

The Use of Local Tourism Pictures as Learning Media to Enhance Students' Motivation and English Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of using local tourism pictures as English learning media on students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation at the elementary level. The research was motivated by the persistent challenges Indonesian learners face in understanding, memorizing, and retaining English vocabulary, which often leads to low motivation and limited engagement. A quantitative one-group pretest-posttest design was employed, involving 21 fifth-grade students from UPT SDN 14 Mengkendek, South Sulawesi. Vocabulary and motivation data were collected through pre- and post-tests and analyzed using paired-sample t-tests. Results revealed significant improvements in both vocabulary mastery ($M = 52.62$ to 72.14 , $p < .001$) and learning motivation ($M = 44.81$ to 53.10 , $p < .001$). These findings suggest that the use of local tourism images such as Torajan landmarks effectively supports vocabulary retention and fosters a stronger emotional connection to learning materials. The integration of culturally relevant visual media aligns with the principles of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) and Self-Determination Theory, showing that when students learn through familiar, locally grounded visuals, they become more motivated and engaged. Overall, the findings contribute to English language education for young learners by providing empirical evidence that culturally relevant, contextual, and visual materials enhance learners' engagement, comprehension, and motivation, and by offering practical pedagogical insights for teachers in designing culturally responsive and meaningful English learning materials at the primary school level.

Keywords: *vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, local tourism pictures, contextual teaching and learning, cultural relevance*

Introduction

Vocabulary mastery is essential in English language learning as it directly influences students' capacity for effective communication (Muliadi, 2018). Lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge hinders learners' ability to articulate their thoughts, understand reading materials, and engage actively in classroom discussions. Vocabulary is considered the foundation of all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2012; Kaboody, 2023). This problem primarily stems from the dominance of decontextualized and culturally neutral English learning materials that fail to connect instructional content with young learners' lived experiences and sociocultural backgrounds.

Many elementary school learners in Indonesia encounter difficulties in understanding, memorizing, and retaining new vocabulary, despite its significance. Such challenges frequently lead to diminished learning motivation and decreased engagement in the classroom. These issues highlight the need for the development of engaging and

contextualized learning strategies that connect abstract word forms with students' real-life experiences (Erkinovna, 2025; Hulaimi, 2019).

A promising approach involves utilizing visual media, specifically images, in language instruction. Visuals offer tangible representations of meaning, stimulate imagination, and maintain learners' attention, thereby improving memory retention and comprehension (Peters, 2019; Na & Nguyen, 2022). Additionally, contextualizing visuals aids students in linking vocabulary to familiar experiences, thereby enhancing meaningful learning (Satrio & Pambudi, 2024).

Local tourism images serve as a culturally relevant educational resource. Their approach links language learning to students' immediate environments and cultural identities (Al et al., 2023). Integrating images of notable Torajan landmarks, such as Londa, Kete Kesu, or Buntu Burake, can enhance vocabulary learning by making it more relatable and promoting pride in local culture. This integration upholds the principles of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) and is consistent with Indonesia's *Merdeka Belajar* policy, which promotes culturally responsive and meaningful education (Mustofa et al., 2023). However, previous studies have generally examined the use of culturally or visually relevant learning materials separately. This has led to the existence of research gaps that systematically examine how the integration of culturally, contextually, and visually relevant material affects the engagement and learning outcomes of Early English students in the primary school context.

The novelty of this study lies in the simultaneous integration of culturally, contextually and visually relevant learning materials in English language learning for Primary School students. The novelty is also seen in providing empirical evidence on how such integration affects early student engagement and learning outcomes, which has not been extensively studied in previous studies. This study investigates the impact of local tourism pictures as English learning media on students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation. The incorporation of visual materials is anticipated to enhance vocabulary acquisition. That is because students interact with content that mirrors their everyday surroundings and cultural identity. Exposure to familiar images enables learners to establish stronger connections between new vocabulary and real-life contexts, thus improving retention and comprehension (Na & Nguyen, 2022; Broek et al., 2018). Additionally, the use of locally relevant materials may enhance students' sense of belonging and pride in their cultural heritage, subsequently increasing their intrinsic motivation to learn (Gay, 2018). This method aligns with CTL principles, highlighting that knowledge gains significance when students relate it to their personal experiences (Ningsih et al., 2019). Thus, analyzing the impact of local tourism images on vocabulary acquisition and learning motivation enhances English language teaching and aligns with the overarching objective of fostering culturally responsive education within Indonesia's *Merdeka Belajar* framework.

