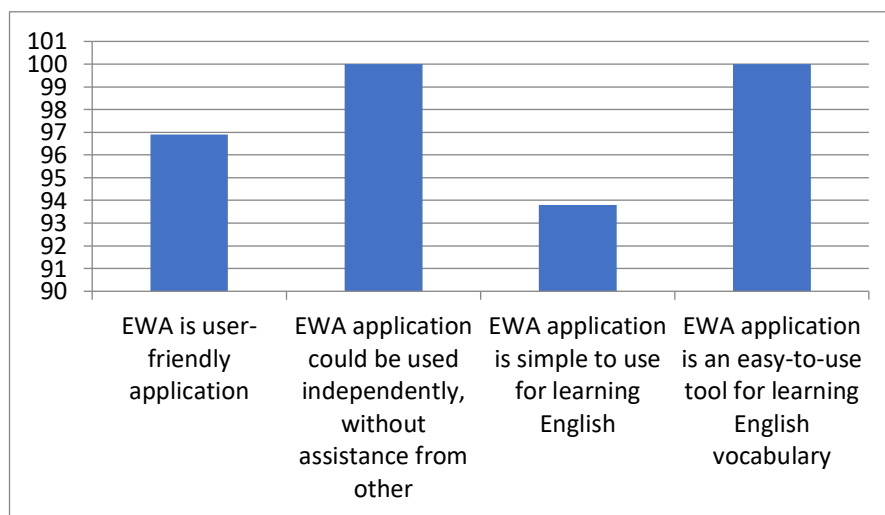
RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Finding

Students' perceptions about the use of the EWA application for learning English vocabulary were discovered based on the findings of the questionnaires and interviews

1. The Simplicity of Using the EWA Application

The chart 1 below showed the percentage of students viewing the simplicity of using the EWA application.


In the viewing simplicity of using the EWA application, students were required to respond a statement by drawing on their experiences with four statements. In the case of the first statement about EWA is user-friendly application, the result of a questionnaire study were agreed upon 96,9 % of students. 93,8% students agreed that EWA app was simple to use for learning English. All of students agreed that EWA app could be used independently without assistance from other and easy-to-use tool for learning English.

From the interview, it confirmed that students feel the EWA application is an easy-to-use tool for learning English vocabulary. They stated that this application is easy to use and also make them easily understand about the material. The result came from several student responses to questions that were provided, and their responses in the sample demonstrated *"This application is easy to use for learning vocabulary and this application provides good features that can make students understand the lesson clearly"*.

2. The Efficiency of EWA Application

Chart 2 below showed the percentage of students answering the questionnaire about the efficient English vocabulary learning in using the EWA application.
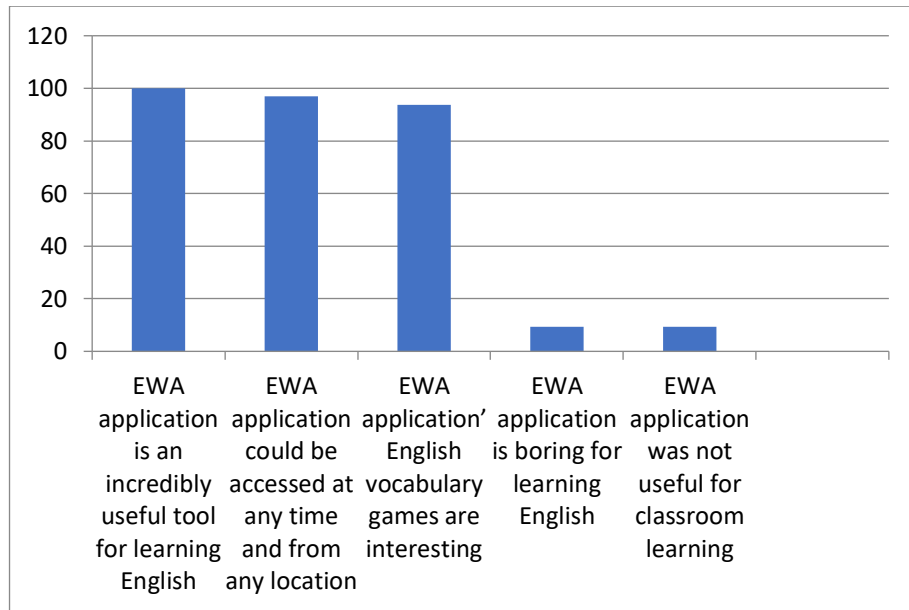

In the aspect of the efficiency of the EWA application, the researcher provided five questions according to students' experience while using this application in the class room or outside the classroom. In the case of the first statement about EWA app is an incredibly useful tool for learning English, all of students agree with the statement. There was 96,9% students agree that EWA application could be accessed at any time and from any location. 93,8% students also agreed about the EWA app have interesting English vocabulary games. On the other hands, 90,6% students disagreed that EWA app is boring for learning English and not useful for classroom learning.

