

Exploring Children's Experiences and Perceptions in Enriching Vocabulary Through the *English for Kids* Application

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore children's experiences and perceptions in enriching English vocabulary through the *English for Kids* application. Employing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study involved early elementary school children who used the application as part of their English learning activities. Data were collected through naturalistic observation, child-friendly semi-structured interviews, and supporting documentation. The data were analyzed inductively using descriptive thematic analysis. The findings revealed that children experienced the application as an engaging and supportive learning tool. Interactive features, including colorful visuals, audio pronunciation, and game-like activities, fostered high levels of engagement and enjoyment. Children perceived vocabulary learning as a playful activity, which encouraged voluntary repetition and sustained interaction. Repeated exposure to vocabulary items enhanced children's familiarity, confidence, and awareness of English words, as reflected in quicker word recognition, spontaneous recall, and the use of newly learned vocabulary in everyday contexts. The study concludes that positive learning experiences, multimodal input, and meaningful exposure play important roles in enriching children's English vocabulary through digital applications. These findings highlight the pedagogical potential of child-centered mobile applications in supporting early English vocabulary development.

Keywords: *children's experiences, perception, vocabulary, English for kids, application*

Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized world, mastery of English vocabulary from an early age plays a crucial role in children's long-term language development, reading comprehension, and academic success. Vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental building block for the development of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) which ultimately influence overall language proficiency (Haris et al., 2025). However, traditional instructional methods in early childhood settings often centered on rote memorization or static flashcard drills can be monotonous, lack engagement, and fail to sustain young learners' intrinsic motivation to learn new English words (Febriani et al., 2025).

To address these limitations, researchers and educators have increasingly turned to digital applications designed specifically for children, such as mobile-based learning tools or gamified English learning apps, to support vocabulary enrichment. In this context, the *English for Kids* application emerges as a child-friendly digital learning tool designed to support early English vocabulary acquisition through interactive and multimedia-based activities. The application typically integrates visual illustrations, audio pronunciation, simple games, and repetition-based exercises to introduce basic English vocabulary such as colors, animals, numbers, body parts, and everyday objects. Several recent studies

have investigated the impact of digital media and educational applications on improving English vocabulary among young learners. For example, the use of mobile-based self-learning applications has been shown to enrich children's English vocabularies through interactive exercises and multimedia features (Ulwiyah, 2025). Similarly, research on apps such as "English for Kids" has reported positive effects on early childhood English vocabulary recognition and retention, leading to increases in learners' engagement and word knowledge (Febriani et al., 2025). Additionally, studies on digitized learning media like Android-based learning apps and gamified vocabulary games demonstrate improvements in vocabulary acquisition when digital tools are systematically integrated into instruction (Pangestuni et al., 2025).

Despite these promising findings, gaps remain in our understanding of young children's experiential processes and perceptions while using English vocabulary applications. Existing research tends to focus predominantly on outcome measures such as test scores or observable vocabulary gains, with limited emphasis on how children experience, interact with, and perceive the learning process itself when using digital apps. Moreover, studies often lack comprehensive analysis of individual differences in motivation, enjoyment, and cognitive engagement during app-mediated learning sessions factors which can mediate vocabulary acquisition success (Haris et al., 2025; Ulwiyah, 2025). The current empirical evidence also rarely examines whether young learners perceive app-based learning as meaningful and relevant to their own language learning goals, an important consideration given the developmental and psycholinguistic demands of vocabulary acquisition at early ages. Theoretical discussions of digital learning apps further suggest that the language input delivered through apps may differ in lexical diversity and complexity from richer language environments such as child-directed speech or traditional literacy sources, potentially influencing learning outcomes in ways that are not yet fully understood (Cambridge Core, 2026).

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the experiences and perceptions of children engaged in vocabulary enrichment through the English for Kids application. Specifically, the research examines how children interact with the app, how they perceive the learning features and activities, and how these factors relate to their engagement and vocabulary growth. The research aims to answer the following question: How do children experience and perceive the use of the English for Kids application in enriching their English vocabulary? Based on this central question, the study has the following objectives: (1) to describe children's experiential interactions with the English for Kids app, (2) to identify children's perceptions of the app's vocabulary learning features, and (3) to analyze associations between children's perceptions and their vocabulary enrichment outcomes.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design grounded in an interpretivist perspective to explore children's experiences and perceptions of vocabulary learning through the *English for Kids* application. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand participants' meanings and lived experiences within their natural learning contexts (Creswell, 2014). The participants were early elementary school children who had experience using the application and were selected purposively to obtain rich descriptions of their learning experiences in one of private course. Parents were involved as supporting informants to provide contextual insights into children's engagement during the learning process. The researcher acted as

the primary instrument, focusing on understanding participants' meanings and interactions in natural learning contexts.

