



## EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY IN ESP CLASSES: IS IT A LEARNING TOOL OR JUST A COOL TOOL?

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### Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of health department students at State Polytechnic of Jember, Indonesia, on how effective *Wordwall* helps them to enrich their English vocabulary during online learning. The researcher used a qualitative approach. Data was collected from ten participants who were chosen based on their activeness while studying and who always participated in the teaching and learning process. It was collected through an open-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Form. The data were analysed qualitatively. It covered data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Based on the result of the present study, the researcher discovered that the students had positive perceptions towards the use of *Wordwall* and they were very enthusiastic about learning vocabulary through the application. The participants also mentioned that this app offers a variety of interactive and creative vocabulary games. On the other hand, the students found that it has The disadvantage is that this application does not provide a place for students to explain their correct and incorrect answers. The students can learn about context and sentence changes by playing games. The result of the study also revealed that *Wordwall* is an effective learning media for enriching students' vocabulary. Thus, it is suggested that lecturers should utilize this application to help their students become more motivated to learn English vocabulary.

**Keywords:** ESP students' perceptions, *Worldwall* application, Vocabulary Learning

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### INTRODUCTION

Learning in the twenty-first century is embracing ever-evolving technologies. According to Yarahmadzahi & Goodarzi (2020), computers and smartphones are now used in many aspects of human life, including business, office, school, and home. Technology is also used by English teachers as a pedagogical tool to increase their students' proficiency in English. The difference today is that people prefer to use mobile phone rather than computers. Teachers preferred mobile phones because of portability, capacity, and flexibility. They will also have no trouble giving students instructions because students frequently use their mobile phones. It is supported by Miangah & Nezarat (2012) who claimed that those properties of mobile phones help teachers to provide tools and software in learning environments. They also mentioned that compared to other wireless devices like laptop computers, mobile phones are relatively cheap and come with built-in Internet browsers in most models. Since they are so affordable, even the most underdeveloped places can afford

them. Information can now be easily sent between professors and students via mobile devices and vice versa. Unfortunately, it is undeniable that teachers in the twenty-first century still face challenges in integrating modern technology with traditional learning in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

In order to learn English, students must be able to master vocabulary that is relevant to the learning objectives. As stated by Hadijah et al. (2020), mastering vocabulary is a critical step in further improving students' ability to use language. In a traditional classroom, the teacher will easily teach vocabulary by asking students to describe something or even to memorize a large number of words. Learning that is done directly or face to face will be more interactive and enjoyable. However, students are frequently frustrated when attempting to arrange the vocabulary they have memorized into sentences (Palmer et al., 2014). Teachers are currently required to have additional media to increase students' vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, students must be able to remember as well as apply what they have learned. In order to assess students' vocabulary knowledge, the teacher must first comprehend the needs of the students during the learning process.

Teachers should adopt learning media that can aid the learning process by using online learning methods. Implementing technology in learning is taken into account to increase students' learning motivation and interaction during learning (Licorish et al., 2018; Santosa, 2017; Wang & Lieberoth, 2016). The use of modern technology in the classroom is undoubtedly a challenge for teachers, especially when it comes to using it as an effective assessment tool (Godwin-Jones, 2015). Teachers will be more helpful in the teaching and learning process with the current facilities. Because teachers and students can use smartphones in addition to laptop computers. Smartphones are also very convenient to use because they are small and portable, and they can be accessed from any location. To put it another way, students can use their smartphones to access the teacher's materials. Students' performance can be improved by incorporating smartphones into the learning process (Sharma & Unger, 2016).

*Wordwall* is one of teaching tools that can be used by teachers in the classroom. It has been used for a long time; it is a medium that displays a collection of words that are classified according to learning objectives. The words presented on the *Wordwall* will be easy for students to read and remember during face-to-face learning (Monita & Sihombing, 2015). Putting vocabulary on the classroom wall will help students remember more vocabulary. It can be interpreted as a presentation of a collection of words arranged systematically to give the appearance of the words required to compose sentences. Its use in face-to-face classes is identical, but it now employs technological sophistication. It is a cutting-edge educational media application. Researchers are increasingly interested in the use of technology media in learning, particularly in improving students' vocabulary skills (Ramadhani et al., 2019).

Previous researchers have conducted research on *Wordwall* when it was still used in a traditional way. Now, it is developed into an application that can be accessed mobile and computer. It is expected to help teachers create more engaging lessons for students. Yet, very little research has been done on the use of *Wordwall* application. To fill this void, this study investigated students' attitudes toward the use of *Wordwall* applications to improve their English vocabulary. Furthermore, the *Wordwall* application incorporates technology. Furthermore, this application incorporates technology so that it can be used during the learning process. Accordingly, this study found an increase in students' motivation to learn vocabulary.

