STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING BRITISH COUNCIL LEARN ENGLISH FOR INCREASING VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

Building vocabulary is crucial to improving students' language skills, yet many EFL students find it difficult to pick up a wide enough vocabulary using conventional teaching techniques. This study aims to investigate how students view the British Council Learn English platform as a digital resource for vocabulary development. Fifteen Junior high school students who had been active platform users for at least a month participated in semi-structured interviews as part of a qualitative descriptive technique to gather data. Key themes were identified through the use of thematic analysis. According to the results, students thought the platform was helpful, efficient, and interesting for vocabulary development, especially because of its interactive content, contextualized learning resources, and audiovisual elements. Nevertheless, many drawbacks were identified, including the absence of speaking practice and the repetitive nature of the activity formats. These findings imply that although the platform greatly facilitates vocabulary acquisition, more work is required to meet students' more extensive language requirements. To optimize the platform's pedagogical potential and student happiness, educators and developers are advised to incorporate elements that encourage speaking practice, collaborative learning, and content variety. To optimize the platform's pedagogical potential and student happiness, educators and developers are advised to incorporate elements that encourage speaking practice, collaborative learning, and content variety.

INTRODUCTIONS

Newly, there has been a noticeable increase in interest in using technology in language acquisition. These technological developments have simplified and automated several sectors, including corporations, industries, and most recently, education (Mchucha et al., 2017). It is reinforced by the internet's explosive rise in recent years, which has benefited everyone in the modern world (Hadina et al., 2023). Educational technology has allowed teachers and students to use engaging and effective interactive learning materials.

Unquestionably, vocabulary is a key component in learning the four fundamental English language abilities: writing, speaking, listening, and reading (Thuong, 2023). Without a doubt, one of the most crucial components of any level of proficiency in a foreign language, particularly English, is vocabulary (Quyen, 2022). Students with a large vocabulary can better communicate and comprehend the lessons being taught. Nonetheless, many pupils struggle to learn vocabulary, which might prevent them from speaking, reading, and writing in English. Even though vocabulary is thought to be a crucial component of language learning, the majority of Vietnamese students struggle to retain the words or phrases they have learned (Thảo, 2022). Due to a lack of appropriate vocabulary, the pupils found it difficult to participate in English-presenting exercises (Syafutra et al., 2023).

One of the issues is that teachers continue to teach vocabulary using the same method and approach, which makes pupils bored (Lubis, 2022). Investigating efficient teaching techniques that might improve students' learning experiences is essential to addressing the difficulties kids encounter in the classroom with vocabulary acquisition and retention. As a consequence, using technology to learn a language is crucial, especially for expanding pupils' vocabulary. It is very beneficial to use technology as a medium in the classroom since it can make students more interested in what they are learning (Pham, 2022).

As previously stated, teachers and students can readily use various applications and websites to enhance their vocabulary in the age of digital technology. There are numerous applications for e-learning. One such website is "Learn English," run by the British Council, which offers a range of interactive materials designed to enhance English language proficiency. Because it offers interesting information that accommodates students of various skill levels, this platform is especially pertinent for those just starting their English language studies. The British Council provides inexpensive English language learning options (Puspitasari et al., 2023). English language practice (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), vocabulary, grammar, and examinations with topic-related audio and visuals are just a few of the options available to pupils (Bogale & Wale, 2024). British Council Learn English is an educational website that offers a range of interactive English learning resources, such as games, stories, songs, and language exercises, with the goal of enhancing students' language proficiency overall (Alimi and Syafei, 2013). Particularly for pupils in elementary school, this platform is thought to be beneficial in enhancing word memory.

"This study is also conceptually supported by theories related to digital learning and language acquisition, such as Dual Coding Theory, Input Hypothesis, and Self-Determination Theory, which provide insight into how learners interact with and respond to digital educational tools." Additionally, interactive and gamified environments promote deep engagement, problem-solving, and retention, which makes them especially useful in vocabulary learning through digital games, according to Gee's Learning Principles in Game-Based Learning (Ali et al., 2023).

