



Exploring Young Learners' Vocabulary Needs through Visual and Interactive Materials: A TEYL Perspective

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Abstract: *This study investigated young EFL learners' vocabulary learning needs in relation to visual and interactive materials. It addressed the question of what students need in vocabulary learning, what limitations they experience, and what types of vocabulary materials they prefer. The study used a convergent mixed-methods exploratory design with 20 young EFL learners and an English teacher at a public elementary school in Palopo, South Sulawesi. Quantitative data included a 12-item Likert-scale questionnaire addressing necessities, lacks, and wants, while qualitative data were generated via the semi-structured teacher interview protocol and several open-ended student responses. Descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and standard deviations) were used for quantitative data, and deductive and inductive thematic codes were used for qualitative data. The findings showed that students perceived vocabulary as necessary for understanding English textbooks (85%, $M = 3.65$), following teacher instructions (80%, $M = 3.60$), and producing simple English. They also reported difficulty retaining new vocabulary (70%, $M = 3.45$) and understanding words without pictures (65%, $M = 3.35$). Students preferred colorful pictures (90%, $M = 3.80$), daily-life topics (75%, $M = 3.65$), interactive activities (70%, $M = 3.50$), and manageable vocabulary loads (65%, $M = 3.40$). The results highlight the importance of visually, contextually, and interactively designed vocabulary material development that sufficiently integrates their needs, lacks, and wants.*

Keywords: *Needs Analysis, TEYL, Vocabulary Learning, Young Learners*

INTRODUCTION

English is now recognized as a lingua franca used in international communication, global education, and access to science and technology. Mastery of English is not only crucial for students or professional workers but also a fundamental skill that must be acquired from an early age. One of the most crucial elements in learning English is vocabulary, as it serves as the foundation for the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Recent research confirms that adequate vocabulary mastery is crucial for students' success in accessing academic content and developing effective communication skills (Zucker, Cabell, & Pico, 2021; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022). Recent studies have shown that vocabulary mastery supports students' access to academic texts and classroom communication. However, in young EFL classrooms, vocabulary should not be treated merely as a list of words to memorize. It functions as a learning tool that enables students to understand instructions, participate in classroom tasks, and

build confidence in using English. Therefore, vocabulary materials need to reflect learners' actual needs, difficulties, and learning preferences. In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), young learners face particular challenges. Various studies have shown that elementary and junior high school-aged students often have significantly limited vocabulary, making it difficult to understand teacher instructions, read texts, and express ideas orally (Cremin, 2022). This situation also occurs in Indonesia, where English learning begins relatively early, but the vocabulary used is still poorly focused and rarely tailored to students' learning needs. As a result, students quickly lose interest and motivation in learning (Hartina, 2018; Wattimena (2022).

Several studies in Indonesia have attempted to address these challenges by developing more engaging and contextual vocabulary materials. For example, research by Umami (2024) developed a picture-based vocabulary book for elementary school students and reported increased motivation and vocabulary retention. Another study by Savitri & Widagdo (2025) found that integrating visual and digital media can improve junior high school students' engagement in vocabulary learning. Meanwhile, Setiawan & Firdaus (2025) emphasized the need for a needs analysis before developing materials to ensure the resulting product truly fits the students' context. These findings indicate that efforts to develop vocabulary learning media are receiving increasing attention, but a systematic approach that combines student and teacher needs analysis remains limited.

Furthermore, research gaps are evident in three main aspects. First, most previous studies have focused on elementary school students or vocabulary learning in vocational high schools, while the context of junior high school students as a bridge between elementary and general secondary education has been relatively rare (Wattimena, 2022). Second, the literature reviewed in this article indicates that vocabulary learning through visual and interactive media has attracted increased attention. But most of these studies are either related to product development or product learning outcomes rather than explicitly mapping learners' necessities, lacks and wants prior to material development. That leaves a pragmatic void in knowing how vocabulary items ought to be designed based on the viewpoint of learners and educators. Yet, a comprehensive mapping of these three aspects is crucial for producing effective learning materials. Third, existing vocabulary materials are generally generic, poorly accommodate local contexts, and do not optimally engage students' preferences for visual media, topics, or exercise formats (Bottoni, 2022)

To address this gap, this study conducted a needs analysis of seventh-grade junior high school students in Palopo City, South Sulawesi. The needs analysis focused on three main aspects: (1) necessities, or essential needs that students should master according to the curriculum; (2) lacks, or actual limitations experienced by students in vocabulary mastery; and (3) wants, or student preferences for vocabulary learning materials, topics, and media. This approach aligns with the needs analysis framework widely used in English language material development (Nation & Macalister, 2021; Basturkmen, 2021).