Method

This study uses a quantitative research design with one-group pretest-posttest model to investigate the impact of the use of local tourism images as a learning medium on improving students' English language skills. The structure of this research method includes research design, research subjects, learning procedures, data collection instruments, and statistical data analysis techniques.

Study Design

This research utilized a quantitative one-group pretest–posttest design to assess the effectiveness of utilizing local tourism pictures as a medium for teaching English vocabulary to elementary pupils. This design was selected to assess the improvement within the same cohort prior to and following the instructional intervention, a prevalent method in classroom-based experimental research where control groups are impractical (Creswell, 2009). During the intervention, students initially undertook a vocabulary pretest, subsequently received instruction utilizing local tourism pictures as visual aids, and finally performed a posttest to evaluate improvements in vocabulary proficiency and motivation. The application of visual media was based on Multimedia Learning Theory, which asserts that the integration of verbal and visual information enhances learning efficacy (Mayer, 2009). The learning approach in this study is based on The Theory of Multimedia Learning proposed by Mayer (2009), which emphasizes that learning becomes more effective when verbal and visual information is combined meaningfully. In addition, this approach is also in line with the principle of contextual learning that relates learning materials to the environment and real experiences of students through the use of local tourist images.

Participants

The participants were 21 fifth-grade students from UPT SDN 14 Mengkendek, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The sampling technique used was total sampling, meaning all students in the class participated in the study.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were gathered through two primary instruments: vocabulary assessments and motivation questionnaires. The vocabulary tests, conducted as pre-test and post-test, aimed to assess students' enhancement in vocabulary mastery following the utilization of local tourism pictures in instruction. Motivation questionnaires were administered before and after the intervention to evaluate changes in students' learning motivation. The instruments provided quantitative data that facilitated an assessment of the visual media's effectiveness in improving vocabulary acquisition and motivation.

Paired-sample t-tests were utilized to assess the statistical significance of the differences between pre-test and post-test scores for vocabulary and motivation. This method was suitable as both measurements were obtained from the same participants before and after the intervention. Cohen's dz was calculated to assess the extent to which the treatment effect. The analyses adhered to the statistical procedures for within-subject designs as described by Field (2018), ensuring accurate interpretation of both significance and effect size.

Data Analysis Techniques

Paired-sample t-tests were utilized to assess the statistical significance of the differences between pre-test and post-test scores for vocabulary and motivation. This method was suitable as both measurements were obtained from the same participants before and after the intervention. Cohen's dz was calculated to assess the extent to which the treatment effect. The analyses adhered to the statistical procedures for within-subject designs as described by Field (2018), ensuring accurate interpretation of both significance and effect size. Data analysis in this study is based on the theory of inferential statistical analysis using paired-sample t-test as described by Creswell (2009), which is

used to compare pretest and posttest scores in order to identify significant differences after treatment is given.

Results

This section presents the results of quantitative data analysis. The data were obtained from the pretest and posttest scores of students after the application of English learning using local tourist images as a learning medium. Data analysis was conducted to identify differences in students' English language skills before and after treatment, as well as to determine the significance of improving learning outcomes based on statistical tests used.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of vocabulary tests

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
N	21	21
Mean	52,62	72,14
Std. Deviation	25,03	24,83
Std. Error Mean	5,46	5,42

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of students' vocabulary test results before and after treatment. The average pre-test score was 52.62, while the average post-test score increased to 72.14. These results indicate an increase in students' vocabulary skills after the application of learning using local tourism images. The standard deviation values in the pre-test (25.03) and post-test (24.83) showed relatively similar score variations in both measurements, while the standard error mean values were not much different indicating data consistency.

