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Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery in Narrative Text through Wordwall Game

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Abstract. Enhancing vocabulary mastery through the Wordwall game is important because students often face several common difficulties in mastering English vocabulary, such as lack of engagement, limited exposure to new words, and difficulty in retaining vocabulary. This study aims to answer whether the use of the Wordwall game can improve eighth-grade students' English vocabulary mastery. Classroom action research was conducted using four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Data were gathered via observation, questionnaires, and testing. The study revealed that integrating the Wordwall game enhanced vocabulary proficiency and increased motivation among students in their English language acquisition. The game stimulated students' comprehension and retention of relevant vocabulary, fostering their enthusiasm for acquiring English. In addition, there was a notable improvement in students' proficiency in vocabulary. The study showed that students who used the Wordwall game had higher vocabulary test scores compared to before using the game. This study provides evidence that students have attained favorable learning outcomes and exhibit high levels of motivation to expand their vocabulary through the Wordwall game. They recognized that the Wordwall game was beneficial in facilitating their acquisition of English vocabulary. It is recommended that teachers use this strategy and regularly evaluate teaching techniques.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Narrative text, Classroom Action Research, Wordwall game

Introduction

Language is the ability of humans to interact with each other. One of the language learning assumptions is understanding the importance of words, sentences, and messages. With mastery of vocabulary, acquiring knowledge can be easily accomplished (Hasram et al., 2020). This vocabulary mastery is a crucial part that learners must master to dominate the four language skills (Riswalastika et al., 2023; Wulandari, Andris Susanto, et al., 2024; Wulandari, Andris, et al., 2024, Arifani et al., 2020; Wulandari, Andris, et al., 2024). Thus, vocabulary is a fundamental component of a language that someone must master to dominate the four language skills.

English is taught at various school levels in Indonesia, from elementary to high school. However, some students face obstacles in expanding their vocabulary, hindering their ability to communicate in English. This problem occurs because English is not the native language they speak daily. Thus, memorizing vocabulary becomes more difficult (Jannah & Syafryadin, 2022; Rosyada-AS & Apoko, 2023). Therefore, students in Indonesia need unique learning methods to enrich their English vocabulary with a foreign accent due to the differences between their native languages. Active and meaningful teaching strategies with various techniques, methods, and learning materials, such as Wordwall game, are needed to help students expand their vocabulary to overcome this challenge.

Research by Jannah & Syafryadin, (2022) shows that most students positively perceive using Wordwall game had a significant impact on the students' level of involvement with both the web application and the classroom. They also stated that they felt happy and enthusiastic about using Wordwall because they enjoyed the teamwork and competition presented in the game. Wordwall was perceived as an exciting game capable of motivating students and providing a fun learning experience, significantly when expanding their vocabulary. In addition, the effect of using Wordwall is also apparent in the level of student engagement in learning and the atmosphere in the classroom. Students become more focused and more actively engaged in the learning process when Wordwall is used as a learning tool in the school. However, there is still a lack of research specifically exploring the impact of using Wordwall games to improve students' vocabulary, especially in narrative texts.

Based on interviews with teachers of a private junior high school in Semarang, it has been observed that some eighth-grade students face challenges in writing sentences and completing assignments due to a limited recognition of vocabulary. Many students struggle with words they have not mastered, leading to lower scores in subjects related to narrative text. Furthermore, some students exhibit disengagement in class by falling asleep or conversing with their peers, resulting in a lack of attention to the teacher's explanations during the learning process. Traditional teaching methods contribute to students' boredom in learning, emphasizing the need for greater diligence and creativity in foreign language instruction to captivate students' attention and facilitate better comprehension of presented materials. Students require assistance distinguishing spelling, interpreting vocabulary from texts, and recognizing synonyms and antonyms. Therefore, there is a need for more innovative approaches in foreign language teaching to enhance students' ability to navigate these linguistic challenges.

Based on these observations, various forms of media aid pupils in developing their command of the English language. One such tool is the Wordwall game, which was introduced to help students recognize the benefits of learning English. By using Wordwall game as an educational game, the learning environment is enhanced, and students are motivated to participate more actively in their education. This approach not only makes learning more enjoyable but also significantly improves students' engagement and mastery of the language. It is anticipated that using the Wordwall game may accelerate students' knowledge of and retention of new terms by increasing their interaction with vocabulary in more relevant contexts (Hasram et al., 2021; Ilahi et al., 2022; Jannah & Syafryadin, 2022; Rodríguez-escobar et al., 2023). This work is expected to make a novel contribution to the development of more innovative and effective methods for learning vocabulary in the environment, specifically in addressing the problem of students' limited knowledge of vocabulary in narrative texts. Furthermore, this study offers novel perspectives on the potential of Wordwall as a stimulating and efficient educational tool for improving students' language skills within specific textual contexts especially in fostering students' vocabulary holistically through narrative text which are different with the other research. Besides, this study also gives more differences in research design by using classroom action research than the previous studies which are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Therefore, the research objectives are to explain the use of *Wordwall* game to improve students' mastery of the vocabulary in the narrative text, to describe the students' mastery vocabulary, and to describe the students' perceptions in learning using *Wordwall* game in learning vocabulary in the narrative text.