The primary contribution of this study lies in presenting empirical data on the vocabulary needs of junior high school students in Indonesia, combining student and teacher perspectives. Thus, this study not only provides an overview of the gap between needs and available materials but also identifies students' desires for the

ideal form of vocabulary materials. The novelty of this research lies in its explicit focus on analyzing vocabulary needs at the junior high school level within the local context of Palopo, which has rarely been studied in depth. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide a basis for teachers and material developers to design vocabulary learning media that are more appropriate, engaging, and effective for young students. Theoretically, this research adds to the literature on needs analysis in the context of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), particularly in developing countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary as the Foundation of Language Learning

Vocabulary has long been recognized as the main foundation of language learning. Nation (2020) emphasizes that vocabulary mastery determines students' ability to access texts, understand instructions, and express ideas. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), limited vocabulary is often the biggest obstacle in both oral and written communication (Schmitt, 2020). Empirical research supports this: Zucker, Cabell, and Pico (2021) show that vocabulary mastery is directly related to early literacy, while Savitri & Widagdo (2025) emphasize the contribution of vocabulary to the English language skills of junior high school students in Indonesia. Thus, the success of English language teaching for young students is largely determined by the extent to which vocabulary learning is designed in a systematic and contextual manner.

However, vocabulary is not just a matter of the quantity of words mastered, but also the depth of understanding and the ability to use them in various contexts (Sofiana, et.al 2025). This means that effective vocabulary material must consider not only the list of words, but also the frequency of use, topic relevance, and relevance to students' daily lives. This study uses these principles as a basis for assessing the needs, limitations, and preferences of junior high school students.

Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) and Cognitive Considerations

Elementary school students fall into the category of young learners who are in the transition stage from game-based learning to academic learning. According to Cameron (2001), young students have unique characteristics: limited attention span, dependence on visual stimuli, and a tendency to learn through concrete experiences. Therefore, vocabulary teaching strategies that are solely text-based are ineffective because they do not align with students' cognitive preferences.

The literature emphasizes that vocabulary learning for young students must involve multi-sensory input. Paivio (2021), through dual coding theory, explains that a combination of verbal and visual representations strengthens the memory process. This is in line with the research by Setiawan & Firdaus, (2025), who found that pictorial media significantly improved vocabulary retention in elementary school students, as well as Savitri & Widagdo (2025) who reported that visualization improved the motivation and engagement of junior high school students. Similar findings were also shown Astuti & Hasibuan (2025), who found that interactive digital media is more effective than traditional textbooks in teaching vocabulary. Thus, the preference of Palopo junior high school students for colorful visual media can be explained by their cognitive and affective needs.

Needs Analysis in Language Learning

The concept of needs analysis was systematically introduced by Hutchinson and Waters (2020) in their study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), but this principle is also highly relevant to TEYL. Needs analysis focuses on three aspects: necessities (what students need to achieve their learning objectives), lacks (the limitations they face in achieving these objectives), and wants (students' preferences or desires related to learning). Nation and Macalister (2021) emphasize that these three aspects must be considered in a balanced manner so that the learning material is truly relevant.

In the Indonesian context, several studies have used this framework to develop learning materials. Abdillah (2023) emphasize the importance of needs analysis in producing materials that are appropriate to the local context. Muzaedah et.al. (2023) found that early elementary students need contextual vocabulary related to everyday life, not just a list of academic words. However, most studies only highlight general needs, without exploring student preferences in detail. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by emphasizing the wants aspect as reflected in student preferences regarding the number of vocabulary words per unit, thematic topics, and exercise formats for teaching English to Young learners.

Necessities, Lacks, and Wants: Indicators in Vocabulary Learning

In this study, necessities were operationalized as students' need to understand textbooks, follow teachers' instructions, and construct simple sentences. This is in line with the findings of Zucker et al. (2021) that vocabulary is the key to accessing academic material. Lacks were measured through difficulty in remembering vocabulary, understanding words without pictures, and limitations of boring learning media. These indicators are supported by research by Amin et.al (2023), which highlights the problem of vocabulary retention, as well as Wettimena (2022), who found limitations of media to be an inhibiting factor.