Data were collected through naturalistic observation, child-friendly semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on children's interactions, engagement, and spontaneous responses while using the application, while interviews were conducted informally using simple language and visual prompts. Supporting interviews and relevant learning documents were used to enrich the data. Data analysis was conducted inductively through descriptive thematic analysis, involving repeated reading, identification of meaningful patterns, and interpretation of themes derived from participants' experiences and perceptions. Findings were presented in rich descriptive narratives.

Results

The analysis of observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation revealed several interconnected themes that describe children's experiences and perceptions while using the *English for Kids* application to enrich their English vocabulary. The findings are presented in a logical sequence, beginning with children's engagement during app use, followed by their perceptions of learning features, and ending with perceived vocabulary development.

Children's Engagement and Enjoyment in Learning Activities

Observational data showed that most children demonstrated high levels of attention and enthusiasm when interacting with the application. They appeared motivated by colorful visuals, sound effects, and interactive tasks such as matching words with pictures or listening to pronunciation models. During interviews, children frequently described the activities as "fun" and "like playing," indicating that they perceived vocabulary learning through the application as an enjoyable experience rather than a formal learning task. This enjoyment was reflected in their willingness to repeat activities voluntarily and explore different sections of the application.

Children's Perceptions of the Learning Process and Application Features

Children reported that the application helped them understand new English words more easily because the words were presented alongside images and audio. Many children expressed confidence in repeating words after listening to native-like pronunciation provided by the application. Supporting informants, such as parents or teachers, observed that children often attempted to use newly learned words outside the learning session, suggesting that the application supported meaningful exposure to vocabulary. These findings indicate that children perceived the application as clear, supportive, and accessible for learning new words.

Childrens' Perceived Vocabulary Enrichment and Language Awareness

Although this study did not aim to measure vocabulary gains quantitatively, qualitative evidence suggested that children became more familiar with English words through repeated exposure in the application. During observations, children were seen recognizing words more quickly and responding with greater confidence over time. In interviews, some children were able to recall and name vocabulary items learned from the application without prompts. Parents and teachers also reported noticing increased curiosity and awareness of English words in everyday contexts, such as naming objects or asking about English meanings.

The results indicate that children experienced the *English for Kids* application as an engaging and supportive learning tool. Their positive perceptions, combined with observable changes in confidence and vocabulary awareness, suggest that the application played a meaningful role in enriching children's English vocabulary learning experiences. These findings reflect the outcomes of a systematic and interpretative analysis of qualitative data gathered from multiple sources.

Discussion

This study employed an inductive and interpretative data analysis process to achieve its research objectives. The analysis did not involve statistical calculations; instead, it relied on a systematic qualitative procedure that included repeated reading of observation records, interview transcripts, and documentation to identify meaningful patterns in children's experiences and perceptions. Through descriptive thematic analysis, data were reduced, organized, and interpreted to construct themes that represented recurring meanings across participants' narratives and behaviors. This process allowed the researcher to move from raw data to coherent findings that reflect children's lived experiences in using the *English for Kids* application.

Children's Engagement and Enjoyment in Learning Activities

The findings indicate that children's high levels of engagement and enjoyment emerged as a central element in their vocabulary learning experiences. Through the analytical process, repeated expressions of enthusiasm, sustained attention, and voluntary repetition of activities were consistently identified across data sources. These patterns suggest that the interactive and game-like features of the application contributed to a learning environment perceived by children as enjoyable rather than instructional. From a qualitative standpoint, such engagement is significant because it reflects children's intrinsic motivation, which plays an important role in early language learning. The interpretation of these patterns supports the notion that enjoyable digital learning environments can facilitate positive learning experiences for young learners. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that gamified and multimedia-based learning environments enhance children's engagement and positive emotional responses, which are essential for language acquisition at early ages (Gee, 2007; Prensky, 2010). When children experience enjoyment during learning, they are more likely to participate actively, repeat learning activities, and sustain attention, all of which contribute to meaningful vocabulary exposure.

