

TEACHING VOCABULARY USING WORDWALL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the use of Wordwall as a digital tool to improve vocabulary learning and student engagement among seventh-grade students of SMPN 29 Pontianak in the academic year 2024/2025. Conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR) in two cycles, data were collected using several instruments, namely vocabulary tests to measure students' vocabulary mastery, observation checklists to monitor classroom activities and engagement, and questionnaires to capture students' perceptions and responses. The findings showed a clear improvement in students' vocabulary achievement, with the mean score rising from 57.64 in Cycle I to 88.27 in Cycle II. Wordwall supported this progress through interactive activities such as matching games, word searches, and sentence completion, which provided repeated exposure, feedback, and meaningful practice. Students also responded positively, showing greater motivation, enthusiasm, and participation during lessons. In conclusion, integrating Wordwall not only improved vocabulary outcomes but also fostered a more engaging and motivating classroom environment, highlighting its potential as a useful tool in English vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: wordwall, vocabulary, student engagement, student perception, asking and giving directions

A. Pendahuluan

Vocabulary is the foundation of all language skills. If students lack sufficient vocabulary, they will struggle to express their ideas, comprehend what they read, and communicate effectively with others. As noted in recent research, "Vocabulary plays a critical role in language learning and proficiency, serving as a foundational element that influences communication, comprehension, and expression." (Robiya, 2024). Regardless of students' grasp of grammatical structures, effectively communicating thoughts and ideas is fundamentally reliant on vocabulary knowledge. A well-developed

vocabulary enables learners to interpret texts, participate in meaningful discourse, and precisely articulate their ideas. Consequently, vocabulary development should be regarded as a central focus in language instruction

According to Gao (2021), mastering enough vocabulary helps students develop key language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, teaching vocabulary is important, even if the number of words taught is limited to suit the lesson. In the context of asking and giving directions, learning relevant words and phrases enables students to understand instructions and ask or

explain how to get to a place correctly. Teachers are encouraged to use different methods so that students do not just memorize words but also understand their meanings and how to use them. Activities such as practice and simple games can make it easier for students to remember new words and use English more confidently in real-life situations.

The current era is characterized by the widespread integration of technology into nearly all aspects of daily life, including education. In the context of English language teaching and learning, technological advances have significantly influenced instructional methods and student engagement. Erben, Ban, & Castañeda (2008) state that technology includes multimedia resources, such as videos, animations, and interactive exercises, making vocabulary learning more engaging and memorable. Rintaningrum (2023), add that introducing technology in English language teaching and learning provides great opportunities for both students and teachers to learn something new and to have new experiences. A digital platform called Wordwall, as a teaching tool, offers interactive features that engage students in vocabulary learning through gamification, quizzes, and multimedia content. The platform allows students to practice vocabulary dynamically, strengthening memory through repetition and contextual use.

In line with the Merdeka Curriculum implemented at SMPN 29 Kota Pontianak, students in Phase D are expected to achieve the ability to understand communicative purposes and identify target readers or viewers when producing structured oral, written, and visual texts in English. This includes the use of increasingly

diverse vocabulary to express desires, feelings, and opinions. Currently, 7th grade students at SMP Negeri 29 Kota Pontianak are entering Chapter 5 titled "This is My School", specifically Unit 1 with the subtheme "School Building". The learning focus in this unit is on how to describe locations using appropriate vocabulary.

However, based on initial observations in class VII B, many students were found to have limitations in remembering vocabulary, which affected their participation in class discussions, understanding of the material, and confidence in using vocabulary related to the material being taught. As a result of this problem, 25 out of 31 students scored below the minimum competency criteria (KKM). To address these issues, the researcher decided to use Wordwall as a tool to teach vocabulary. There are various features in Wordwall, including match up, quiz, open the box, random wheel, unjumble, find the match, group sort, missing word, anagram, maze chase, gameshow quiz, matching pair, true or false, and many more. These activities actively encourage participation and repeated exposure to vocabulary, helping students remember new words more easily than memorizing them. By integrating Wordwall into the learning process, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging environment that motivates students to build their vocabulary, thereby improving overall academic performance.

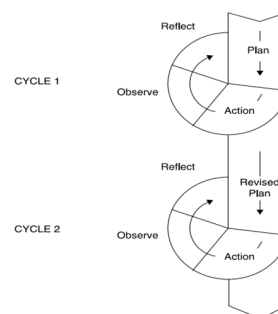
Previous research on Wordwall's effectiveness in vocabulary mastery by Silalahi, Rusmardiana, Febriningsih, & Taha, (2023), showed that the use of Wordwall can improve pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary comprehension. However, the study employed more quantitative methods, such as questionnaires,

without delving deeper into students' engagement and learning experiences through qualitative analysis. Previous research has also focused solely on 8th-grade junior high school students, so it is not yet known how effective Wordwall is across different age groups or language proficiency levels. Mazelin & Maniam (2022), also studied the role of Wordwall in improving class participation, but did not directly measure vocabulary mastery, and used a small sample and qualitative data from video recordings and surveys.