Numerous earlier studies have demonstrated the value of technology in helping students learn English vocabulary. Quyen (2022) investigated how Vietnamese students' vocabulary acquisition was enhanced by using the Memrise mobile application. According to the findings, the application's gamification features, spatial repetition, and visualization enhanced both the amount of time students spent learning vocabulary and their motivation to study. This result is consistent with the study by Maulana et al. (2024), which showed that students' reading comprehension and passion for learning English were enhanced in Thailand when they used the British Council Learn English Kids website. Furthermore, Alimi & Syafei (2013) discovered that incorporating activities and songs from the British Council website into the elementary school curriculum greatly enhanced the vocabulary retention of the kids. These findings support the claim that interactive digital media can be a useful tool for vocabulary learning while also giving students a more pleasurable and autonomous learning environment.

Prior research has demonstrated that digital media, including interactive websites and mobile applications, can improve students' vocabulary acquisition, particularly through multimodal presentation characteristics, gamification, and spatial repetition. The majority of these studies, nevertheless, have concentrated on the quantitative impacts of

using particular apps on learning outcomes for students (Qizhen Deng, Guy Trainin, 2015). Few studies have looked at how students react, appreciate, and subjectively view their experiences utilizing digital platforms to learn vocabulary, especially when it comes to the British Council's Learn English website. In other words, studies using a qualitative approach still hardly ever examine students' in-depth impressions and learning experiences of this site.

This study directly contributes to the user-centered design of future e-learning platforms by documenting specific learner suggestions for improvement (e.g., adding progress tracking, cultural context, and group challenges). As a result, students no longer play the role of passive recipients of their learning environment, but rather actively participate in its construction (Qizhen Deng, Guy Trainin, 2015).

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of using the British Council Learn English website to increase their vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, this research is conducted to examine how students perceive the platform's effectiveness in supporting vocabulary learning, identify which features of the website are considered most beneficial for vocabulary development and retention, and examine the challenges and motivating factors experienced by students while using the platform as a medium for learning vocabulary. Through these research questions, the study intends to provide insights into how digital tools can be effectively integrated into vocabulary learning in English language education.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative and case study methodology to examine students' opinions about utilizing the British Council Learn English website to increase their vocabulary. A qualitative method was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences, attitudes, and motivations, which cannot be fully captured through numerical data. As Hammond (1980) suggest, qualitative research is particularly effective in uncovering meanings and insights from participants in their natural context.

Since it enables the researcher to thoroughly understand students' experiences, attitudes, and motives for utilizing the platform, a qualitative technique was selected. Because the study focused on a particular context, students' use of British Council Learn English case studies was employed to enable in-depth and comprehensive information exploration (Gu, 2005).

The participants in this study were the second junior high school in one of the schools in Medan. The study's population consists of eighth-grade students from one of the Medan schools. In this instance, there were 32 pupils in the population. Purposive sampling was used to choose the study's sample. The sample size for this study was fifteen students who have either used or have familiarity with the British Council's Learn English. Researchers can purposefully choose people who are particularly informed or familiar with the topic under study by using this sample technique (Ngo et al., 2017).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather data because they allowed for in-depth discussion of participants' answers while sticking to a set of guiding questions. Depending on the participants' availability, interviews were done in person or online using video conferencing services. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for qualitative research where researchers want to comprehend individual viewpoints in a targeted yet open-ended way, claim Elaish et al. (2023).

Following Chen (2024) six-phase approach, the gathered data were subjected to thematic analysis: becoming acquainted with the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, defining and labeling themes, and creating the report. The researcher might find recurrent themes and patterns in the participants' tales by using this technique. Following Perfecto (2023)standards for reliability in qualitative research, methods like member verification and peer debriefing were employed to guarantee the validity of the results.

Some tactics were used to guarantee the reliability of the study. One important method was member checking, in which participants were requested to check the accuracy of the data and interpretations by going over the condensed transcripts of their interviews. By doing this, the possibility of researcher bias was decreased, and the participants' intended meanings were maintained. These tactics are in line with Perfecto (2023), who stress that even in the absence of collaborative analysis, consistent and transparent recording can enhance the reliability of qualitative research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perceptions of Using the British Council Learn English Website to Improve Vocabulary Acquisition

This study investigates how students perceive the British Council Learn English platform in facilitating vocabulary acquisition. Drawing on interviews with 15 junior high school students, the analysis centers on five major dimensions: accessibility, instant feedback, consistency, variation, and audio-visual completeness. Each dimension reflects a distinct aspect of the learner experience and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how digital tools support or hinder vocabulary learning. Insights from students' voices provide critical perspectives on the pedagogical potential of such platforms.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions

STUDENT CODE	ACCESSIBILITY	INSTANT FEEDBACK	CONSISTENCY	VARIATION	AUDIO-VISUAL COMPLETENESS
S1	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Media fails to load with poor connection
S2	Occasional internet issues or mobile incompatibility	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S3	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S4	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S5	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Helps understand pronunciation and context better

S6	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Limited to quizzes, no oral feedback	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Media fails to load with poor connection
S7	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Limited to quizzes, no oral feedback	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Media fails to load with poor connection
S8	Occasional internet issues or mobile incompatibility	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S9	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Limited to quizzes, no oral feedback	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S10	Occasional internet issues or mobile incompatibility	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S11	Occasional internet issues or mobile incompatibility	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Media fails to load with poor connection
S12	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S13	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Supports habit formation and structured learning	Interactive features like games and videos make learning fun	Helps understand pronunciation and context better
S14	Occasional internet issues or mobile incompatibility	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Helps understand pronunciation and context better

S15	Flexible and accessible anytime via various devices	Immediate results help identify mistakes quickly	Repetitive exercises can become boring	Lacks diverse or advanced real-life topics	Media fails to load with poor connection

Accessibility emerged as a central advantage in the students' narratives. Learners described the ability to access materials from various devices and at flexible times as a strong point. "I like it because I can study at night before sleeping just using my phone is enough," said S1, emphasizing how digital access expands the temporal and spatial boundaries of learning. S6 similarly noted, "If I don't understand, I can repeat it as many times as I want without waiting for a teacher." These reflections highlight the autonomy that online platforms afford, especially for students who prefer to learn at their own pace.

Technical limitations remain a persistent obstacle for several students. Issues such as unstable internet connections and device incompatibility disrupt learning flow and diminish enthusiasm. S2 explained, "Sometimes my phone doesn't work well the screen lags, and the internet is too slow for videos." This problem resonates with S11's frustration: "When I try to open the listening part, it keeps buffering. I lose motivation." Student feedback illustrates how digital access remains uneven and dependent on infrastructural conditions that affect user experience.

Instant feedback from the platform's quiz and exercise features plays a significant role in learner satisfaction. Immediate correction helps students understand their errors without delay, reinforcing learning outcomes. "When I choose the wrong answer, it tells me right away. So I learn faster," said S3, demonstrating the instructional value of real-time feedback. "It's better than textbooks because I can instantly see how well I'm doing," added S13, who valued the transparency and interactivity the digital format offers over traditional methods.

Absence of oral feedback was highlighted as a notable gap. Learners expressed the need for features that assess speaking and pronunciation. "There are many exercises, but no one tells me if I say it right or wrong," commented S6. S9 also voiced this concern, stating, "It would be nice if we could speak into the app and get corrected." These responses suggest that the platform still leans heavily toward receptive skills and lacks support for productive language development.

Consistency in design was perceived positively by students who benefit from structured repetition. Familiarity with exercise formats allows for smoother navigation and strengthens memory retention. "The format is always the same every day, so I get used to the rhythm. It helps me remember better," explained S5. Students like S12 and S13 confirmed that regular exposure to similar activities created a learning habit that enhanced long-term retention.

Monotony from repetition was a common concern, particularly among students who thrive on novelty. Uniform task types, while predictable, risk disengagement over time. "At first it was fun, but then I got tired because the tasks were always the same," reflected S3. Maintaining a balance between consistency and novelty appears crucial to sustaining motivation, especially among adolescents accustomed to fast-changing digital content.

Variation through games and interactive visuals gained favorable responses. Students perceived learning as more enjoyable and effective when it included multimedia elements. "The games make me excited to study. I keep coming back because it feels like playing," said S1. Motivation increased when content delivery was dynamic and incorporated fun elements, enhancing the appeal of vocabulary practice.

Lack of topic diversity within exercises was cited as a drawback by several respondents. Learners expected the platform to reflect more real-world situations and conversational scenarios. "I want more vocabulary from real-life conversation, not just the same kind of quiz," said S10. Insufficient contextualization was seen as limiting the applicability of learned vocabulary in everyday communication.

Audio-visual resources were praised for aiding pronunciation and contextual understanding. Students with visual or auditory learning preferences found these features particularly supportive. "The videos help me understand how words are used in daily situations," noted S5. Observing language in action through multimedia allowed learners to move beyond rote memorization toward more functional language use.

Access to media was not always smooth due to technical limitations. Inconsistent streaming and buffering issues undermined the potential benefits of audio-visual tools. "The video doesn't load well if the internet is bad, so I skip it," explained S7. This technical interference detracts from user experience and reinforces the need for adaptive and offline-compatible learning resources.