Meanwhile, wants include students' preferences for colorful visual media, everyday topics, a limited number of vocabulary words per unit, and interactive exercises. These indicators are in line with the results of research by Savitri and Widagdo (2025) on the effectiveness of interactive digital media, as well as Setiawan & Firdaus (2025). on the role of visuals in increasing student engagement. Thus, the necessities–lacks–wants framework not only provides a map of student needs, but also explains how vocabulary should be taught to be cognitively and affectively relevant.

A literature review shows that previous studies have confirmed the importance of vocabulary, the effectiveness of visual media, and the need for needs analysis. However, previous studies in Indonesia still face three main limitations. First, research has focused more on Junior high school students, while Elementary School as a primary phase has rarely been studied. Second, most studies only emphasize necessities and lacks, while the wants aspect of students has not been explored much. Third, there is still little research linking the results of needs analysis with curriculum implications at the junior high school level.

This study contributes by filling these three gaps. By involving elementary school students in Palopo and combining quantitative data (Likert questionnaires) and qualitative data (teacher interviews, student comments), this study provides a comprehensive picture of their vocabulary needs. The findings that students want

visual media, a limited number of vocabulary words, and interactive exercises expand the literature on needs analysis by emphasizing the role of wants in material design. This has important theoretical implications that student preferences should be positioned as an integral part of curriculum and material design, not merely as a supplement.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods exploratory design. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same phase, analyzed separately, and then integrated during interpretation. The quantitative data provided a descriptive overview of students' perceived necessities, lacks, and wants in vocabulary learning. The qualitative data from the teacher interview and supplementary student responses were used to explain and enrich the questionnaire findings. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to generate local insights into vocabulary learning needs rather than test causal relationships or generalize findings to a wider population (Nation & Macalister, 2021; Basturkmen, 2021).

Participant

The participants were 20 upper elementary school students at a public elementary school in Palopo, South Sulawesi, and one English teacher who taught the class. The students were selected through purposive sampling because they represented young EFL learners with beginner-level vocabulary proficiency. The sample size was suitable for an exploratory needs analysis aimed at understanding local classroom needs, although the findings should not be generalized beyond the study context. The selection of 20 students was considered adequate for an exploratory study aimed at understanding the specific needs of a small group of young students (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Representativeness was strengthened by involving teachers as key informants to validate learning needs based on the curriculum and teaching practices.

Research Instrument

1. Students Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data related to the learners' needs, difficulties, and preferences in learning English vocabulary. It was structured using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) and included several multiple-choice questions to allow a broader understanding of students' responses. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items that explored three key dimensions of learners' needs analysis: necessities, lacks, and wants. The questionnaire has items (12) equally divided across the three constructs, needs and wants. Each construct contained four items. The necessities items on student need vocabulary to decipher a textbook, follow teacher instructions, produce simple spoken utterances in phrases and write basic sentences. The lacks items about vocabulary retention, knowing the meaning of words without pictures, difficulties in spelling of words and reading comprehension help based on only textbook. Want items were concerned with students' desire for colorful pictures,

topics relating to the daily life of learners, smaller vocabulary sets and interactive exercises.

For instance, items representing necessities included statements such as “I need to learn vocabulary to understand English textbooks well,” while those representing lacks covered aspects like “I have difficulty understanding the meaning of new vocabulary without the help of pictures.” Additionally, wants were assessed through items such as “I prefer to learn vocabulary with colorful picture books.” To ensure the instrument’s validity, content validation was conducted by an English lecturer with expertise in Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) and experience in developing similar instruments. Furthermore, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach’s alpha, resulting in an α value of 0.82, which indicates a high level of reliability according to George and Mallery (2019).

2. Teacher Interview Guideline

The interviews were semi-structured with six open-ended questions, for example: "What are the students' main difficulties in mastering English vocabulary?" and "What kind of learning media do you think is most needed?" To ensure the reliability of the qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed by the respondents (member checking). An interview guideline was established according to a framework of necessities, lacks and wants for needs analysis. The questions consisted of some aspects related to the teacher perception toward students’ vocabulary problems, classroom materials needed, and appropriate media for young EFL learners.

Research Procedure

This research took place over two months (May–June 2024) with the following stages:

1. Preparation

The questionnaire instrument and interview guide were developed based on needs analysis literature (Hutchinson & Waters, 2020; Nation & Macalister, 2021). The instrument was validated by an English language expert to ensure item clarity and appropriateness.

