

Students' Perceptions of The *Bumper Stickers Strategy* in Enhancing Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is essential in English learning, yet many junior high school students struggle to understand descriptive texts because of limited vocabulary, difficulty identifying key ideas, and low engagement. This study investigated students' perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy as a visual-textual technique to support comprehension. Using a descriptive quantitative survey, data were collected from 40 seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kayuagung using an 18-item Likert-scale questionnaire covering perceived effectiveness, engagement, motivation, clarity, and ease of use. Instrument validity was confirmed using Pearson product-moment correlation, and reliability was high ($\alpha = 0.84$). Descriptive statistical analysis showed a positive overall perception with a mean score of 3.78, indicating that the strategy was effective, clear, easy to use, and helpful in organizing information visually, although engagement and motivation received slightly lower ratings. The findings suggest that the Bumper Stickers Strategy is a beneficial instructional tool for enhancing reading comprehension, supporting cognitive processing, and promoting creative learning, with the potential for broader application in various educational contexts.

Keywords: bumper stickers strategy; reading comprehension; students' perceptions; descriptive text.

ABSTRAK

Pemahaman membaca sangat penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, namun banyak siswa sekolah menengah pertama berjuang untuk memahami teks deskriptif karena kosakata yang terbatas, kesulitan mengidentifikasi ide-ide kunci, dan keterlibatan yang rendah. Penelitian ini meneliti persepsi siswa terhadap Strategi Bumper Stickers sebagai teknik visual-tekstual untuk mendukung pemahaman. Dengan menggunakan survei kuantitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan dari 40 siswa kelas tujuh SMP Negeri 1 Kayuagung melalui kuesioner skala Likert 18 item yang mencakup efektivitas yang dirasakan, keterlibatan dan motivasi, serta kejelasan dan kemudahan penggunaan. Validitas instrumen dikonfirmasi menggunakan Korelasi Produk-Momen Pearson, dan keandalan tinggi ($\alpha = 0,84$). Analisis statistik deskriptif menunjukkan persepsi keseluruhan yang positif dengan skor rata-rata 3,78, menunjukkan bahwa strategi tersebut efektif, jelas, mudah digunakan, dan membantu dalam mengatur informasi secara visual, meskipun keterlibatan dan motivasi menerima peringkat yang sedikit lebih rendah. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Strategi Bumper Stickers adalah alat instruksional yang bermanfaat untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan, mendukung pemrosesan kognitif, dan mempromosikan pembelajaran kreatif, dengan potensi untuk aplikasi yang lebih luas dalam konteks pendidikan yang bervariasi.

Katakunci: strategi bumper stickers; membaca pemahaman; persepsi siswa; teks

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential skill that supports students' overall learning development. In English language learning, reading comprehension is widely recognized as a central component because it contributes significantly to students' academic performance and language proficiency. This enables

learners to decode texts, analyze information, explain ideas, and articulate their own understanding of the written materials (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The primary goal of reading is to grasp the intended message conveyed by the writer and accurately interpret it (Al Aziz & Yusanti, 2020). To achieve this, reading requires the integration of background knowledge and cognitive processes to construct meaning, locate relevant information, and use that information to build and share a new understanding (Prayitno et al., 2021). Therefore, strengthening students' reading comprehension skills is essential because it supports effective learning across subject areas and enhances their ability to communicate meaningfully in English.

Reading descriptive texts presents notable challenges for junior high school students, particularly in the areas of vocabulary understanding and the processing of complex information. Studies reveal that many students struggle to identify word meanings in descriptive texts, which limits their ability to comprehend the overall content (Maufiroh et al. 2024). This difficulty intensifies when texts contain long or complex sentences, often forcing students to reread passages repeatedly without achieving deeper comprehension. Since reading comprehension depends heavily on the ability to decode vocabulary effectively, such lexical challenges pose a serious barrier (Farnia & Geva, 2013). Moreover, although some students show high extrinsic motivation toward reading, this does not always lead to improved understanding (Apoko et al., 2024). Loss of concentration, as observed by Maufiroh et al. (2024), contributes to prolonged reading without meaningful comprehension. Additional challenges arise from students' limited awareness of text structure, which is essential for processing descriptive texts effectively (Hidayat & Musthafa, 2020). These reading difficulties are also reflected in students' struggles to organize and express ideas during descriptive writing tasks, suggesting incomplete comprehension of the texts they read (Syifa et al., 2022). Teachers also report that many descriptive texts used in the classroom do not match students' cognitive levels, indicating the need for more appropriate instructional materials (Nisak et al., 2023). Therefore, addressing these linguistic and cognitive obstacles is crucial to improving students' ability to meaningfully engage with descriptive texts.

