



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTION ON LEARNING STYLES AND VOCABULARY MASTERY: THEIR EFFECTS TOWARDS READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: This study investigates the effects of perception on learning styles and vocabulary mastery on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The research was conducted at Public Junior High Schools in Bogor in the 2024/2025 academic year with 87 students as the sample. Using a survey method with a quantitative approach, data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression with SPSS 22. The regression equation obtained was $\hat{Y} = 8.534 + 0.354X_1 + 0.578X_2$. The findings indicated that perception on learning styles and vocabulary mastery significantly and simultaneously influenced students' reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05; F = 163.277). Partially, perception on learning styles (t = 3.992; Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) and vocabulary mastery (t = 5.696; Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) both showed significant effects. This finding indicate that these two factors play an important role in improving students' comprehension of narrative texts.

Keywords: Perception on Learning Styles; Vocabulary; Reading

PERSEPSI GAYA BELAJAR DAN PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA: PENGARUHNYA TERHADAP PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA TEKS NARATIF

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh persepsi gaya belajar dan penguasaan kosakata terhadap pemahaman membaca teks naratif siswa SMP. Penelitian dilaksanakan di SMP Negeri Kota Bogor pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025 dengan jumlah sampel 87 siswa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah survei dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Analisis data dilakukan melalui statistik deskriptif dan regresi linier berganda dengan bantuan SPSS 22. Persamaan regresi yang diperoleh adalah $\hat{Y} = 8.534 + 0.354X_1 + 0.578X_2$. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi gaya belajar dan penguasaan kosakata secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05; F = 163.277). Secara parsial, persepsi gaya belajar (t = 3.992; Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) dan penguasaan kosakata (t = 5.696; Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) keduanya memberikan pengaruh signifikan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa persepsi gaya belajar dan penguasaan kosakata merupakan faktor penting dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap teks naratif.

Kata kunci: Persepsi; Gaya Belajar; Kosa Kata; Membaca

INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as a global lingua franca, functioning as a common medium in education, business, technology, and international communication (Rao, 2019). In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject under the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes the integrated development of six skills: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting (BSKAP, 2022). Among these, reading plays a particularly crucial role as a receptive skill and is frequently practiced through genre-based approaches, including descriptive, recount, report, procedure, and narrative texts (Fasikh, 2018). Narrative texts are especially important because they engage students in decoding, interpretation, and moral reflection, thus strengthening both cognitive and affective aspects of literacy (Anderson & Anderson, 2003; Hamhij, 2017). Despite this significance, Indonesian students continue to show low performance in reading comprehension. The 2022 PISA results placed Indonesian students at a score of 359, the lowest since 2000, highlighting serious challenges in literacy that demand further educational attention (OECD, 2023).

Research has shown that two major factors strongly influence reading comprehension: vocabulary mastery and learning styles. Vocabulary knowledge helps learners decode texts, understand meaning in context, and draw inferences (Brooks, Clenton, & Fraser, 2021; Haryadi, 2022), while learning styles determine how students absorb, process, and retain information (Sadeghi, Kashef, & Safari, 2012). More specifically, students' perceptions of their learning styles—whether visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or otherwise—can shape their approaches to learning and impact their reading performance (Fidan, 2016; Muluk, Habiburrahim, & Rechal, 2021). Yet, studies investigating the combined influence of vocabulary mastery and perceived learning styles on comprehension remain scarce. Existing research often isolates these variables or neglects the unique challenges of narrative text comprehension in junior high school contexts in Indonesia. This leaves a gap in understanding the interactive role of perceptual and linguistic factors in students' reading achievement (Fasikh, 2018; Mursid, 2022).

The present study seeks to address this gap by examining the effects of perception on learning styles and vocabulary mastery towards reading comprehension of narrative texts among ninth-grade students in Bogor. It specifically investigates whether students' self-perceptions of their learning preferences, together with their vocabulary knowledge, influence their ability to comprehend both explicit and implicit meanings in narrative texts. Theoretically, the study contributes by offering insights into how cognitive and perceptual factors interact in second language reading (Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015). Practically, the findings provide valuable input for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers in tailoring instructional strategies that accommodate diverse learning preferences while strengthening vocabulary knowledge. Although the research is limited in scope to narrative texts and a specific student population, its implications may extend to broader contexts of English language teaching and learning in Indonesia and other EFL settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design with survey to investigate the effects of perceptions of learning styles and vocabulary mastery on the students reading comprehension in narrative texts. The correlational approach was selected because it enables researchers to identify the degree of association between variables without manipulating them, which is suitable for naturally occurring classroom conditions (Creswell, 2012). Multiple regression analysis was further applied to determine the extent to which the independent variables—perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery—contribute to predicting students' reading comprehension outcomes. The relationship between the independent variables (X_1 , X_2) and the dependent variable (Y) is illustrated in the figure below.