2. Quantitative Data Collection

The questionnaire was printed and distributed directly to 20 students during English class hours. The, the teacher assisted to explain the purpose of the questions to avoid misinterpretation. The questionnaire took approximately 25 minutes to complete.

3. Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted after the learning session, lasting approximately 30 minutes, and were recorded with the respondents' permission. In addition, the researcher solicited open-ended comments from five students regarding their experiences after completing the questionnaire.

4. Triangulation and Data Checking

Data from questionnaires, teacher interviews, and student comments were compared to identify any congruence or discrepancies. Member checking was conducted with teachers to ensure the researcher's interpretation aligned with the respondents' intentions.

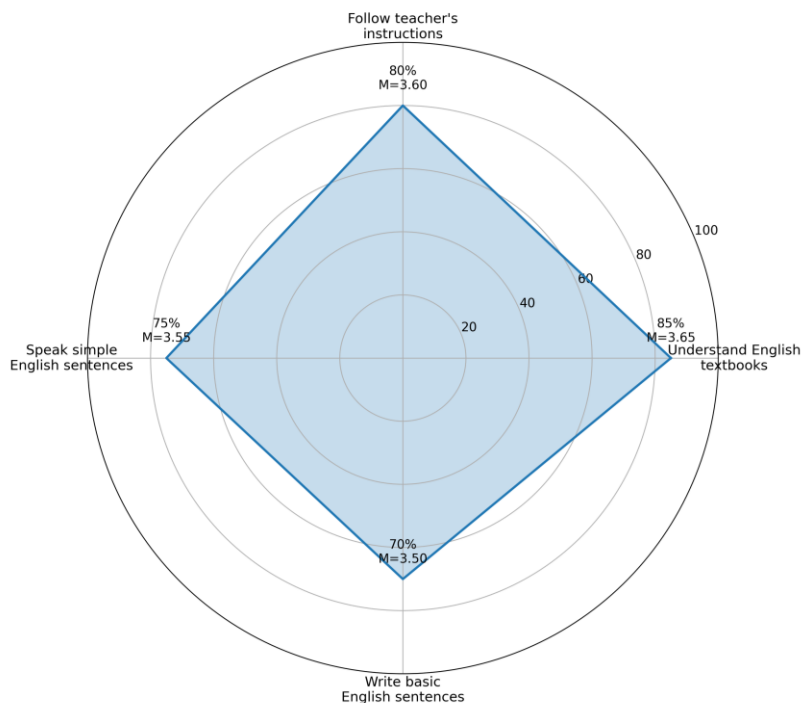
Data Analysis

Data quantitative were analyzed using SPSS version 26 based on the standard of data processing descriptive statistic. Because this study was exploratory and did not attempt to install a testing of group differences or causal influences, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the students' response patterns. The analysis reports mean scores, percentages and standard deviations in each of the needs analysis dimensions: necessities, lacks and wants.

Data were analyzed for themes using a mixed deductive and inductive coding approach, where the deductive codes captured features of effective professional learning from prior research (Harris et al., 2022), while the inductive codes identified features within each subcategory as new areas of interest for education in the region. The deductive coding was driven by the needs analysis framework, namely necessities, lacks and wants. Inductive coding was then applied to identify specific aspects within the categories including: vocabulary recall difficulties, dependency on visual supports, preference for topics within daily life settings, and learning through interactive activities. As the coding was done by the researcher, inter-coder reliability was not calculated. Source triangulation; audit trail and member checking with the teacher were used to foster credibility of qualitative findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Necessities: Essential Needs in Vocabulary Learning