Research on literacy instruction has increasingly highlighted the importance of incorporating multimodal strategies to improve students' comprehension and engagement. Instructional techniques that integrate visual and textual elements have been shown to enhance students' understanding and motivation. Saptarina et al. (2024) report that the Bumper Stickers Strategy helps students internalize reading processes by transforming learning materials into simple mnemonic devices. While Lewis (2024) emphasizes the need for varied instructional approaches to support literacy development, his work though not directly addressing the strategy—supports the broader use of visual-textual aids, as also argued by Parameswari et al. (2021). Saptarina et al. (2024) found that the Bumper Stickers Strategy increased students' interest and participation by engaging them in the creation of visual and textual representations of meaning. This aligns with Baye et al. (2018), who noted that effective reading comprehension requires flexible application of multiple strategies, including visual aids. This strategy is also consistent with active learning principles, as Hikida et al. (2019) show that such approaches strengthen comprehension and retention. Since descriptive texts rely heavily on detailed expressions, encouraging students to process reading materials creatively and structurally makes the Bumper Stickers Strategy especially relevant. Furthermore, Wahyuni (2024) demonstrated that innovative approaches like this can be effective across content areas, signaling a shift toward more dynamic and interactive teaching methods. Overall, the Bumper Stickers Strategy offers a promising and engaging approach for enhancing students' reading comprehension.

Despite the growing use of innovative reading strategies, such as the Bumper Stickers Strategy, little is known about how students perceive the effectiveness, clarity, and engagement level of this strategy in supporting their reading comprehension. Without understanding students' perceptions, educators may struggle to determine whether the strategy truly meets learners' needs, motivates them, and enhances their comprehension of descriptive texts. This gap highlights the need to investigate students' perceptions to ensure that instructional practices are responsive, effective, and aligned with their learning experiences. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy in enhancing their reading comprehension, particularly in understanding descriptive texts.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive, quantitative research method with a survey design. The survey design was chosen to systematically collect and analyze students' perceptions of Bumper Stickers'

Strategy in enhancing their reading comprehension. Through this approach, the researcher was able to quantify students' responses and identify general trends regarding the effectiveness, clarity, and engagement level of the strategy as perceived by learners.

The study population consisted of all classes of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kayuagung in the 2025/2026 academic year. However, only one class with a total of 40 students participated in the research because this group had been taught reading comprehension using the Bumper Sticker Strategy. Purposive sampling was employed, meaning that the sample was intentionally selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. In this context, the chosen class was considered the most appropriate and representative because it met the following criteria: exposure to the Bumper Sticker Strategy and active involvement in reading comprehension activities. This sampling technique ensured that the participants were aligned with the study's objectives and allowed the researcher to gather more accurate and meaningful data.

The main instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire developed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument consisted of statements organized into three dimensions: (1) Perceived Effectiveness of the Bumper Stickers Strategy, (2) Perceived Engagement and Motivation, and (3) Perceived Clarity and Ease of Use. The questionnaire was adapted from established perception-scale frameworks and was further modified to align with the context of reading comprehension and the implementation of the Bumper Stickers' Strategy. To ensure the quality of the instrument, both its content and construct validity were examined. For content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in English education who evaluated the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each item. Their suggestions were incorporated to refine the instrument before data collection. Construct validity was tested using item-total correlations through the Pearson product-moment correlation formula. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, where a coefficient value of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively through several systematic steps. First, each student's response was scored by assigning numerical values ranging from 1 to 5, after which the total and mean scores for each item were calculated. The results were then processed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to provide a detailed description of students' perceptions across each category. To interpret the findings, the mean scores were classified using predetermined criteria, where scores ranging from 4.21 to 5.00 indicated very high perception, 3.41 to 4.20 high perception, 2.61 to 3.40 moderate perception, 1.81 to 2.60 low perception, and 1.00 to 1.80 very low perception. In addition, statistical analyses were conducted using Microsoft Excel and SPSS to examine item validity through Pearson product-moment correlation and to assess the questionnaire's reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The results of these analyses were used to determine students' overall perceptions of the Bumper Stickers' Strategy in enhancing their reading comprehension.