Method

Research Design

This study employed action research to investigate the practical applications and excellent methods to address problems. Teachers or researchers may start a program or project called classroom action research (CAR) to address learning problems by conducting research activities. They argue that class activity research is a research project carried out in a classroom by fusing the meanings of three keywords: research, action, and classroom. In this study, the CAR was implemented into two cycles. Each cycle focused on four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Participants

This current research had 32 participants which were taken purposive sampling based on the background of learning vocabulary in seventh graders. These subjects were consisted 18 males and 14 females with the vocabulary mastery still under the minimum based criteria score.

Research Instruments

Data for this study were collected using the following instruments: observation, tests (pre-test and post-test), and a questionnaire. During classroom action research, the researchers observed the teacher's performance, the classroom environment, and the students' responses to utilizing wordwall in mastering vocabulary in narrative text. Lesson plans had to be appropriate for teaching and learning. This study also compared pre- and post-test results to assess EFL learners and the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the researchers disseminated the

questionnaire to EFL students that modified from the previous study (Klimova & Polakova, 2020). This questionnaire, which included nine indicators, was used to collect student responses about developing vocabulary mastery with wordwall game in narrative text.

The research procedures were explained into two cycles. The first cycle includes planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. Planning the action was specified what, who, where, when, why, and how the research would be done. First, the teacher created a lesson plan, prepared materials for teaching basic vocabulary, created observation, tests, and questionnaires sheets for students. Then, she established success criteria for teaching and learning. In action implementation was consisted the teacher explained using word wall, she utilized and discussed in the learning process. In observation was divided into some steps, the student and instructional actions were monitored in the observation step. Teacher watched students' vocabulary learning exercises and replies using wordwall game. The teacher evaluated students using an observation sheet. The collaborator observed the teacher's teaching process and provided feedback utilizing an observation sheet. Next, the reflection consisted of the student performance was assessed through reflection during treatment. If the first cycle failed, a second would be started. If the first cycle was successful, the second cycle would be done to better and more validly achieve the study goals. Cycle II aimed to improve pupils' language mastery. Cycle II followed the same four steps as cycle I. The planning, acting, observing, and reflecting were some activities. But. the differences only on acting and reflecting step that the teachers taught using word wall games and drilling the vocabularies related to narrative text. The last for the reflection steps, student performances were assessed through reflection during treatment.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the T-test formula in SPSS software. One type of analysis used to evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment is called a paired sample t-test. This test compared the average before and after the study and then tested the difference between the two averages. The choice of this test is due to its ability to assess the t-statistic, t-distribution, and degrees of freedom to calculate the p-value, also known as the probability. This p-value determines whether the means of a population are different from each other. The T-test is one of several hypothesis tests. Students' work was assessed based on the criteria outlined in the descriptive text rubric. In addition, before starting the research, expert judgment was used to ensure the validity of the data collected from the instruments. Considering these aspects of validity, the research findings from these three instruments were reliable and comprehensively used to conclude the effectiveness of using *Wordwall* game to improve students' vocabulary acquisition in narrative text.

Findings and Discussion

The Implementation of the Use of the *Wordwall* Game

In the first cycle, learning was carried out according to the lesson plan. While in the second cycle, different and fun learning was conducted through laptops and cell phones in *Wordwall* games as a medium to increase students' vocabulary in narrative text. The following is an explanation of the cycles used in

this study. If the action planning stage has been completed, the next step is to implement the plan in the classroom based on the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) that was prepared previously. At this stage, the teacher and the researcher collaborated to carry out classroom learning. Researchers, as teachers, carry out actions based on previous planning, and then teachers, as observers. Classroom activities involved obtaining the required material through a cooperative approach using *Wordwall* games in groups. Before the learning began, researchers formed groups according to the number of students, and learning activities were carried out in groups. This implementation is flexible or changeable and can be modified at any time, adjusted to the situation, conditions, and needs in the field. After the learning activities, each student was given a worksheet to assess their understanding of vocabulary in narrative text.