Table 2 Paired Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
Pai 1 Nilai Pre-test	21	52.62	25.03	5.46
Post-test	21	72.14	24.83	5.42

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of students' vocabulary test scores before and after the intervention. The mean score rose from 52.62 on the pre-test to 72.14 on the post-test, indicating a significant improvement after utilizing local tourism pictures in vocabulary instruction. The standard deviations (25.03 for the pre-test and 24.83 for the post-test) indicate comparable variability in both assessments, suggesting that the improvement was consistent among the majority of subjects. These findings offer preliminary evidence that the utilization of local tourism pictures substantially impacted students' vocabulary proficiency before the statistical significance assessment.

Table 3. Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Nilai Pre-test & Post-test	21	.719	.000

Table 3 displays the correlation between students' pre-test and post-test scores. The correlation coefficient of $r = .719$ indicates a significant positive correlation between

the two sets of scores, indicating that students who performed on the pre-test also generally attained high scores on the post-test. The significance value ($p = .000$) indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This significant and meaningful correlation indicates that the noted enhancement in vocabulary performance is consistent and not attributable to unexpected changes, so strengthening the reliability of the intervention's impact.

Table 4. Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower			
Pair 1 Nilai Pre-test - Posttest	-	18.70	4.08	-28.04	-11.01	-4.78	20	.000
	19.52							

Table 4 presents the results of the paired-sample t-test that compares students' vocabulary scores from pre-test and post-test assessments. The analysis indicated a mean difference of -19.52, complemented by a standard deviation of 18.70 and a standard error of 4.08. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -28.04 to -11.01, indicating that the actual mean improvement lies within this range. The t-value of -4.78, with 20 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p = .000$ ($p < .001$), indicates a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test findings. The data substantiate that the utilization of local tourism pictures significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery.

Learning Motivation

Table 5 Paired Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
Pai 1 Nilai Pre-test	21	53.10	5.46	1.19
Post-test	21	44.81	7.96	1.74

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of students' learning motivation scores before and after the intervention. As shown, the mean score increased from 44.81 on the pre-test to 53.10 on the post-test, indicating an average improvement of 8.29 points following the use of local tourism pictures in English instruction. The standard deviation decreased from 7.96 to 5.46, suggesting that students' motivation scores became more consistent after the treatment. These descriptive results indicate a positive trend in students' learning motivation; however, further inferential analysis (Paired Samples Test) is required to determine whether the observed increase is statistically significant.

Table 6. Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Nilai Pre-test & Post-test	21	.302	.183

Table 6 presents the correlation between students' pre-test and post-test motivation scores. The correlation coefficient of $r = .302$ indicates a weak positive relationship, meaning that students with higher motivation scores before the intervention

tended to have slightly higher scores afterward. However, the significance value ($p = .183$) exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05, suggesting that this correlation is not statistically significant. Therefore, the relationship between pre-test and post-test motivation scores is weak and may have occurred by chance rather than reflecting a consistent pattern among participants.

Table 7. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 Nilai Pre-test - Posttest	8.29	8.18	1.79	4.56	12.01		4.64	20	.000

Table 7 displays the results of the paired-sample t-test for students' learning motivation scores. The analysis shows a mean difference of 8.29, indicating that students' motivation levels increased after the use of local tourism pictures in English instruction. The computed t-value of 4.64 with 20 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p = .000$ ($p < .05$) confirms that the improvement was statistically significant. This result demonstrates that the intervention effectively enhanced students' learning motivation, and the observed increase was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that integrating local tourism pictures into English learning significantly improved both vocabulary mastery and learning motivation among elementary students.

Vocabulary Enhancement

The enhancement in vocabulary test results corresponds with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of visual media in vocabulary learning (Ariesta et al., 2024). Images function as visual references that assist learners in linking new vocabulary to tangible concepts. In this context, local tourism images offered familiar references that enhanced the concreteness and retention of vocabulary for students. This aligns with Mayer, (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which asserts that learners comprehend and retain information more efficiently when verbal and visual components are meaningfully integrated.