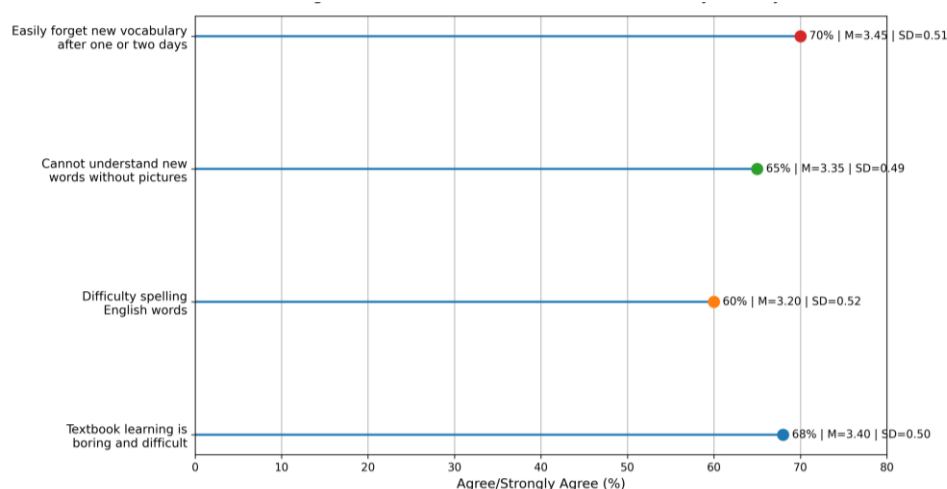


Note. The radar chart displays the percentage of students who selected Agree or Strongly Agree. Each point is annotated with the exact original values from the table, including the mean score (M).

Figure 1. Students perceived necessities in vocabulary learning

A radar chart of students perceived needs in vocabulary learning is illustrated in Figure 1. The distribution indicates a consistently high level of agreement across all four indicators, which supports the view that vocabulary was seen as an essential need for both classroom participation and beginning language development. The most obvious need for English textbooks was understanding textbooks (85% agreement and mean score $M = 3.65$). This was then followed by listening to the teacher (80%, $M = 3.60$), speaking short sentences in English (75%, $M = 3.55$), and writing simple sentences in English (70%, $M = 3.50$). These findings are reflective of the role that vocabulary plays functionally in receptive and productive activities related to language learning.

2. Lacks: Students' Current Limitations in Vocabulary

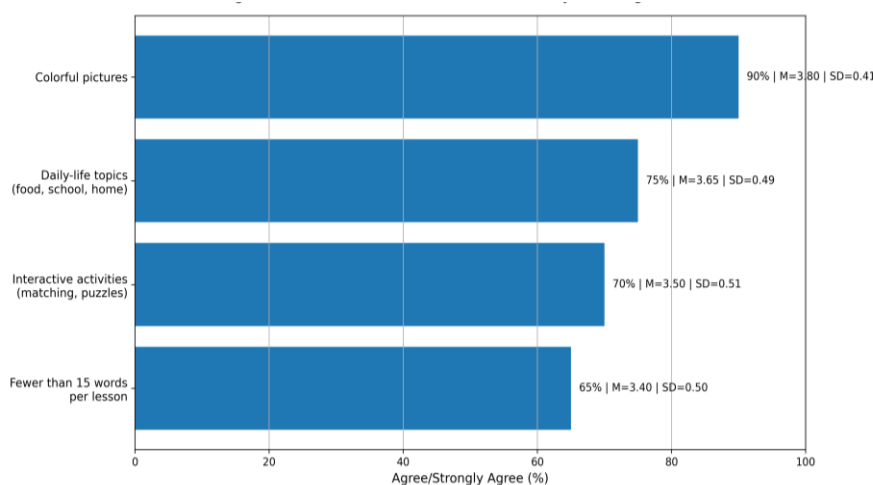


Note. The chart displays the percentage of students who selected Agree or Strongly Agree. Each marker is annotated with the exact mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) from the original table.

Figure 2. *Students Perceived Lacks in Vocabulary Mastery*

Chart 2 depicts what students perceive they are missing in terms of vocabulary mastery. Fascinating lookup significance impact of studying foreign language, the chart shows student's inability to retain newly learnt vocabulary was the commonest limitation reported. Region 1: This item received the most agreement at all ($n = 70\%$) of students selecting agree or strongly agree ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.51$). It indicates that vocabulary was a significant challenge in retention for the participants. Secondly, with regard to textbook-based materials, which 68% of the students considered boring and hard—($M = 3.40$, $SD=0.50$). Moreover, 65% of students said they could not learn the meaning of novel words without visual support ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.49$), referring to their reliance on pictures or other pictorial scaffolds. The smallest (although still moderate) response related to difficulty with spelling with 60% agreement ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.52$). These findings together imply students' restricted word knowledge was not only a consequence of memory and spelling but also related to the insufficient information contained within present learning resources.

3. Wants: Students' Preferences for Vocabulary Materials



Note. The chart displays the percentage of students who selected Agree or Strongly Agree. Each bar is annotated with the exact mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) from the original table.