Furthermore, technology integration in education has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, aiming to enhance the learning experience and improve educational outcomes (Khan et al., 2018). Among the myriad educational technologies available, *Wordwall* games have emerged as a promising tool for facilitating vocabulary acquisition, particularly in language learning contexts (Çil, 2021; Hasram et al., 2021; Rodríguez-escobar et al., 2023). The preceding discussion has elucidated the efficacy of *Wordwall* games in fostering vocabulary development during Cycle I of implementation. While initial observations suggest a generally positive trajectory, a nuanced analysis reveals areas necessitating refinement to optimize the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach. Central to this optimization endeavor is the imperative to address prevailing challenges hindering the seamless integration of *Wordwall* games into the instructional framework.

One noteworthy observation pertains to how students engage with the learning process facilitated by *Wordwall* games. Despite the structured group dynamics inherent in this approach, instances of passive participation and distraction detract from the intended learning outcomes. Such observations underscore the importance of recalibrating instructional strategies to cultivate a more conducive learning environment wherein students are actively engaged and attentive. Additionally, the transition from cycle I to cycle II necessitates strategically reassessing group compositions to foster collaboration and maximize the collective learning potential.

The efficacy of *Wordwall* games as a catalyst for vocabulary acquisition hinges upon optimizing instructional stimuli to elicit sustained student interest and curiosity. Educators can augment student engagement and stimulate deeper cognitive processing by strategically embedding inquiry-based prompts within the game framework. Furthermore, heightened teacher involvement and oversight are indispensable catalysts for sustaining student focus and facilitating meaningful learning experiences. In this vein, the forthcoming pedagogical interventions in cycle II are poised to engender a more dynamic and interactive learning milieu wherein students are empowered to construct knowledge and consolidate linguistic competencies actively.

Using *Wordwall* games to teach vocabulary acquisition in cycle I went according to plan. However, some adjustments are still needed to increase the confidence that there would be an increase in students' scores. As educators explore the complexities of using technological tools like *Wordwall* games into teaching

methods, it becomes more evident that improvement is a continuous and repetitive process. Although the cycle I went through provided valuable insights into the potential of Wordwall games to improve vocabulary acquisition, it also revealed areas that may be improved. One such area of concern pertains to student engagement and responsiveness during game play. Despite the structured framework afforded by the group system, instances of disengagement and distraction were noted, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to foster sustained attentiveness and active participation. Moreover, the transition to cycle II heralds an opportune moment to implement strategic adjustments to optimize the learning environment and maximize student outcomes.

Educators must adopt a multifaceted approach encompassing instructional modifications and pedagogical innovations. Central to this endeavor is the imperative to recalibrate group compositions to foster student collaboration and synergy (Tang et al., 2024). By strategically curating group dynamics to encompass diverse learning styles and aptitudes, educators can cultivate a dynamic ecosystem where students can leverage their collective strengths and support one another in their linguistic journey. Additionally, the infusion of inquiry-based stimuli within the gameplay framework potentiates intellectual curiosity and deepens conceptual understanding (Urdanivia Alarcon et al., 2023). Educators encourage student interest and channel their cognitive energies towards meaningful engagement with the curriculum through thoughtfully crafted prompts and queries.

The findings gleaned from this study affirm the efficacy of Wordwall games as a potent tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and fostering holistic language development. By capitalizing on gameplay's interactive and immersive nature, educators can create a dynamic learning environment wherein students are motivated to engage with course content and cultivate enduring linguistic competencies actively. The integration of Wordwall games into the educational repertoire offers several and extensive benefits, including quick vocabulary acquisition, increased engagement, and enhanced productivity (Jannah & Syafriyadin, 2022). The previous studies also shows that innovative pedagogical approach has the potential to transform language education and enable students to flourish in an increasingly interconnected global environment through ongoing exploration and refinement (Mulyadi et al., 2023; Mulyadi, Arifani, et al., 2020; Mulyadi, Wijayatiningsih, et al., 2020).

The Improvement of Vocabulary Mastery

Using the Wordwall game to learn the vocabulary subtheme "Narrative Text" in the eighth grade of Junior High School has an effect. The findings in Table 1 show an increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. In the first cycle, the average pre-test score was 41, while the post-test score in the first cycle increased to 59. The significant value for the 2-tailed test is $0.000 < 0.05$, , indicating a significant impact of Wordwall games on vocabulary learning. This suggests a substantial impact of Wordwall games on vocabulary learning. Furthermore, Consequently, vocabulary instruction using Wordwall games in cycle I successfully improved student performance. The data can be seen in Table 1.