Regarding the efficiency of the EWA application used by the students during learning as a media for learning vocabulary, the students interviewed expressed their thoughts based on their experience in using the application and said that the EWA application was easy to use because it had interesting features in helping them develop new vocabulary. This application also has a daily sequence that encourages the students to learn new vocabulary based on the certain level that they have never known before at anytime and anywhere. The results that the researcher got from the student's excerpt answer *"EWA application helped me to learn more effective because this application provide daily sequence that make me more encourage in increasing the available levels to learn English vocabulary at anytime and anywhere"*.

3. The Advantages of the EWA Application

The chart 3 below presented the view of students about the advantages of the EWA application in learning English vocabulary.
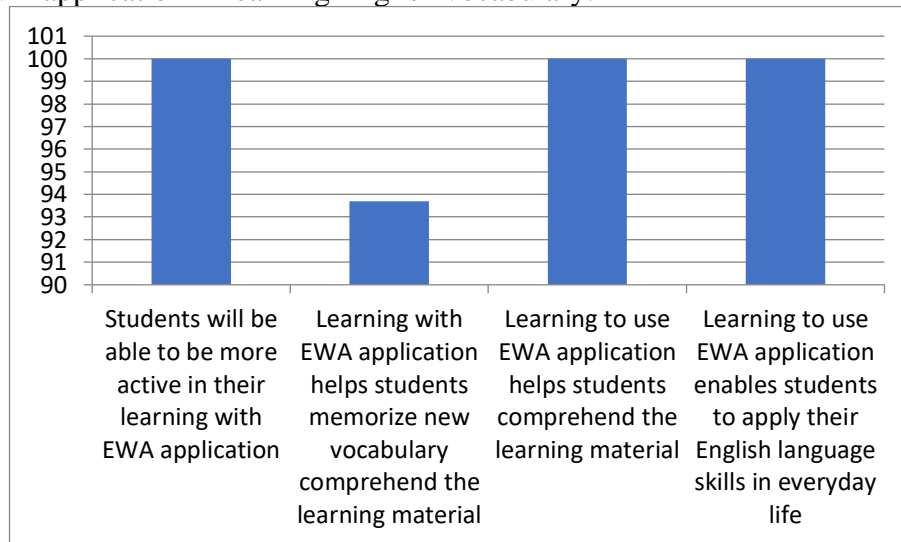

In the several of advantages of the EWA application, the researcher provided four questions based on students' experience while using this application in a few months. All of students agreed that learning to use EWA application helps students comprehend the learning material, enables students to apply their English language skills in everyday life, and they will be able to be more active in their learning with EWA application. Furthermore, 93,7% students agreed that learning with EWA application helps students memorize new vocabulary comprehend the learning material.

The researcher also gave interview question to students regarding whether they used the EWA application to enable to apply their English language skills in everyday life. Students showed positive perceptions of using the EWA application. This application provides interactive games and online conversations that they can apply at any time in their daily lives. Apart from that, they also feel curious and want to re-learn the new vocabulary provided at EWA so they can have conversations related to the vocabulary they got after studying it. From the students' responses to the provided question, the researcher obtained to this *"EWA application is very good at increasing my vocabulary because my growing curiosity in using this application allows me to understand the vocabulary provided by interactive games. This application also provides online conversation which I can apply at any time in my daily life".*