In contrast, this current study focuses on vocabulary learning by implementing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, which involves systematic planning, action, observation, and reflection to improve students' learning outcomes. While previous studies mostly emphasized self-reported engagement or perceived effectiveness, this study uses a quantitative vocabulary test to objectively measure students' vocabulary learning outcomes when using Wordwall, along with an observation checklist and questionnaire to collect qualitative data. In addition, this study was conducted in a different educational context, involving 7th grade students, thus expanding the existing findings. By addressing this gap, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how Wordwall contributes to students' vocabulary learning, classroom engagement and student perception.

B. Metode Penelitian

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the Kemmis & McTaggart model, consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.



Kemmis & MC Taggart's Action Research Design (Burns, 2010)

In the planning stage, the researcher and teacher prepared the lesson plan, teaching materials, media, and evaluation instruments. The action stage involved implementing Wordwall in vocabulary learning, while the observation stage focused on monitoring students' participation and classroom activities. Finally, reflection was used to analyze the outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements for the next cycle.

The research subjects were seventh grade students, with a total of 31 participants.

Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and vocabulary tests. Observation checklists assessed student participation and engagement; questionnaires captured students' perceptions and experiences with Wordwall; and vocabulary tests, including fill-in-the-blank and essay questions, measured learning improvement.

Data analysis combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data from observations and questionnaires were reduced, categorized, and interpreted by themes. Quantitative data from vocabulary tests were analyzed using mean scores, categorized as: 0–55 (very poor), 56–70 (poor), 71–85 (good), and 86–100 (excellent).

C.Hasil Penelitian dan Pembahasan

This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to evaluate the effectiveness of Wordwall in improving vocabulary mastery and student engagement among seventh grade students. The research was conducted in two cycles, each involving planning, action, observation, and reflection stages.

In Cycle I, students showed initial understanding of vocabulary related to asking and giving directions, but the class average score was still low, at 57.64, categorized as "poor" and below the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) of 70. Observation revealed limited active participation—only a few students fully engaged before activities started, and many remained passive. Collaboration and group discussions were encouraging factors that increased social interaction, but some students struggled to apply the vocabulary properly. Technical issues and unclear instructions also affected engagement.

Cycle II showed significant improvement after adjustments. Students' mean score rose to 88.27, classified as "excellent," with all students achieving or exceeding the mastery level. Observations documented increased attention, enthusiasm, and participation with more sustained focus and interactive collaboration during Wordwall activities. Group work and challenges promoted teamwork and motivation, while teacher guidance helped address difficulties promptly.

Vocabulary test score summary:

Cycle	Mean Score	Category	% Students Below Mastery	% Students Above Mastery
Cycle I	57.64	Poor	77.4%	22.6%
Cycle II	88.27	Excellent	0%	100%

Reflection Summary:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Smooth lesson implementation	Initial distractions and talking
Increased student participation in games	Technical slow loading issues
Enhanced enthusiasm and positive interaction	Repetition of instructions needed for some
Better teacher-student interaction	Limited time for feedback at lesson end

Student Engagement Analysis:

Engagement was observed using behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions, revealing how Wordwall fostered a motivating learning atmosphere.

Engagement Aspect	Indicators	Observations
Behavioral	Attention, answering, persistence	Most students actively participated, few passive
Emotional	Enthusiasm, smiling, enjoyment	Positive emotions were frequently observed

Engagement Aspect	Indicators	Observations
Cognitive	Vocabulary recall, problem-solving	Students showed mental effort to understand/use vocabulary
Social Interaction	Group discussions, peer support	Over half actively collaborated and motivated peers

Questionnaire Findings on Student Perception:

Theme	Highlights	Sample Quotes
Perceived Ease of Use	Simple, clear instructions	"Because it's easy and clear"
Perceived Usefulness	Memory game, repetition, audiovisual support	"Games helped me remember vocabulary easily"
Attitudes Toward Change	Game-like learning, social play, motivation from challenges	"Feels like playing a game, fun and not boring"
Behavioral Intentions	Desire for sustained and frequent use	"Hope we use Wordwall more often"

These findings indicate that Wordwall not only improved vocabulary achievement but also enriched the emotional and social engagement of students, making learning interactive, enjoyable, and inclusive.

Overall, the integration of Wordwall as a gamified digital tool effectively supported vocabulary mastery and enhanced student engagement through meaningful practice, collaboration, motivation, and positive classroom dynamics.

E. Kesimpulan

This study showed that the use of Wordwall in vocabulary learning for seventh-grade students significantly improved their vocabulary mastery. The students' average scores increased from 57.64 in the first cycle to 88.27 in the second cycle, reflecting a 53.15% increase in achievement. Wordwall's interactive activities with repeated exposure and immediate feedback helped students better understand, remember, and confidently use new vocabulary.

In addition, students had positive perceptions of Wordwall. They expressed that the learning activities were enjoyable, motivating, and easy to follow. Wordwall helped reduce their anxiety during learning and encouraged active participation. The fun and collaborative aspects of Wordwall fostered enthusiasm and created a supportive classroom environment. Overall, Wordwall promoted both vocabulary development and student engagement, enhancing the quality of the learning process.

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