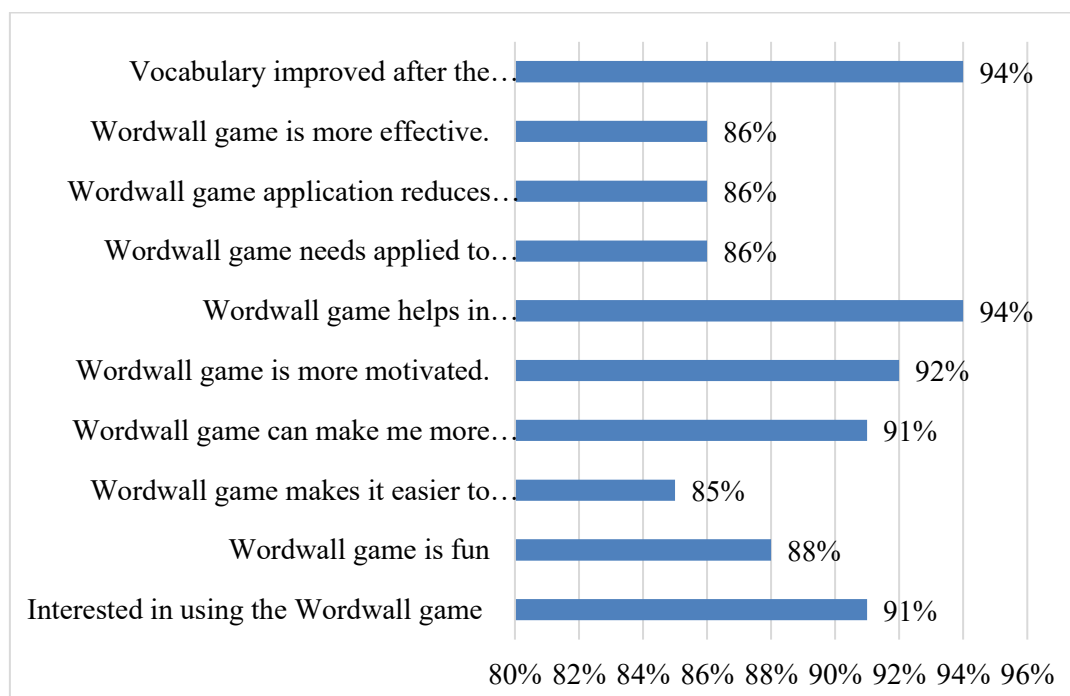
Table 1. The Impact of Wordwall Games on Vocabulary Learning

| Cycle | Test Type | Average Score | Significance Value (2-tailed) | Conclusion |
|----------|-----------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cycle I | Pre-test | 41 | 0.000 | Significant impact |
| Cycle I | Post-test | 59 | | |
| Cycle II | Pre-test | 59 | 0.000 | Significant impact |
| Cycle II | Post-test | 72 | | |

According to Table 1, cycle II indicates a critical difference between the average pre-test and post-test scores. In cycle II, the average pre-test score is 59, and the post-test score is 72, showing a higher improvement than in cycle I. Furthermore, statistical data analysis demonstrates a more significant impact, where the significance value (2-tailed) is $0.000 < 0.05$, leading to the rejection of H_0 . It shows that an even more significant impact and improvement in student scores compared to Cycle I. Additionally, Thus, it can be concluded that vocabulary teaching using Wordwall games in Cycle II successfully significantly increased student scores.

The Students' Perception of Using the Wordwall Game to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in Narrative Text

The students' perception of using Wordwall game to improve vocabulary mastery in narrative text can be seen in Figure 1. It presents nine indicators, all with high positive percentages, indicating that most students have a favorable view of the game. These indicators range from the game's effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary and reducing boredom to motivating students to be more active in class.

**Figure 1. Indicators of Students' Perception**

The Wordwall game appears to be highly effective in this educational context. 94% of students reported increased vocabulary after using the game and

felt more motivated. It suggests that Wordwall can be a valuable learning tool, especially in teaching English or other vocabulary development subjects.

The bar chart also shows that 86% of students feel that the Wordwall application reduces boredom and makes subsequent lessons more engaging. It is a strong indication that integrating technology and gamification in education can enhance student engagement and enthusiasm.