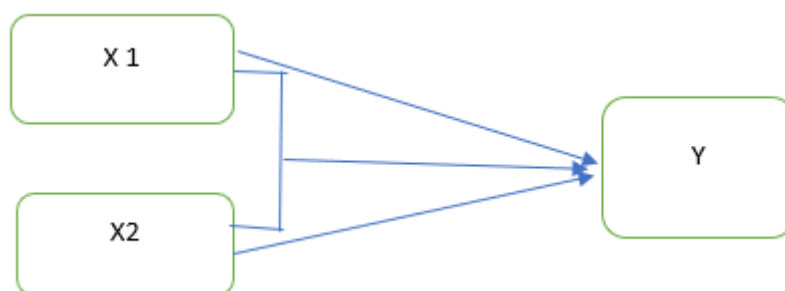


Figure 1

Constellation of relationship between research variables

Description:

Independent Variables

X1: Perception on Learning Styles

X2: Vocabulary Mastery

Dependent Variable

Y: Reading Comprehension in Narrative Text

In Figure 1, the arrow from Perception on Learning Styles (X1) to Reading Comprehension (Y) indicates that students' awareness and understanding of their own preferred learning styles may influence their ability to comprehend narrative texts. When learners adjust their strategies according to their learning preferences, they are expected to interpret and manage information better. Second, the arrow from Vocabulary Mastery (X2) to Reading Comprehension (Y) highlights the role of vocabulary knowledge as a key linguistic resource. Students with stronger vocabulary mastery are likely to decode words, grasp meanings, and interpret contextual clues more efficiently, which enhances their overall comprehension of narrative passages. Ultimately, the model suggests that X1 and X2 influence Y simultaneously. In other words, both perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery together contribute to the students' reading comprehension performance. A strong perception of learning styles without sufficient vocabulary mastery (or vice versa) may not lead to optimal comprehension; thus, both variables are considered complementary in supporting reading skills in narrative texts.

The study was conducted at two public junior high schools in Bogor, Indonesia. The total population consisted of 646 ninth-grade students. From this population, 87 students were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was chosen because the study targeted students who had already been introduced to narrative texts in the English curriculum, ensuring that they possessed the necessary background knowledge for the comprehension test.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error, which resulted in 87 participants being considered sufficient to represent the population. Of these, 41 students came from School A and 46 from School B. The participants were between 14 and 15 years old, representing a mix of male and female students. All were enrolled in regular English classes and had similar exposure to curriculum-based instruction, thereby reducing variability caused by external learning opportunities. Students with special educational needs were excluded to maintain sample homogeneity and ensure that the instruments could be administered effectively across the group.

Three research instruments were developed and validated for this study: a questionnaire on perceptions of learning styles, a vocabulary mastery test, and a reading comprehension test.

1. Perception of Learning Styles Questionnaire

This questionnaire was adapted from the VARK learning style model and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory then modified to suit the Indonesian junior high school context. It consisted of

27 Likert-scale items divided into four dimensions: awareness of learning styles, preference for certain styles, perceived effectiveness, and adaptability. Responses were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated more positive perceptions of learning styles. The questionnaire was subjected to expert validation by two lecturers specializing in language education and educational psychology. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 students outside the research sample. Based on the results, all 27 items met the validity requirement ($r\text{-value} > 0.213$). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = \mathbf{0.910}$) indicated excellent internal consistency.

2. Vocabulary Mastery Test

The vocabulary mastery test consisted of 28 multiple-choice questions, each with four options. The items were constructed to measure three aspects: (a) recognition of word meanings, (b) ability to select appropriate words in context, and (c) knowledge of synonyms and antonyms within narrative text passages. The items were drawn from the vocabulary lists in the national curriculum for junior high school and contextualized within short narrative passages. The test was reviewed by English teachers to ensure content validity. Item analysis from the pilot study showed acceptable difficulty and discrimination indices. The test achieved strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = \mathbf{0.858}$), demonstrating that the items consistently measured vocabulary mastery.