Since it has so many features, such as interactive and printable, creating with a template, switching templates, editing any activity, themes and options, students' assignments, sharing with the teacher, and embedding on a website, the *Wordwall* application can be used to create better lessons. The researcher investigated the use of *Wordwall* as a medium for assessing students' vocabulary during online learning. According to previous research, an investigation was conducted on the implementation of *Wordwall* and the effectiveness of using media games in learning English vocabulary to make it more interactive. Previous research looked at the use of *Wordwall* on descriptive texts in junior high school, but not at the level of adult learners. The previous study looked into the use of the *Wordwall* application in traditional or face-to-face classes, whereas the current study looked into the use of the *Wordwall* application in online classes. As a result, the present study was aimed to: (1) investigate students' perception towards the use of *Wordwall* applications during online learning, (2) find out whether *Wordwall* can boost students' motivation in learning vocabulary. This study would be beneficial to readers, especially in terms of interesting media for learning English.

## METHOD

The researcher employed descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is presented descriptively through data interpretation. The data were all qualitative in nature, with no numerical information. It presented social phenomena, perceptions, and problems from the perspective of students. The phenomenon investigated in this study was students' attitudes toward the use of the *Wordwall* application to expand their vocabulary. The subjects were chosen by the researcher using selection. The researcher observed the subjects on a daily basis in class in order to select the appropriate subjects. After having the observation, ten health department students taking Intermediate English Course were selected. They were selected for their activeness, involvement, and participation during the learning process.

The first step in data collection was identifying the necessary information so that research questions could be answered. The first step in data collection was identifying the information needed to answer research questions. The purpose of this study was to find out students' perception towards *Wordwall* during online learning and to know whether *Wordwall* can boost students' motivation in learning vocabulary. An open-ended questionnaire derived from Hutchinson and Waters' theory (1987) was employed in the present study, enabling the researcher to set priory criteria for data analysis while remaining open to unexpected meanings. Also, Mackey and Gas (2005) mention that the benefits of open-ended questionnaire are that they allow respondents to express their own ideas in their own way, which may produce more surprising and insightful data. The open-ended questionnaire was administered in order to obtain more detailed information about students' perceptions

Table 1 displayed the guideline of the questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire were chosen to reflect the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was created with Google Form. Additionally, distributing questionnaires assisted students in conveying their impressions or interest in using *Wordwall*. In more detail, the question referred to the participants' experience with *Wordwall*, their enthusiasm, and how *Wordwall* helped them enrich their vocabulary. The students' vocabulary improvement was investigated and described through the discussion using the results of the students' answers collected after implementing *Wordwall*. The question number 4 in the questionnaire reflected how the students manifested their motivation in learning vocabulary through the *Wordwall* application.

**Table 1. Guideline of the Questionnaire**

No.	Questions
1	What makes it difficult for you to recall English vocabulary?
2	Do you think learning English through game media is enjoyable? Explain!
3	Can you be motivated while learning if you use media and games?
4	What are your thoughts on using the <i>Wordwall</i> application to improve your English vocabulary?
5	Can you describe what you like and dislike about the <i>Wordwall</i> application?

The collected data is analyzed qualitatively. The data analysis process includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. It is consistent with Creswell's (2008) who claimed that a narrative discussion is the primary format for presenting and summarizing findings in qualitative research. A narrative discussion is a written passage in a qualitative study in which authors summarize the findings of their data analysis in detail.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the research elaborated the data that was found through questionnaire. Based on the result of the questionnaire, it is found that most of the students faced difficulties, namely remembering vocabulary that changed depending on its use. As a result, it is critical for teachers to pay attention to gaps in their students' learning vocabulary and to assist them with incidental words from the topics studied (da Silva et al. 2021). They mentioned that it was hard for them to recall vocabulary since there were lots of words that they needed to master.

*“The spelling and the time that we've used it make it difficult for me to remember English vocabulary.”*

It is in line with Silarova (2011) who inform that Students had difficulty remembering how words changed depending on when they were used. Furthermore, students almost never practiced using new vocabulary. Meanwhile, students would encounter a plethora of new vocabulary in a variety of contexts. According to Hadijah et al. (2020), students frequently encountered obstacles while learning vocabulary. using the right vocabulary assisted students in creating sentences and improved students' ability to apply it to sentences. Meanwhile, students struggled to remember and comprehend the meanings of numerous vocabularies.

Yet, they had positive perceptions of the *Wordwall* application. The use of games and media helps students think faster and more enthusiastically, and it helps them memorize vocabulary easily. Additionally, the *Wordwall* application was very enjoyable to use. This application gave students the opportunity to improve their English vocabulary knowledge. Particularly interesting questions, clear instructions, and contextual types of questions that help students remember. This also influenced students' readiness to respond, as they needed to understand the steps to answer questions in games in the *Wordwall* application.