The questionnaire presented indicates that a significant number of students expressed strong agreement regarding the use of Wordwall games for learning English vocabulary. Most students find the learning process enjoyable, demonstrating positive acceptance of integrating Wordwall games into their language learning experience (Arsini et al., 2022; Çil, 2021; Hasram et al., 2021; Jannah & Syafradin, 2022). Additionally, students strongly agree that this makes learning new vocabulary easier to remember. The positive impact is not limited to enjoyment, as many students acknowledge that Wordwall games actively engage them in the learning process, creating a participative classroom environment. Furthermore, the motivational aspect of learning many new words through Wordwall games is strongly emphasized by many students, indicating this method's effectiveness in sparking their interest in expanding their vocabulary. The data also reveals that after experiencing Wordwall games, students agree that there is an increase in confidence in understanding and identifying vocabulary used in texts. This increased confidence suggests that Wordwall games not only enhance vocabulary but also improve overall language comprehension skills.

In addition, most students advocated for the continued implementation of the Wordwall game in future English materials, emphasizing their belief in the effectiveness of this approach. The reduction of boredom in the classroom was a benefit noted by students, further confirming the positive influence of the Wordwall game on the overall learning experience (Ilahi et al., 2022; Jannah & Syafradin, 2022). Therefore, when the choice of vocabulary matches their learning needs, their attitude will be positive, and vocabulary acquisition will improve (Arifani et al., 2020). Overall, the feedback from the questionnaire strongly supports the idea that the Wordwall game is perceived as an effective and fun tool for improving English vocabulary among students.

The integration of Wordwall games into the English curriculum not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also fosters a dynamic and engaging learning environment (Ilahi et al., 2022). By leveraging interactive and gamified learning modalities, educators can capitalize on students' intrinsic motivation and innate curiosity to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the English language. Additionally, the collaborative nature of Wordwall games cultivates a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among students, fostering a supportive classroom community wherein every individual is empowered to contribute and thrive. This collaborative spirit extends beyond the confines of the classroom, as students are encouraged to actively share their newfound linguistic prowess with peers and family members, reinforcing their learning and solidifying their language skills.

The seamless integration of technology into the language learning curriculum aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends and equips students with essential digital literacy skills for success in the 21st-century workforce (Mulyadi, 2018; Mulyadi, Wijayatiningsih, et al., 2020). By harnessing the power of

gamification and digital platforms, educators can transcend traditional pedagogical boundaries and unlock new avenues for student engagement and academic achievement. As such, the widespread adoption of Wordwall games stands poised to revolutionize English language education, ushering in a new era of interactive and immersive learning experiences tailored to today's learners' diverse needs.

Conclusion

The study examined the effectiveness of utilizing Wordwall game to enhance eighth-grade students' vocabulary mastery in narrative text. Through meticulous observation, it was evident that students exhibited increased engagement and attentiveness when Wordwall game was employed, leading to notable improvements in their responses to learning activities and overall learning outcomes. The attainment of predetermined success criteria in post-tests underscores the efficacy of Wordwall game as a teaching method in the eighth-grade curriculum. Insights gleaned from questionnaire analysis revealed overwhelmingly positive student perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Wordwall game in facilitating vocabulary mastery. Nearly all students concurred with the presented indicators, particularly highlighting their positive response to learning activities involving Wordwall games. Hence, it is evident that students responded favourably to this innovative teaching approach. In summary, implementing the vocabulary teaching method using Wordwall game has proven highly effective in imparting vocabulary knowledge and driving significant improvements in student learning achievements. The findings affirm not only the students' endorsement of the approach but also its alignment with the intended learning objectives, thus validating its efficacy as a pedagogical tool.

The implications for educators, students, and educational stakeholders of using Wordwall games are multifaceted. For educators, the success of Wordwall games underscores the importance of incorporating interactive and gamified elements into teaching strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers should receive professional development to effectively utilize digital tools like Wordwall in the classroom. For students, interactive learning tools such as Wordwall can make the learning process more enjoyable and effective, leading to better retention and understanding of vocabulary. Positive learning experiences fostered by these games can also improve students' attitudes towards learning and increase their intrinsic motivation. For educational stakeholders, incorporating digital tools into the curriculum aligns teaching methods with students' learning preferences and technological advancements, while investments in digital learning tools and teacher training can significantly improve educational outcomes. Practitioners are recommended to integrate Wordwall games into lesson plans, customizing the content to address specific vocabulary needs and using student feedback to continuously improve the games. Regular assessment of the games' impact on student performance is also essential. Future research should include longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of Wordwall games on vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency, comparative studies to identify best practices, and exploration of the games' applications in other subjects and grade levels to determine their broader educational potential.

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