3. Reading Comprehension Test

The reading comprehension test was developed to measure students' ability to understand narrative texts. It contained 30 multiple-choice items targeting several comprehension skills: identifying the main idea, understanding sequences of events, analyzing character and setting, making inferences, determining moral values, and interpreting vocabulary in context. The passages were taken from English textbooks commonly used in grade IX classrooms, with modifications to suit test purposes. Like the other instruments, the comprehension test was validated by experts and piloted with 30 students. All items met the validity requirement, and the overall reliability was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = \mathbf{0.817}$), confirming that the test was suitable for use in this research.

Data collection was conducted between March and July 2025. Prior to administration, formal permission was obtained from school principals and English teachers. The research process was explained to students, and informed consent was secured. The data collection process occurred in three stages:

1. Students first completed the Perception of Learning Styles Questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered digitally via Google Forms and required approximately 30 minutes. Clear instructions and examples were given to ensure that all students understood how to respond.
2. The Vocabulary Mastery Test was then administered in a separate session. Each student was given 30 minutes to complete the test under teacher supervision in the classroom.
3. Finally, the Reading Comprehension Test was conducted. Students were given 40 minutes to read narrative passages and respond to the multiple-choice questions.

To minimize distractions, all instruments were administered during regular English lesson hours. Teachers and the researcher supervised the sessions to ensure academic honesty and to address any technical issues with the online forms. All responses were coded and analyzed using **SPSS 22.0**. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were calculated to summarize the data. Before conducting inferential tests, assumption tests were performed:

- Normality test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) to ensure that the distribution of scores did not deviate significantly from normal.
- Linearity test to verify that the relationships between independent and dependent variables were linear.
- Multicollinearity test to ensure that the independent variables were not highly correlated with each other.
- Heteroscedasticity test to check the equality of variances in the regression model.

After the assumptions were met, Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine pairwise relationships among perception of learning styles, vocabulary mastery, and reading comprehension. Subsequently, multiple regression analysis was applied to determine the relative and combined contributions of perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery to reading comprehension. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Effect sizes (R^2 values) were also reported to show the strength of relationships.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical guidelines for educational research. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. Permission letters were secured from the principals of both participating schools. All students and their parents were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Students were assured that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and that their responses would remain confidential. No personal identifiers were collected, and the data were reported in aggregate form. The researcher declared no conflicts of interest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The overall data description in this research is presented based on the results of calculations and tests conducted using the SPSS 22 application program, along with its analysis and interpretation.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistic

		Statistics		
		Perception on Learning Style	Vocabulary Mastery	Reading Comprehension in Narrative Texts
N	Valid	87	87	87
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		79.69	79.57	82.74
Median		80.00	82.00	83.00
Mode		73	82	87
Std. Deviation		8.791	8.034	8.371
Minimum		60	64	60
Maximum		96	96	97
Sum		6933	6923	7198

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the three major variables: perception of learning styles, vocabulary mastery, and reading comprehension. The mean score for perception of learning styles was 79.69 ($SD = 8.79$), ranging from 60 to 96. This indicates that most students demonstrated a positive perception of their preferred learning styles, although variation across individuals remained. Vocabulary mastery had a mean of 79.57 ($SD = 8.03$), ranging from 64 to 96, suggesting that the majority of participants had relatively high lexical knowledge. Reading comprehension scores were slightly higher, with a mean of 82.74 ($SD = 8.37$) and a range of 60 to 97. Overall, the results suggest that the sample achieved moderately high performance across all three domains.