Figure 3. *Students' Preferences in Vocabulary Learning Materials*

The horizontal bar chart addresses the second question, students' preferences on vocabulary learning materials as presented in figure 3. Results revealed the highest level of agreement was for learning vocabulary through colorful pictures (90%) with each ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.41$). Third was vocabulary of daily-life topics: food, school and home (75% agreement $M = 3.65$ $SD = 0.49$). The students also prefer engaging in matching and puzzle focussed activities, with 70% agreement ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .51$). Preference was lowest, albeit still significant for vocabulary units with fewer than 15 words per lesson: 65%, ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .50$). In conclusion, the figure indicates a general student preference for vocabulary materials that are visually stimulating, contextualized, supported by active learning opportunities, and with moderate lesson load of vocabulary in each lesson.

The qualitative data from the teacher interview and students open-ended responses revealed supporting results for the questionnaire findings over three dimensions of needs analysis, namely necessities, lacks, and wants. With respect to the necessities dimension, the teacher stated that the omission students have difficulties following a lesson due to limited vocabulary knowledge. According to the teacher, "It is not grammar that prevents students from following the material most of all, but ignorance of the meaning of basic words native to children's books. Vocabulary is the foremost pillar for them" It means you know you're trying to understand a word and then it's like you build it up. P1.) The statement was reported in connection with the requirement that students need to understand the content of textbooks, as well as materials presented to them in classroom.

The main findings that could be elaborated on is the lacks dimension of students were found to struggle with remembering vocabulary and with understanding words in isolation in a text without visual prompts. One student explained: "I feel bored and can't memorize words in readings if they are just in a textbook" (S2). Another student stated: "Often, I do not understand the words that have no pictures" (S3). Each of these utterances spoken by the students is linked to their claims about the constraints they felt in terms of recalling the vocabulary,

learning it from textbooks and figuring out how to learn words while relying on pictures.

Regarding the wants dimension, students preferred colorful pictures, familiar topics and smaller number of vocabulary items in each lesson. As one of the students said, "I remember new words easily with pictures and in colors" (S1). Another student said: I like learning words from around me eg food or school things (S4) Another response revealed students' desire for a lighter vocabulary load: "If there are multiple words in a chapter, I feel overwhelmed. More words lead to better practice (S5) The following responses were also recorded as supplementary data for the students preferred supporting aid used in their vocabulary.

Discussion

The study investigated needs analysis for young EFL learners with respect to the dimensions of necessities, lacks and wants in terms of vocabulary learning. The results revealed that vocabulary was felt to be a necessary resource for comprehension of classroom materials, providing basic follow-up on teacher instructions and generating basic level simple English. Simultaneously, students encountered challenges in remembering new vocabulary, comprehending the meaning of words without visual support, spelling English words as pronunciation is different from writing them and having been taught through textbook-based material. Students also liked vocabulary materials to be visual, colorful, familiar, manageable and interactive. The resulting patterns were backed up by the teacher interview and students' open-ended responses as vocabulary learning problems related to classroom participation, material accessibility, and students' interactions with the learning tasks.

Research question one concerned what students need from vocabulary learning. Results of this research question show vocabulary was seen as a requirement for classroom use, rather than something abstract to memorize in a language element. Students needed vocabulary to engage with textbook content, follow instructions from the professor, and form basic spoken and written sentences. This finding implies that vocabulary knowledge served as an intermediary between classroom input and students' engagement. In young EFL contexts where exposure to English outside the context of school is often limited, vocabulary becomes a limiting factor in meaningful engagement with lessons (Butler, 2019, p. 18). This stance aligns with the research that vocabulary is the lexicon base for understanding, interaction and early productive language(Chiriac, 2025).

The second research question is about what limitations that students experience in mastering vocabulary. Retention, visual support, spelling and learning from books comprise the most difficulty in this research question findings. Many students reported finding it hard to remember new vocabulary after a short period of time, were confused by topics for which they could not see pictures and found learning through textbook-driven methods dull and cumbersome. The interview of teachers also revealed that students faced difficulties in understanding the lesson mainly due to limited knowledge about simple words from the textbook. This finding suggests that vocabulary difficulty can prevent learners from accessing learning content before they even begin grammar, speaking or writing tasks.

Vocabulary constraints thus function as a gateway hurdle, not just to individual test success but at the level of classroom teaching more generally.