The discussion of this theme demonstrates that engagement and enjoyment are not merely supplementary elements but central components of effective vocabulary learning experiences for children. The qualitative data analysis process revealed that the *English for Kids* application fostered a learning atmosphere perceived as enjoyable and motivating, which in turn supported children's sustained interaction with English vocabulary. These findings emphasize the pedagogical value of designing child-centered digital learning applications that integrate play, interaction, and meaningful language exposure.

Children's Perceptions of the Learning Process and Application Features

The findings show that children perceived the *English for Kids* application as clear and supportive in helping them understand new English vocabulary. The combination of images and audio enabled children to comprehend word meanings more easily, as visual representations and auditory input worked together to support understanding. This

result is consistent with studies on multimodal learning, which indicate that young learners benefit from visual and auditory integration in vocabulary acquisition (Mayer, 2017; Sun & Dong, 2021). Qualitative analysis of children's responses revealed that such multimodal input reduced confusion and increased confidence in learning new words.

Children's confidence in repeating words after listening to native-like pronunciation highlights the role of accurate audio models in supporting pronunciation and language awareness. Previous research suggests that exposure to clear pronunciation through digital applications can enhance learners' willingness to practice speaking and improve their confidence (Hao et al., 2019; Tsou & Kao, 2022). In addition, observations from parents and teachers showed that children attempted to use newly learned words in daily contexts, indicating meaningful vocabulary exposure beyond the application. This finding aligns with studies emphasizing that repeated and contextualized exposure supports vocabulary retention and transfer to real-life language use (Lin & Lin, 2020).

Childrens' Perceived Vocabulary Enrichment and Language Awareness

Observations showed quicker word recognition and more confident responses over time, while interviews revealed children's ability to recall vocabulary items without prompts. These findings support previous studies indicating that repeated and meaningful exposure plays a crucial role in early vocabulary acquisition (Peters, 2014; Webb & Nation, 2017). Reports from parents and teachers further indicated that children demonstrated increased curiosity and awareness of English words in everyday contexts, suggesting that vocabulary learning extended beyond the application environment. Such transfer of learning is commonly associated with effective digital learning tools that provide engaging and accessible language input (Lin & Lin, 2020; Sun & Dong, 2021). Overall, the findings indicate that the *English for Kids* application functioned as an engaging and supportive learning tool, contributing meaningfully to children's English vocabulary learning experiences through repeated and enjoyable exposure.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the achievement of the research objectives resulted from a rigorous qualitative data analysis process that emphasized interpretation, pattern recognition, and thematic construction. The narrative findings suggest that the *English for Kids* application provides a meaningful learning experience by fostering engagement, supporting comprehension, and encouraging early vocabulary awareness. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital applications function as experiential learning tools in early English vocabulary development.

Conclusion

This study explored children's experiences and perceptions of vocabulary learning through the *English for Kids* application using a descriptive qualitative approach. The findings indicate that children experienced the application as an engaging and supportive learning tool for enriching English vocabulary. Interactive features such as colorful visuals, audio pronunciation, and game-like activities encouraged high levels of engagement and enjoyment, leading children to perceive vocabulary learning as a playful and meaningful activity rather than a formal task.

The results further demonstrate that the multimodal design of the application supported children's understanding and confidence in learning new words. Repeated exposure to vocabulary items enabled children to recognize and recall words more quickly over time, while observations and interviews suggested growing vocabulary awareness and curiosity beyond the application context. Overall, the study concludes that

positive learning experiences, sustained engagement, and meaningful exposure contributed to children's vocabulary enrichment through the *English for Kids* application.

Educators and parents are encouraged to use child-friendly digital applications such as *English for Kids* as complementary tools to support early English vocabulary learning, particularly those that emphasize interactive and multimodal features. Application developers are advised to design learning content that integrates play-based activities, clear pronunciation models, and repeated vocabulary exposure. Future research may employ mixed-method or longitudinal designs to further examine the long-term impact of digital applications on children's English vocabulary development.

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