4. The Disadvantages of the EWA Application

The chart 4 below showed the view of students about the disadvantages of the EWA application in learning English vocabulary.
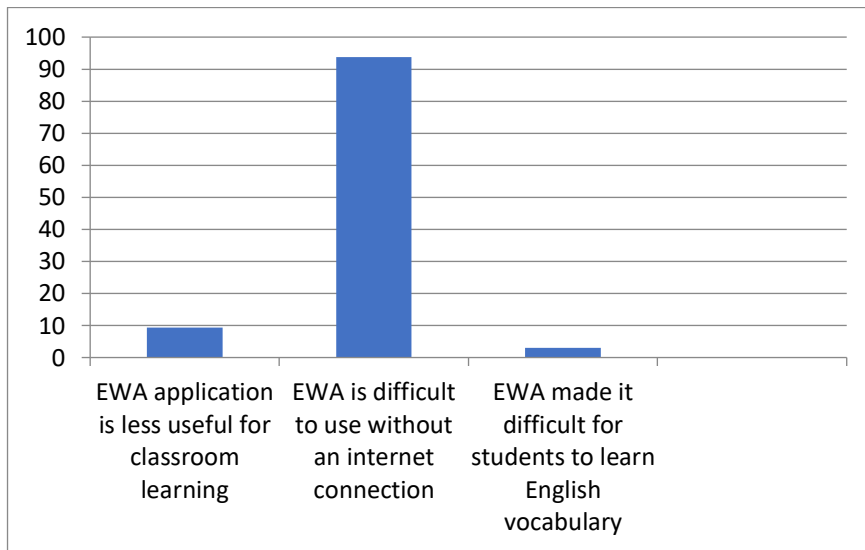
In the viewing the disadvantages of using the EWA app, students were required to respond a statement by drawing on their experiences with 3 statements. There was 90,6% students disagree that EWA app is less useful for classroom learning. Then, 93,7% students agreed that EWA is difficult to use without an internet connection. In addition, 96,9% students disagreed that EWA made it difficult for students to learn English vocabulary.

To support the questionnaire questions, researchers also gave interview questions to students about difficulties in using the EWA application. The results of the interviews also stated that students found it difficult to use the EWA application when the internet network was unstable which made the application error so they could not continue their lessons optimally. From the students' responses to the provided question, the researcher obtained to this *"In the application, there are a few challenges and disadvantages. In this application, I have difficulty accessing English lessons, especially if I use this application without being connected to the internet and sometimes errors and loading occur when the network is unstable".*

5. Students' Interest in Using The EWA Application

The chart 5 below showed the percentage of students' interest in using the EWA application in learning English vocabulary.
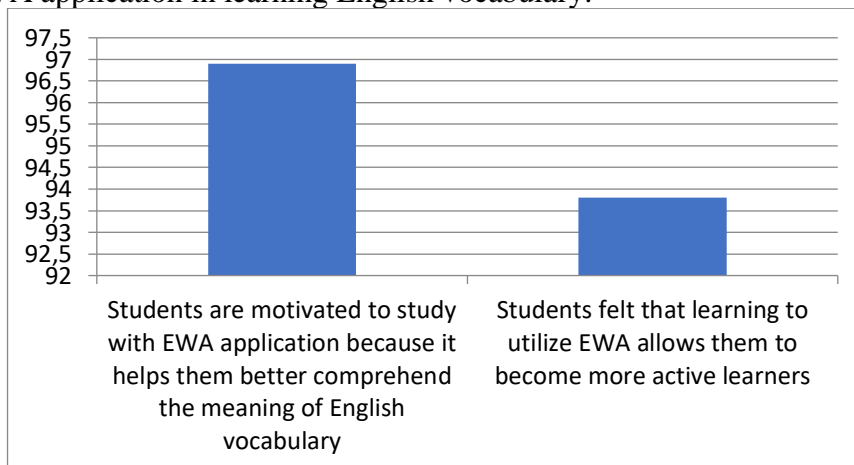
Based on the results of questionnaire about students' interest in using the EWA application, 96,9% students agreed that they are motivated to study with EWA application because it helps them better comprehend the meaning of English vocabulary. Students with the percentage of 93,8% also felt that learning to utilize EWA allows them to become more active learners.

Based on questionnaire above, students gave a positive perception about the students' interest in using the EWA Application. Apart from the questionnaire, the researcher also provided several interview questions to support students' questionnaire answers. From the interview, it confirmed that students are motivated to study with EWA application because it helps them better comprehend the meaning of English vocabulary. This application also provided fun feature which the students can learn accompanied by games. The result came from several student responses to questions that were provided, and their responses in the sample demonstrated *"I am very motivated and excited to learn English using the EWA application because it provides fun features so I have the desire to learn new vocabulary accompanied by games"*.