The third research question examined which kinds of vocabulary learning materials students preferred. The clear preferences for colored pictures, daily-life topics, fewer vocabulary items each lesson and interactive activities (e.g., matching and puzzles) support this research question. Students preferred to use materials that were concrete, familiar, and less cognitively demanding — as indicated by these preferences. Wants should not be considered as ornamental or secondary data under the needs analysis framework. Wants are the learners' perceptions of what they want from learning materials to support their learning, (Branch, 2009, p. 17). In this research, students needs were most closely associated with their deficits. They said they could not recall words and failed to comprehend vocabulary when it was provided without illustrations, but also overwhelmingly preferred visual and interactive semantics. This alignment indicated that preferences may be more indicative of perceived learning needs rather than attraction to colorful media.

There are a couple of mechanisms that may clarify why these results were recorded. One, networks of vocabulary retention rely on repetition, proactive retrieval and continued functional use. When students only come across new words in dictionary lists or brief classroom introductions, they might recognize the word temporarily but it will not be remembered in the long-term memory (Meganathan et al., 2019, p. 64). This is why students preferred fewer vocabulary words with more practice. Focusing on some target words provides learners with more time to process meanings, alternate forms and phrases and perform more basic tasks through vocabulary use. Second, the dual coding theory helps rule in that students seek out visual support. Learners are able to process information through both the verbal (the linguistic representation) and visual channels when verbal input is paired with visual representation (Nguyen, 2012, p.135). Pictures can help students pair unfamiliar English words with physical meanings, which is invaluable if a student still has limited vocabulary skills.

Third, interest in daily-life topics can be explained with contextualized learning. Students might find it helpful to pay attention to the vocabulary surrounding food, school, home and other environmental objects; this type of vocabulary connects new words with physical items that students come across in their immediate environments. Prior knowledge of the context, that is to say, contextual familiarity reduces cognitive load and helps vocabulary learning by providing relevant sense-making (Seyapalan et al., 2023, p.6). Fourth, students may gain interest in the interactive behavior patterns due to their active preference for various activities. From identifying words through matching tasks to recalling vocabulary through puzzles, picture-word activities require learners to respond, compare, and apply. Engaging in these tasks may present more retrieval opportunities than the passive reading from textbooks. Thus, the data about what students want can inform lexicon materials that use visual supports, carry pragmatic relevance, maintain control over input and promote the practices of active engagement.

These findings are generally in-line with prior research that put vocabulary at the center of EFL learning and classroom engagement (Hakami, 2025, p. They also support the empirical studies that visual aids enable learners to learn new vocabulary (Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022, p. As we have seen previously, students

experienced success with concrete and visually supported materials (Meganathan et al., 2019, p. 64), similar to previous studies on young language learners. As noted, this study is different than intervention based studies that directly assess the impact of a specific medium on vocabulary success. The current study did not examine whether the type of materials (visual or interactive) influenced the mastery of new vocabulary. Rather, it defined the perceived needs of learners prior to material development. This contrast is significant due to the fact that needs analysis provides a diagnostic base in order to design materials, whilst intervention studies test whether those materials work.

The results also contrast those of studies that highlight comprehensive vocabulary coverage as the primary instructional aim. Students preferred to be given a smaller number of words in this study. Sample characteristics, proficiency level, and learning context may account for the difference in this finding. Perhaps the depth of processing is more useful to learners with shallow levels of vocabulary knowledge, whereas word lists that are too huge may not be beneficial for younger learners. This difference might also give way to instruments. For example, as studies that record vocabulary tests may emphasized measurable gains while this study recorded questionnaire and teachers interviews and students responses to reflect perceived needs and preferences. Interpret the results as needs data from classrooms and not as direct evidence for vocabulary learning.

Theoretically, the study contributes to needs analysis research by demonstrating how necessities, lacks and wants can be linked in developing vocabulary material. Necessities showed what students needed vocabulary for, gaps highlighted the constraints that prevented them from progressing and wants indicated what sort of material support they desired. The integrated view broadens the needs analysis beyond just curricular alignment. It indicates that geeky interests can be a significant predictor for whether or not someone has access to the material(s) they wish to learn, feels enabled in their learning experiences and demonstrates engagement therein. Further, the study supports the relevance of cognitive and affective aspects of vocabulary learning. It has been argued that visual and interactive materials may act an attractive resource but as scaffolds addressing the way in which learners memory limitations, a need for concrete input, and an inherent desire for more engaging tasks be addressed.