The validity of the questionnaire was examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation, and all 18 items were found to be valid, as each met the required correlation coefficient ($r \geq 0.312$, $N = 40$, $\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that every item effectively measured students' perceptions. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.84, demonstrating high internal consistency. Therefore, the questionnaire was considered both valid and reliable for measuring students' perceptions.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis Result

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Students' Perception Questionnaire	0.84	Reliable

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The descriptive analysis of students' perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy, based on responses from 40 seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kayuagung, indicated a generally positive attitude toward the strategy. The questionnaire consisted of 18 items grouped into three dimensions: perceived effectiveness, engagement and motivation, and clarity and ease of use. Students responded

using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The results of the three dimensions are explained as follows.

The results in the first dimension, as stated in Table 1, *Perceived Effectiveness*, show that students generally viewed the Bumper Stickers Strategy as highly effective in supporting reading comprehension. The mean scores across the seven items ranged from 3.6 to 4.0, indicating consistently positive perceptions. Students agreed that the strategy helped them understand the text ($M = 3.8$), identify key ideas ($M = 4.0$), remember information ($M = 3.9$), summarize content ($M = 4.0$), and comprehend descriptive text ($M = 3.8$). They also reported that the strategy made reading easier ($M = 3.7$) and increased their interest in it ($M = 3.6$).

With a total mean score of 3.83, this dimension falls within the high category, suggesting that the bumper stickers' strategy was perceived as effective in improving key aspects of reading comprehension. These findings reinforce the idea that visual- and summarization-based techniques help students process written information more clearly and efficiently.

Table 2. Perceived Effectiveness

Item	Shortened Statement	Mean	Category
1	Strategy helps me understand text	3.8	High
2	Helps identify key ideas	4.0	High
3	Helps remember information	3.9	High
7	Helps summarize text	4.0	High
8	Supports comprehension of descriptive texts	3.8	High
13	Makes reading easier	3.7	High
14	Enhances reading interest	3.6	High
Total Mean: Perceived Effectiveness		3.83	High

The second dimension, as in Table 2, *Clarity and Ease of Use*, received some of the highest ratings in the entire questionnaire. Students responded positively to the clarity of the instructions ($M = 3.9$) and found the strategy easy to use ($M = 4.1$). Additionally, they strongly agreed that the strategy helped them organize information visually ($M = 4.2$), which received the highest mean score among all items. Students also felt that the strategy supported them in completing the tasks effectively ($M = 3.8$).

The total mean for this dimension was 4.00, categorized as high, indicating that students found the Bumper Stickers Strategy clear, practical, and straightforward to implement. This high level of clarity likely contributed to its effectiveness, as students could focus more on understanding the text rather than struggling with the procedure itself.

Table 3. Clarity and Ease of Use

Item	Shortened Statement	Mean	Category
4	Easy to use	4.1	High
10	Helps organize information visually	4.2	Very High
11	Clear instructions	3.9	High
17	Helps complete tasks	3.8	High
Total Mean: Clarity and Ease of Use		4.00	High

The third dimension, *Engagement and Motivation*, showed slightly more varied results, although overall student perceptions remained positive. Items related to enjoyment ($M = 3.7$) and motivation to read ($M = 3.6$) were rated highly. The students also indicated that the strategy encouraged creativity ($M = 4.1$) and supported group work ($M = 3.7$), demonstrating its role in promoting active and collaborative learning.

However, several items in this dimension received moderate ratings. These included increases in class participation ($M = 3.5$), improvements in vocabulary understanding ($M = 3.4$), and enhancement of

focus ($M = 3.5$). While still positive, these results suggest that the motivational impact of the strategy may vary depending on individual student differences, such as prior reading interest or learning preferences.

The total mean score for this dimension was 3.64, which falls into the high category overall, showing that students felt moderately to highly engaged when using the strategy.