This finding is further supported by a significant improvement in students' learning motivation following the intervention. When learners recognize the relevance of lesson materials to their environment, their intrinsic motivation is likely to increase (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The incorporation of local tourism imagery fostered a sense of relevance and ownership in the learning experience, promoting active engagement and curiosity. This corresponds to Hoa's (2022) research, which demonstrated that picture-based activities can improve students' interest and emotional engagement in English learning.

This approach supports the findings of Siumarlata and Arrang (2023), who highlighted that the integration of local cultural topics in English learning enhances contextual understanding and fosters cultural pride. The findings of this study indicate that linking vocabulary acquisition to students' cultural contexts enhances retention while simultaneously reinforcing identity and engagement. The integration of visual media grounded in local culture is pedagogically effective and culturally significant,

facilitating the connection between linguistic development and cultural awareness in EFL classrooms.

Learning Motivation

The significant increase in learning motivation identified in this study can be explained by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which posits that relevance, autonomy, and personal connection augment intrinsic motivation. When students view learning materials as relevant to their experiences, their sense of competence and autonomy increases. This study demonstrates that the utilization of locally themed visual materials enables students to recognize their own environment within the content, thereby enhancing emotional connection and enjoyment key factors that support motivation in language learning (Noels, 2001).

Interactive visual media have been acknowledged for enhancing learners' attention and enjoyment (Mubarokah et al., 2022; YOSHIDA, 2013). Visual elements engage dual coding processes, wherein verbal and visual inputs mutually reinforce one another, leading to enhanced cognitive processing (Paivio, 1991; Mayer, 2009). In the classroom context, multimodal engagement shifts learning from a passive to an active experience, promoting greater student participation and persistence in challenging tasks.

The utilization of culturally relevant pictures fostered a sense of pride and ownership in learners. This is consistent with the findings of Wulandari et al. (2020) and Miqawati et al. (2024), indicate that the incorporation of local identity into instructional materials enhances learners' emotional connection to their culture, which promotes cultural awareness and the educational experience. Consequently, motivation is not solely a reaction to external incentives but also an embodiment of internalized cultural values and self-expression. Embedding local context in English instruction enhances cognitive engagement and nurtures the affective and cultural dimensions of learning.

Synergy Between Vocabulary and Motivation

Although the correlation between pre- and post-motivation scores was not statistically strong ($r = .302, p = .183$), both variables showed significant overall improvement. This indicates that contextual media can simultaneously foster cognitive gains (vocabulary) and affective engagement (motivation). As Yang and Fang (2008) suggest, meaningful visual contexts encourage deeper involvement and comprehension in second language learning.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of local tourism images as a learning medium has a positive impact on improving the English language skills of elementary school students. These findings suggest that contextual integration of visual materials not only helps students understand the material more easily, but also increases engagement and motivation to learn. Theoretically, the study reinforces the view that foreign language learning in early childhood students becomes more effective when associated with a local context close to the student's experience. In practical terms, the results of this study provide implications for teachers to utilize learning resources based on the surrounding environment as an alternative to English Learning media. Nonetheless, this study has limitations on the number of samples and the design of the study without a control group, so further research is recommended to involve a wider sample and a more comprehensive experimental design.

Suggestions

The study's findings suggest instructional practices and research. First, English teachers should use photographs of local tourist spots and other culturally relevant resources to make learning new words more meaningful and interesting. Pictures from students' daily lives and cultures can help learners relate abstract English terms to real-life circumstances. Second, curriculum creators should consider incorporating local culture-based learning materials to national English teaching materials to assist students become more culturally and linguistically competent. Finally, larger samples, various grade levels, and comparator groups could improve generalizability in future studies. Qualitative methods like classroom observations and interviews may reveal how cultural familiarity affects student engagement and vocabulary retention..

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