Table 2

Kolmogorov Smirnov Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
			Unstandardized Residual
N			87
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}		Mean	.0000000
		Std. Deviation	3.78663139
Most Extreme Differences	Extreme	Absolute	.049
		Positive	.048
		Negative	-.049
Test Statistic			.049
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.200 ^{c,c}

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Table 3

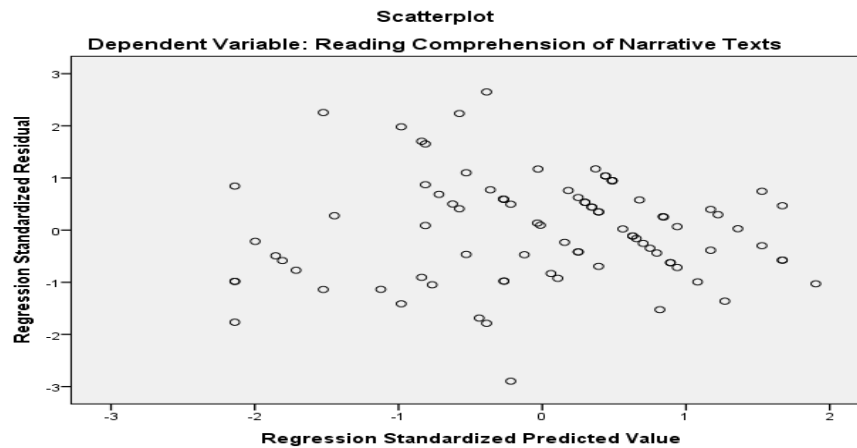
Multicollinearity diagnostics

Coefficients ^a											
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	8.534	4.146		2.059	.043					
	Students' Perception of Learning Style	.354	.089	.371	3.992	.000	.842	.399	.197	.282	3.551
	Vocabulary Mastery	.578	.097	.555	5.969	.000	.870	.546	.295	.282	3.551

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension of Narrative Texts

Table 2 and 3 show that preliminary tests confirmed the data met the requirements for regression analysis. The **Kolmogorov–Smirnov test** indicated normality ($p = .200 > .05$). Linearity was confirmed for both predictors ($p > .05$), while multicollinearity diagnostics (Tolerance = 0.282; VIF = 3.551) showed no problematic correlations between independent variables.

Figure 2
Heteroscedasticity Test



The scatterplot shown in Figure 2 also confirmed homoscedasticity. From the figure above, we know that there is no clear pattern shown. The residual points are randomly spread along the Y-axis, indicating that the assumption of homoscedasticity is met, validating the regression model assumptions.

Regression Analysis

To examine the predictive power of perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery on reading comprehension, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results are displayed in Table 4. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 84) = 163.28$, $p < .001$, with $R^2 = .795$. This means that approximately 79.5% of the variance in reading comprehension was explained jointly by perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery.

Table 4

The correlation coefficient calculation of the influence of variables X1 and X2 on variable Y

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.892 ^a	.795	.791	3.831	.795	163.277	2	84	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vocabulary Mastery, Students' Perception of Learning Style
b. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension of Narrative Texts

Table 5

Regression Line Equation Calculation Results of the Influence of Variables X1 and X2 on Variable Y

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	8.534	4.146		2.059	.043
Students' Perception of Learning Style	.354	.089	.371	3.992	.000
Vocabulary Mastery	.578	.097	.555	5.969	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension of Narrative Texts

Individually, as shown in Table 5, both predictors contributed significantly to the model. Perception of learning styles showed a positive effect on reading comprehension ($\beta = .354$, $t = 3.992$, $p < .001$), indicating that students with higher awareness and appreciation of their learning styles tended to perform better in reading comprehension tasks. Similarly, vocabulary mastery was a stronger predictor ($\beta = .578$, $t = 5.969$, $p < .001$), suggesting that lexical knowledge played a crucial role in enhancing students' comprehension of narrative texts. The regression equation obtained was $\hat{Y} = 8.534 + 0.354X_1 + 0.578X_2$.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the importance of both perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery in predicting reading comprehension. Together, these two variables accounted for nearly 80% of the variance in reading outcomes, which is a substantial proportion for educational research.

The Role of Perception of Learning Styles

The positive contribution of learning style perception is consistent with theories of metacognition and learner autonomy. When students are aware of their learning preferences—whether visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or mixed—they are better able to select strategies that suit their strengths. This alignment between preference and practice may reduce cognitive load and enhance focus during reading activities. Previous studies (e.g., Sadeghi et.al, 2012; Fidan, 2016) have emphasized that learners who are conscious of their styles are more strategic and motivated, which resonates with the present findings.