Table 4. Engagement and Motivation

Item	Shortened Statement	Mean	Category
5	Learning becomes enjoyable	3.7	High
6	Motivates me to read	3.6	High
9	Increases class participation	3.5	Moderate
12	Improves vocabulary understanding	3.4	Moderate
15	Helps focus	3.5	Moderate
16	Encourages creativity	4.1	High
18	Beneficial for group work	3.7	High
Total Mean: Engagement and Motivation		3.64	High

The overall mean score of students' perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy showed consistently positive responses across all three measured dimensions. The highest mean was recorded in the dimension of *Clarity and Ease of Use*, with a score of 4.00, categorized as *High*, indicating that students found the strategy easy to understand and apply during the learning activities. This was followed by the dimension of *Perceived Effectiveness*, which obtained a mean score of 3.83, also in the *high* category, suggesting that students believed the strategy contributed effectively to their learning process, particularly in understanding reading materials. Meanwhile, the dimension of *Engagement and Motivation* received a mean score of 3.64, still falling within the *High* category, showing that the strategy successfully maintained students' interest and encouraged their active participation. When combined, the overall mean score across all items was 3.78, categorized as *high*, demonstrating that students generally viewed the Bumper Stickers Strategy positively and considered it beneficial in supporting their learning experience.

Table 5. Overall Mean Score

Dimension	Total Mean	Category
Perceived Effectiveness	3.83	High
Clarity and Ease of Use	4.00	High
Engagement and Motivation	3.64	High
Overall Mean (All Items)	3.78	High

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that students held overall positive perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy in learning reading comprehension, as reflected in the overall mean score of 3.78, which was categorized as high. This demonstrates that students perceived the strategy as supportive of their reading processes and beneficial in helping them understand descriptive texts, an area known to be challenging owing to vocabulary load, sentence complexity, and structural demands (Maufiroh et al., 2024; Hidayat & Musthafa, 2020). The discussion is based on the three dimensions assessed in the

questionnaire: perceived effectiveness, clarity and ease of use, and engagement and motivation.

The first dimension, *Perceived Effectiveness*, obtained a total mean score of 3.83, showing that students generally viewed the strategy as effective in supporting reading comprehension. Items such as “helps identify key ideas” and “helps summarize text” both reached mean scores of 4.0, suggesting that the strategy enabled students to distill key information from descriptive texts more clearly. This is particularly important because reading comprehension requires students to “construct meaning, locate relevant information, and use that information to build and share new understanding” (Prayitno et al., 2021). By simplifying information into short, concise stickers, the strategy helped students break down complex passages into manageable parts, addressing common difficulties such as decoding vocabulary and processing lengthy sentences, problems widely reported among junior high school learners (Farnia & Geva, 2013; Maufiroh et al., 2024). Thus, the high perception scores in this dimension indicate that the Bumper Stickers Strategy effectively supports students’ comprehension by transforming challenging descriptive texts into clearer, more accessible, and cognitively manageable learning materials.

This finding also aligns with prior studies that emphasize the benefits of integrating visual and textual elements in reading instruction. Saptarina et al. (2024) reported that the Bumper Stickers Strategy enables students to internalize reading processes by converting information into simple mnemonic cues, making comprehension easier and more meaningful. These findings support the conclusion that the Bumper Stickers Strategy strengthens cognitive processing and enhances students’ ability to interact meaningfully with the text.

The second dimension, *Clarity and Ease of Use*, received the highest total mean score of 4.00, indicating positive perceptions of the strategy’s usability. Students rated the ease of use ($M = 4.1$) and clarity of instructions ($M = 3.9$) highly, while the item “helps organize information visually” ($M = 4.2$) was the highest in the entire questionnaire. These results demonstrate that the visual and structured nature of the strategy resonated strongly with learners.

This aligns with the results of a previous study that strategies that integrate visual supports significantly enhance students’ comprehension and reduce cognitive load. Parameswari et al. (2021) stressed the importance of multimodal tools in literacy development, noting that visual-textual integration allows learners to access and organize information more effectively. Therefore, the positive student perceptions in this dimension reaffirm that the Bumper Stickers Strategy offers a practical and efficient scaffold that simplifies learning processes and strengthens overall reading comprehension.