Student engagement appears tightly linked to the platform's ability to provide instant reward mechanisms. Points, stars, and completion progress offered motivational boosts. "When I finish a task and get a score, it feels like I've achieved something," shared S15. Positive reinforcement motivates students to revisit the platform voluntarily, cultivating an intrinsic interest in vocabulary practice.

Peer influence and classroom integration also shaped usage. Although the platform is individually oriented, students felt more engaged when their peers or teachers encouraged its use. "My teacher told us to use it for homework, and then we talked about the games in class," said S14. Social contexts surrounding digital tools amplify their relevance and boost learner accountability.

Perceptions of effectiveness varied across usage frequency and technical conditions. Students with consistent internet access and habitual use reported higher satisfaction. Conversely, learners facing access challenges or repetitive content showed declining motivation. This polarity underlines the importance of customizing digital tools to meet diverse learning environments and preferences.

Final reflections from students illustrate that while the platform provides substantial support for vocabulary learning, enhancements are still needed. More diverse content, real-time speaking practice, and reliable media access were recurrent suggestions. Learners emphasized that enjoyable, accessible, and interactive features must be matched with pedagogical depth. Future development of such platforms must prioritize inclusivity, engagement, and skill integration to fully meet student expectations.

Discussion

Effective Features of the British Council Learn English Website in Supporting Vocabulary Learning and Retention

The integration of digital features within the British Council Learn English website plays a pivotal role in shaping students' vocabulary learning experience. The findings of this study reveal that students perceive several features, particularly games, videos, audio materials, and interactive exercises, as instrumental in enhancing both vocabulary acquisition and retention. These features not only diversify the learning methods but also make vocabulary learning more contextual, engaging, and cognitively stimulating.

One of the most prominent features highlighted by students is the use of interactive games. These gamified elements are not merely entertaining but serve as reinforcement mechanisms through repetition and active recall. Students noted that games create a competitive yet enjoyable environment that sustains their motivation and attention. Furthermore, Gee's (2003) paradigm for game-based learning highlights how interactive settings promote contextual learning and deeper involvement. Because of the continuous exposure and rewarding mechanisms, students claimed that these gamified features improved their motivation and helped words stick better. As one student (S1) shared:

If the game is fun, I enjoy studying more, and the words that keep being repeated become easier to remember, especially when I get points or stars as a reward."

The instructional films on the platform also worked well since they placed new words in authentic contexts. This supports Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), which holds that processing verbal and visual information at the

same time improves memory and comprehension. Students emphasized that observing how words were used in stories or dialogues helped them comprehend not just the content of the words but also how to utilize them correctly. As noted by student S5:

> *"The videos help me understand how the words are used in everyday conversations. So it's not just about memorizing them, but also knowing how to say them correctly."*

Pronunciation and listening comprehension were found to benefit from audio materials, including dialogues and listening exercises. The Input Hypothesis (1982) by Krashen, which emphasizes that language learners pick up new vocabulary when exposed to comprehensible input—language that is just a little bit above their current level but still understandable with context—is supported by this observation. Students reinforced their pronunciation and comprehension by frequently emphasizing how they would listen and imitate the audio, as well as memorize. Students emphasized that observing how words were used in stories or dialogues helped them comprehend not just the content of the words but also how to utilize them correctly. For instance, student S12 remarked:

> *"I often replay the listening sections, and it helps with my pronunciation. Sometimes I imitate the speaker right after listening, so the words stick in my head more quickly."*

Interactive quizzes and exercises also received positive feedback, especially for their role in self-assessment and immediate feedback. These activities compel students to retrieve vocabulary in various formats, strengthening their mental associations with new words. The diversity in quiz formats matching, fill in the blank, and multiple-choice ensures that vocabulary is not merely memorized but meaningfully internalized.

A number of students found the use of images with vocabulary words to be beneficial. This reflects not only Paivio's theory but also the ideas of Cognitive Load Theory, which describes how integrating verbal and visual input can optimize the presentation of information, minimize unnecessary cognitive load, and improve retention (Sweller, 1988).