*“Yes, it is a lot of fun, and I enjoy it. Learning to use game media excites me to study.”*

*“Yes, because if you do something that people enjoy, such as a game, they will easily understand.”*

*“This is extremely appealing. Wordwall not only provides clear instructions, but it also helps our brain remember the correct vocabulary.”*

This is consistent with the findings of Rueb et al. (2018), who discovered that the use of games and learning media can create interactive and meaningful learning processes. As a result, learning becomes more effective. A successful learning process demonstrated that the learning was carried out optimally. It can be concluded that the use of games or media can create a fun learning environment to alleviate the boredom of learning English. Hence, teachers must take into account the importance of providing learning media that meets the needs of students.

Besides having positive perception towards the use of *Wordwall* application, most of the students generally agree that using *Wordwall* application as a learning medium can certainly motivate them to learn vocabulary. It made them easily remember vocabularies since they enjoyed doing it.

“Yes, because it's enjoyable”

*“I believe it can provide motivation for learning some vocabulary.”*

This is consistent with Kahar et al., (2021) research, which found that *Wordwall* applications are very beneficial to students' vocabulary knowledge in English. Students can achieve learning objectives if they do so through activities they enjoy. In addition, learning media is another important tool that can help students learn vocabulary. To keep students' attention, teachers frequently incorporate games into their lessons. Some researchers agree that using games in learning provides a rich and engaging language learning experience (Plonsky & Ziegler, 2016; Reinhardt, 2017). Chen et al., (2021) also mentioned that using games to learn vocabulary improves learning over the traditional method of using textbooks. According to Rueb et al. (2018), incorporating games in vocabulary learning provides students with not only pleasure or learning satisfaction but also pedagogical benefits that can complement and improve their vocabulary knowledge, particularly in foreign languages. Educational games are one type of game that can help students learn (Shofiyani & Sholihah, 2021). It is just that educators must be able to readjust to students' learning needs. Furthermore, in the context of education, a student's satisfaction leads to a sense of willingness and freedom for students to express themselves, as well as the opportunity to be heard in order to achieve learning goals. Teachers can help students improve their motivation and enthusiasm for learning by incorporating games.

Though the result of the present study mentioned that the students had positive perceptions towards the use of word wall application and it could boost the students' motivation in learning vocabulary, the students also gave feedback on the utilization of *Wordwall* application. It cannot be denied that each medium has advantages and disadvantages. Students responded and gave feedback by stating what they like about *Wordwall* and what they dislike about it. They mentioned that *Wordwall* provides games to help students remember vocabulary, but they must answer more quickly and precisely. Their complaint was that they require time to think in order to respond appropriately. In addition, it requires a strong internet connection, so it can be used to answer questions without a hitch.

*“I enjoy it because it is entertaining; however, I believe that I should think faster before the monster kills me.”*

*“Yes, I can. What I like about this Wordwall application is that it is very interesting and fun to use. What I don't like about this application is that it can be difficult to control at times.”*

Teachers must assist students in compiling cognitive schemas through their learning experiences in order to achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently (Francom, 2018). The teacher must adjust the topic selection, the level of difficulty, and the use of templates when implementing the *Wordwall* application. One of the student complaints is the template from the game used; however, the teacher can adjust the template to the type of topic because the application has many interesting templates. This application can greatly assist teachers in developing practice questions, which are packaged in interesting templates on this app.

In other words, teachers must be able to embrace students' desire to learn more about technology in order for them to become an active generation in technological development. Furthermore, the incorporation of game applications in vocabulary learning provides teachers with insight that can be used as guides in developing games that are appropriate for their students' perceptions of using needs (Hasram et al., 2021). Students will be more interested in the lessons they are doing as a result of this. Teachers can use the *Wordwall* application in classroom, online, or blended learning settings.

*Wordwall* application is also effective at all levels of vocabulary learning (Ismiyati & Saputri, 2020) as students frequently struggle with writing due to a lack of vocabulary and concept use (Darliani & Agustina, 2019). It is recommended that future research incorporate the types of game applications that can be used to learn vocabulary. The students' development progress in mastering English vocabulary can be seen although it will take some time to see how far students have come in their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, designing games for lessons must adhere to the curriculum in order to achieve learning objectives.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the findings of the present study, the students had positive perceptions towards the use of *Wordwall* for expanding their English vocabulary. This was due to the fact that *Wordwall* could increase students' creativity in expressing their opinions, increase their learning motivation, and help them stay focused on accelerating the thought process, provided them with the opportunity to know more vocabulary through selected game features, and kept them active in learning.

By incorporating games or educational media into lessons, it can impact student learning effectiveness. It provides students with not only pleasure or learning satisfaction but also pedagogical benefits that can complement and improve their vocabulary knowledge, particularly in foreign languages. Educational games are one type of game that can help students learn vocabulary easily. These findings suggest that ESP lecturers use *Wordwall* application to teach students the registers they need to participate effectively in their workplaces. Even though the study provided evidence that *Wordwall* can help students learn vocabulary, teachers must still adjust the level of difficulty and choose appropriate topics to use *Wordwall* application. Additionally, it is suggested that future researchers conduct additional research to examine the effectiveness of using *Wordwall* application to teach vocabulary in ESP contexts.

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