Descriptive texts are described as especially challenging because of vocabulary demands and complex sentences (Maufiroh et al., 2024). The visual scaffolding provided by the Bumper Stickers Strategy directly addresses these challenges by offering structural clarity. Its smooth integration into reading lessons without requiring extensive prior explanation further supports its perceived clarity and effectiveness. Consequently, the strategy’s ability to simplify linguistic complexity and present information visually makes it an effective tool for helping students navigate and understand descriptive texts more confidently.

The third dimension, *Engagement and Motivation*, obtained a total mean score of 3.64. Students felt that the strategy made learning enjoyable ($M = 3.7$), motivated them to read ($M = 3.6$), and encouraged their creativity ($M = 4.1$). These results suggest that the strategy promoted active engagement, which is crucial given that many students frequently lose concentration during reading activities (Maufiroh et al., 2024) and that extrinsic motivation does not always translate into improved comprehension (Apoko et al., 2024). Thus, the moderate-to-high scores in this dimension suggest that the Bumper Stickers Strategy plays a valuable role in sustaining students’ interest and promoting meaningful involvement during reading activities.

The use of visual and creative elements in this strategy aligns with the findings of Permana (2020), who argued that learning strategies that integrate visual creativity enhance student interest and comprehension. Saptarina et al. (2024) also found that the Bumper Stickers Strategy increases students’ participation and interest because it requires them to create visual and textual representations of meaning, making reading more interactive and stimulating. Additionally, Hikida et al. (2019) emphasized that active learning approaches strengthen comprehension and memory, which helps explain students’ positive reactions to the creative and collaborative aspects of the strategy. Therefore, the strong alignment between students’ perceptions and previous research confirms that the strategy’s visual and creative components significantly contribute to making reading tasks more engaging, meaningful, and cognitively supportive.

However, some items related to vocabulary development ($M = 3.4$) and class participation ($M = 3.5$) were rated moderately, suggesting that the motivational impact of the strategy varied among individuals. As noted by Wang et al (2020), “intrinsic reading motivation contributed strongly positively to reading achievement, whereas extrinsic reading motivation directly negatively affected reading achievement,” indicating that not all types or levels of motivation produce the same effect for every student.

The results across all three dimensions suggest that the Bumper Stickers Strategy is a promising instructional tool for improving students' reading comprehension. Its strengths lie in its visual, structured, and student-centered design, which closely aligns with the current research supporting multimodal and active learning approaches. Some scholars emphasize that reading comprehension requires strategic support, especially when dealing with descriptive texts, which challenge students in terms of vocabulary, structure, and coherence (Maufiroh et al., 2024; Syifa et al., 2022). The positive perceptions reported in this study reinforce the value of integrating clear, visually guided, and interactive strategies to promote deeper comprehension.

Overall, while engagement levels varied among learners, students consistently perceived the Bumper Stickers Strategy as effective, easy to use, and beneficial for developing their reading skills. These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the integration of visual-textual, concise, and student-centered strategies in English reading instruction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that students generally held positive perceptions of the Bumper Stickers Strategy in learning reading comprehension, as shown by the overall mean score of 3.78, which was categorized as high. In the dimension of perceived effectiveness, students agreed that the strategy helped them understand texts, identify key ideas, summarize content, and process information more efficiently, resulting in a high mean score of 3.83. The dimension of clarity and ease of use received the highest score ($M = 4.00$), demonstrating that the students found the strategy simple to follow, clearly structured, and visually helpful in organizing information. Meanwhile, the engagement and motivation dimensions also showed a positive perception with a mean of 3.64, although some items, such as vocabulary development and participation, fell into the moderate category, suggesting that the motivational impact varies among learners. These findings imply that teachers should integrate more visual and structured techniques into reading instruction, provide clear and simple procedural steps, and promote active and collaborative learning to enhance comprehension. Additionally, teachers may need to apply supplementary motivational strategies to accommodate diverse learner preferences. For future research, it is recommended that larger and more diverse samples be used, experimental or longitudinal designs be applied to measure actual learning outcomes, and qualitative methods be incorporated to gain deeper insight into students' experiences. Comparative studies with other reading strategies and digital adaptations of the Bumper Stickers Strategy are also suggested to explore its broader applicability and potential for enhancing reading comprehension in different learning contexts.

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