The practical implications of the reviews are that teachers should focus specifically and consistently on vocabulary learning. Mini Lesson: A frequent misconception is that vocabulary should be an adjunct to reading, or grammar for that matter. Through pictures, examples of word usage, objects in the classroom and small contextualized tasks teachers can introduce their students to target words. They can also restrict the number of target words per one lesson and give additional practice via matching, classification, writing exercises and basic sentence formation. Material writers can build on these findings to create visual vocabulary units with well-known themes and dynamic activities. Curriculum planners can also allow teachers freedom to tailor vocabulary materials to learners' proficiency, local context and preparedness to learn.

The research design was an exploratory mixed-methods so it did not involve hypotheses testing, or effects of a particular vocabulary intervention. The study was of 20 students and one English teacher from the same school, so the conclusions are more local classroom findings than wide generalizations. The data also depended

on self-reported student perceptions which may be affected by memory bias, social desirability or students not knowing much about their own learning. Furthermore, more qualitative data were derived from a single teacher interview and few student answers, precluding the consideration of additional perspectives by other teachers, parents or stakeholders in their school. The lack of objective vocabulary assessments, and classroom observation was another limitation in comparing students' perceived needs to actual performance on these vocabulary tasks.

By using larger, more diverse samples across schools, grade levels and regions, the limitations of these findings can be addressed in future research.. Classroom observation would also provide insight into how vocabulary is taught and how learners respond to various kinds of visual and interactive support. Future research could also include additional teachers, parents and curriculum stakeholders for a more wide-reaching snapshot of vocabulary learning support in the classroom as well as beyond. Importantly, intervention studies are required to determine whether visual and interactive vocabulary materials promote short-term and long-term vocabulary retention, classroom participation and productive use of words. Other new questions for future studies may include exploring the effects of visual-based vocabulary materials on vocabulary retention, the number of vocabulary items manageable in one lesson, and which interactive tasks suit best for beginner young EFL learners.

Consequently, this study argues that the vocabulary needs of young learners of EFL should be interpreted through the interplay between what learners need, lack and prefer. The results present a localized view of how students experienced vocabulary learning, as perceived by the teacher in an EFL classroom. Despite the preliminary state of these findings, as well as their specificity to the context in which they were collected, these results provide a useful starting point for designing materials that target visual, contextual, manageable and interactive vocabulary items. In summary, the originality of this paper rests in showing how needs analysis can inform the development of vocabulary material as to make it more relevant to learners work in real-life classroom contexts and their learning processes.

CONCLUSION

This study employed a needs analysis framework that addressed what young EFL learners need to learn in terms of vocabulary (necessities), what they cannot do (lacks), and what they would like to learn (wants). It sought to answer what learners require vocabulary for, where the tempers of their limitations lie and which kinds of materials they prefer when it comes to be dealt with, in relations to vocabulary learning. The results indicate that vocabulary was considered as an essential skill for comprehending textbooks, obeying teacher commands and putting out basic English. Several limitations were also reported by students, especially regarding difficulty retaining new vocabulary, difficulties in comprehending vocabulary words without visual input, difficulty spelling English language words correctly, and learning through textbook-based formats (Table 4). Regarding needs, students preferred vocabulary materials with colorful pictures, popular daily-life topics, manageable vocabulary loads, and interactive activities. Qualitative data from a teacher interview and students' open-ended responses

corroborated these findings, particularly as a function of vocabulary limitations to access classroom materials and participation in learning tasks.

This research adds to needs analysis literature by demonstrating how the interplay between necessities, lacks and wants can guide the development of vocabulary materials for young EFL learners. The results also provide guidance on how to design more visual, contextual, manageable and interactive materials. For classroom practice, teachers would base their instruction on explicit vocabulary teaching and provide visual scaffolding whilst limiting the number of target words presented in each lesson to a minimum three explicit lessons with four new complex academic vocabulary words per interactive task and at least one opportunity at repeated use in tasks. Curriculum and material planners need to take into account the preferences and local context of learners as well while producing vocabulary resources. Future research may expand this study by incorporating larger samples, using standardized vocabulary measures, classroom observations and testing the efficacy of visual and interactive vocabulary strategies on students' retention of vocabulary material and participation in class.

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