6. Students' Enthusiasm of learning English Vocabulary with EWA App

The percentage of students who responded to the questionnaire regarding their enthusiasm of learning English vocabulary in using the EWA application was displayed in the table 4.6.
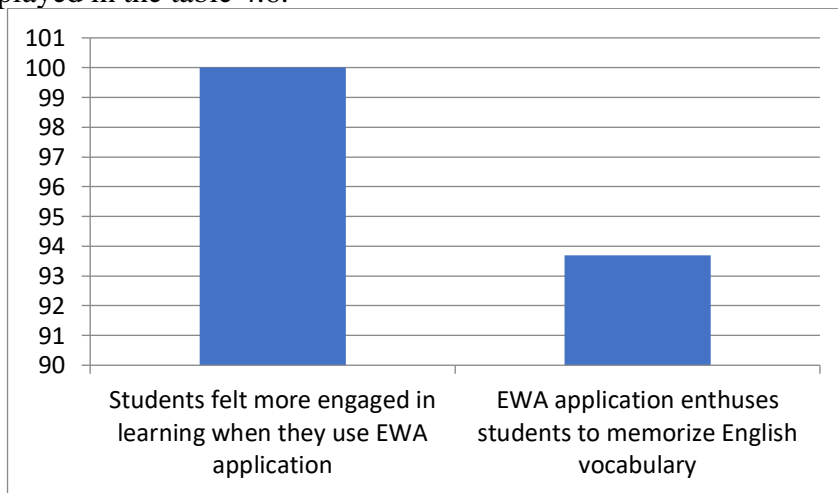
In the aspect of students' enthusiasm of learning English vocabulary with EWA application, the researcher only offers two statements. The first statement about students felt more engaged in learning when they use EWA application where all of students agree with the statement. 93,7% students agreed that EWA application enthuses students to memorize English vocabulary. As evidenced by the result of this statement more than half of students agree and a few students disagree with this statement given to them. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of students disagree with the statement which they felt in the EWA application beneficial for classroom learning. EWA application enthuses students to memorize English vocabulary.

Discussion

Based on the result above, EWA application is a interesting tool for learning English, especially vocabulary, with students expressing positive perceptions. The app is easy to use, accessible at any time and location, and offers various interesting features such as recording vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary learning, and evaluation. An application with user-friendly features, such as recording students' beginning vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary learning, and evaluation, is used to make this vocabulary understanding (Nasrulloh, 2022). English learning media can make learning easier by using a smartphone anywhere and anytime, and also easy to use with attractive displays and images accompanied by sound in the pronunciation (Sari, 2015).

Some applications for learning English are conveniently and freely accessible to students based on their own interest (Ameri, 2020). Students find the EWA application engaging and motivating, as it helps them better understand the meaning of English vocabulary and encourages them to become more active learners. It can be seen that majority of students in this class felt the EWA application is not boring for learning English as a learning media because it provides interesting and user-friendly features that make students enjoy to learn English vocabulary. This interest is one of the internal factors that arise when students discuss how they perceive or experience of using something (Urrohmah, 2023). Using the EWA application in daily life not only makes it convenient to use anywhere and anytime, but it also increases students' engagement in the learning process. Mobile phones and the internet are examples of technology that is thought to be an excellent tool to support the teaching and learning process (Nuraeni & Nurmalia, 2020).

However, some students experience disadvantages of using the EWA application, such as internet connection issues, which can hinder their ability to use the application. Almost all learning applications are worried about internet connection since it could lead to serious issues that prevent them from using their learning time as intended (Mataniati, 2019). Despite these challenges, students express excitement and motivation to use the English language to learn new vocabulary and complete vocabulary exercises. Students who are motivated will respond to an experience they have had with a stimuli, which makes motivation important factor of perception (Munday, 2015). The EWA application's mobile phone format enhances learning communication both inside and outside the classroom, making it a valuable tool for students to enhance their English language learning experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conclusion, all of students gave a positive perception of their EWA application experience due to its ease of use at any time and place without any usage restrictions. From this study, the researcher recommend teachers and schools to play a crucial role in helping students utilize their educational applications and tools at school and also comprehend the requirements of students through a need assessment conducted prior to using new media or applications to understand students' needs, capabilities, and areas for improvement in various aspects.

For students, they find that they more excited and motivated to learn new vocabulary, but they encounter challenges with their internet connection while using the application. This would help students to stay motivated and interested in continuing their English language, ultimately bringing about various benefits that can be applied to different aspects of English learning. The researcher only focused on learning English vocabulary at senior high school with a small sample. The researcher hopes that future researcher can utilize the EWA application in other English language skills like reading, listening, speaking and writing as a whole could be further explored through a broader and more engaging sample.

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