The platform's support for self-directed learning is another asset. The flexibility to go at their own speed, go over the content again, and customize the experience to suit their tastes was appreciated by the students. These characteristics are strongly related to Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that the satisfaction of three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness has a major impact on learner motivation. Students are more likely to be genuinely motivated and stick with their work longer when they believe they have control over their learning process (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Despite the strengths identified, students also pointed out several limitations. A recurring suggestion was the need for more advanced vocabulary content and speaking practice features, which are currently underrepresented on the platform. This gap indicates a potential disconnect between the platform's offerings and the evolving needs of intermediate or advanced learners seeking productive language skills development.

Another critical insight is the lack of collaborative or social learning features, such as peer interaction or group tasks. While the platform excels in individual learning support, it lacks components that foster communicative competence through social engagement. Given the increasing emphasis on communicative and interactive learning, this absence may limit the platform's holistic impact on language development.

The British Council Learn English website demonstrates significant effectiveness in vocabulary learning through its rich array of digital features. However, to maximize its pedagogical potential, it should evolve toward a more integrative model combining gamified, contextual, auditory, and visual learning with collaborative and higher-order skill development. Addressing these areas will not only enhance learner satisfaction but also ensure that vocabulary acquisition translates into communicative competence and real-world language use.

Challenges and Motivating Factors in Using the British Council Learn English Website for Vocabulary Learning

While the British Council Learn English website has been widely appreciated by students for its interactive features and engaging content, a critical examination of the data reveals that learners also encounter several notable challenges during its use. These challenges, although not entirely obstructive, often shape the overall learning experience and can influence the sustainability of vocabulary acquisition over time (Ying, Y. H., 2021). Recognizing these constraints is vital in understanding how digital learning platforms can be enhanced to accommodate diverse learner needs more effectively.

One of the most frequently cited obstacles is technical accessibility, particularly related to internet stability and platform responsiveness across devices. Students reported that difficulties in loading interactive content, especially videos and audio, occasionally disrupted their learning flow. This challenge is particularly pertinent in regions with limited digital infrastructure, where slow internet speeds and outdated devices hinder students' ability to fully benefit from online resources. Consequently, learners with inconsistent access may feel excluded from the digital learning environment, leading to disengagement.

Another critical barrier is the lack of speaking practice tools, which many students expressed as a limitation of the platform. While the website excels in presenting vocabulary through listening, reading, and interactive exercises, it provides minimal opportunities for learners to actively produce language orally (Ying, Y. H., 2021). This imbalance may limit students' ability to internalize vocabulary through usage and restrict their development of communicative competence. The absence of real-time speaking tasks or feedback mechanisms for oral practice reflects a broader gap in many vocabulary learning platforms that prioritize input over output.

Figure 1. Challenges and Motivating Factors in Using the British Council Learn English Website for Vocabulary Learning

Monotony in certain content formats was raised as a concern by some students. While the platform offers diverse materials, several learners noted that repetitive activity types and predictable quiz patterns could lead to boredom over time. When students encounter similar exercise structures repeatedly, the novelty wears off, and intrinsic motivation may decline. S3 expressed,

At first I was excited with the matching games and quizzes, but after doing the same kind of tasks again and again, it didn't feel fun anymore. I already knew what would come next, so I lost focus."

This suggests that continuous innovation and content variation are necessary to sustain long-term engagement in digital vocabulary learning environments. Language learners also face cognitive and affective challenges, such as

vocabulary overload and a lack of immediate personal feedback. Some students reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume of new vocabulary presented within a single module, which can result in surface-level understanding rather than deep mastery. S9 admitted,

"Sometimes there are too many new words in one lesson, and I can't remember most of them. I try to memorize, but without someone to explain or correct me, it's hard to know if I'm using them right."

Without personalized scaffolding or adaptive learning pathways, students may struggle to consolidate and apply the vocabulary in meaningful ways. Furthermore, the absence of a human feedback loop may limit emotional support and learner self-confidence, especially among beginners.

Despite these challenges, there are also compelling motivating factors that drive students to persist in using the platform. One prominent factor is the autonomy and flexibility the website offers. Students appreciate the ability to learn at their own pace, review materials as often as needed, and choose content based on their interests. This sense of control over one's learning process enhances self-directed learning and fosters a sense of responsibility, both of which are critical in digital education settings. S6 shared,

"I like that I can study anytime I want, even at night before sleeping. If I don't understand, I can repeat it many times. That's not always possible in class, so I feel more confident learning on my own here."

Another motivating element is the interactive and gamified nature of the content, which appeals to students' desire for enjoyment in learning. The games, multimedia quizzes, and visual storytelling components serve as intrinsic motivators that make vocabulary learning less tedious and more engaging. The element of fun, combined with pedagogical effectiveness, encourages learners to revisit the platform voluntarily, which is a desirable outcome in any vocabulary learning program.