Nevertheless, the effect size of perception of learning styles ($\beta = .354$) was smaller than that of vocabulary mastery. This suggests that while self-awareness about learning styles is beneficial, it operates more indirectly. For instance, students who perceive themselves as visual learners may rely on graphic organizers when reading, which in turn supports comprehension. However, perception alone may not guarantee deep understanding unless combined with adequate linguistic resources such as vocabulary knowledge.

The Role of Vocabulary Mastery

The stronger predictive power of vocabulary mastery aligns with decades of research in reading theory (Nation, 2001; Laufer, 1997). Vocabulary provides the building blocks for decoding meaning from texts. Without sufficient lexical knowledge, students struggle to grasp main ideas, infer implicit information, or appreciate stylistic features of narrative texts. The present study confirmed that vocabulary mastery was the most powerful predictor of

reading comprehension ($\beta = .578$), highlighting its central role in second language reading development.

Interestingly, the high mean score of vocabulary mastery (80.26) suggests that the students in this study had already developed a relatively strong lexical base. This might be attributed to their exposure to English in formal schooling and possibly through digital media. Still, the variation in vocabulary scores partly explained why some students achieved superior comprehension compared to others.

Combined Effects and Implications

The combination of perception of learning styles and vocabulary mastery produced an R^2 of .795, which indicates a synergistic effect. Students with both high vocabulary knowledge and strong awareness of their learning preferences were most likely to excel in reading comprehension. This highlights the need for instructional strategies that not only expand students' vocabulary but also cultivate their metacognitive awareness of how they learn best.

For teachers, these findings suggest several pedagogical implications. First, explicit vocabulary instruction should remain a priority in junior high school English classes. Techniques such as word mapping, semantic clustering, and contextualized practice can enrich students' lexical repertoires. Second, teachers should encourage learners to reflect on their learning styles and experiment with strategies that match their preferences. For example, visual learners may benefit from mind maps, while auditory learners may find it useful to engage in repeated oral reading. By fostering this dual approach, educators can help students build the linguistic and metacognitive foundations needed for effective reading comprehension.

Relation to Previous Research

The results of this study are in line with previous findings in the field of applied linguistics. Studies by Qian (2002) and Schmitt (2010) have repeatedly demonstrated the strong link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Similarly, research on learning styles (Sadeghi et.al, 2012; Fidan, 2016) has shown that learners who are aware of their styles tend to engage more actively in learning tasks. The present study adds to this body of literature by demonstrating that both variables operate jointly and significantly in the context of Indonesian junior high school students.

Limitations and Recommendations

Although the results are promising, certain limitations must be recognized. The study relied on quantitative measures, which may not capture the full complexity of how learning styles influence comprehension in practice. Future research may incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews or classroom observations, to explore how students actually apply their style awareness during reading. In addition, the study was conducted in only two public junior high schools in Bogor, which may limit the generalizability of results. A broader sample across diverse educational settings could yield more representative findings.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effects of perception on learning styles and vocabulary mastery toward students' reading comprehension in narrative texts among public junior high schools in Bogor City. The results demonstrated significant effects of both variables, individually and simultaneously, on reading comprehension. Vocabulary mastery emerged as the stronger predictor, but perception of learning styles also played a meaningful role. Specifically, students with stronger awareness of their learning styles and higher vocabulary mastery achieved better comprehension of narrative texts. Together, they accounted for nearly 80% of the variance in reading outcomes. These findings confirm the crucial role of both cognitive and metacognitive factors in supporting reading achievement.

The results of this research also carry pedagogical implications. First, English language teaching at the junior high school level should explicitly integrate vocabulary enrichment programs into classroom instruction, particularly contextualized vocabulary learning within narrative texts. Second, teachers are encouraged to consider students' learning style preferences in designing reading activities, ensuring varied instructional approaches to cater to diverse learners while simultaneously strengthening their vocabulary knowledge to foster deeper engagement and understanding. This study also validates the interdependence of linguistic resources and metacognitive awareness in shaping reading comprehension, and highlights the need for instructional practices that balance both elements. Third, parents and the wider community also play an essential role in creating a supportive environment by providing access to reading materials and encouraging effective study habits at home.

Despite its contributions, this study was limited to a specific context and text type, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to investigate diverse genres, larger populations, and broader educational settings to provide more comprehensive insights. Overall, the study reinforces that enhancing both learning style awareness and vocabulary mastery is vital for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly in narrative texts.

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