Peer influence and classroom integration also contribute to students' motivation. Several learners indicated that discussions with classmates, teacher recommendations, or group assignments involving the platform encouraged them to explore it more actively. This social dimension of learning although not directly facilitated by the website acts as an extrinsic motivator, fostering a sense of belonging and healthy competition among peers (Ying, Y. H., 2021). Teachers who integrate the platform into formal lessons further reinforce its relevance and increase learner commitment.

The platform's visual and auditory richness enhances students' perception of learning as a multisensory experience, which, in turn, reinforces motivation. Learners who are visually oriented or prefer auditory input find the interface supportive of their learning preferences, making the process more personalized. The availability of diverse media formats also allows students to experiment with various learning strategies, leading to better retention and a greater sense of achievement.

Interestingly, some students reported that the sense of progress and goal achievement they experienced when completing lessons or earning points acted as a motivational trigger. These micro-successes help build confidence and create a positive learning trajectory, which is essential for sustained vocabulary development. However, for these mechanisms to be fully effective, more advanced features like progress dashboards or level-based rewards could be integrated to amplify the sense of accomplishment.

While challenges such as technical limitations, limited speaking opportunities, and repetitive content must be addressed, the motivating factors ranging from learner autonomy to gamified engagement highlight the platform's potential as a powerful tool for vocabulary learning. A critical balance must be achieved between maintaining high engagement and ensuring comprehensive language development. Thus, refining the platform to address user feedback while preserving its motivating elements is key to optimizing its pedagogical impact.

The challenges and motivating factors identified in this study can be effectively examined through the lens of the *Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) developed byDavis (1989). TAM posits that users' acceptance of

technology is largely influenced by two constructs: *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use*. While the majority of students found the British Council Learn English website useful for vocabulary acquisition, technical issues such as poor internet connectivity, lagging interface response, and limited mobile optimization negatively affected their experience of ease. This discrepancy illustrates how barriers in the digital infrastructure can hinder student engagement and restrict equitable access to language learning opportunities, especially in under-resourced regions.

In terms of learner motivation, the findings are strongly aligned with *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000), which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and emphasizes the importance of fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Students who reported high satisfaction and continued use of the platform due to its gamified and multimedia elements demonstrated intrinsic motivation, driven by enjoyment and personal interest. Meanwhile, suggestions for progress tracking, real-time feedback, and collaborative spaces point to students' desire for competence and social interaction. When digital learning environments support these psychological needs, they can enhance learners' motivation and lead to deeper and more sustained engagement with the material (Dehghanzadeh et al., 2021).

Cognitive Load Theory provides a useful framework for understanding students' complaints about content monotony and information overload. When learners are confronted with a dense amount of unfamiliar vocabulary without sufficient scaffolding or contextual diversity, their working memory becomes overburdened, reducing learning efficiency. This corresponds to what Sweller describes as *extraneous load* unnecessary cognitive demand that distracts from meaningful learning. To address this, e-learning platforms must be designed to minimize redundancy and repetition, and instead employ varied, context-rich activities that optimize *germane load*—the cognitive effort directly related to processing and understanding new information. By applying these principles, vocabulary learning through digital tools can be made both cognitively manageable and pedagogically impactful.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this study underscore the significant role of the British Council Learn English website in supporting vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students. Students expressed positive perceptions of the platform's accessibility, interactive features, instant feedback mechanisms, and multimedia integration, particularly with games, quizzes, and audiovisual content that enhance engagement and contextual learning. While consistent repetition was valued for reinforcing vocabulary retention, several participants also voiced concerns about content monotony, lack of oral feedback, and limited variation in real-life applications. Despite these limitations, the platform was widely regarded as useful and motivating, providing learners with autonomy, flexibility, and a gamified environment conducive to independent vocabulary learning.

This study, however, is limited by its small sample size and context-specific focus on students from one school in Medan, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research is encouraged to employ broader, more diverse samples and mixed-methods designs to capture varied learner experiences and performance outcomes. It is also recommended that the British Council enhance the platform by incorporating speaking assessment tools, level-based content customization, and offline-access features. Further integration of collaborative learning spaces and culturally relevant material may also strengthen the platform's pedagogical reach. Educators are encouraged to integrate this website into classroom practices with guided activities to maximize its potential for learner engagement and vocabulary mastery.

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