



The Integration of Word Wall Media to Improve EFL Students' Vocabulary Mastery at Junior High School Pulau Morotai

Megawati Basri¹, Dwi Budidarma Sutrisno²

^{1,2} English Education Study Program, Universitas Pasifik Morotai, Pulau Morotai, Maluku
Utara

Corresponding E-Mail: Megawatibasri065@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of word wall media on students' vocabulary acquisition in English at Junior High School. It can be a practical and effective strategy for educators to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition in English, as it provides visual reinforcement and promotes active engagement with new words in the classroom. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a quasi-experimental design with qualitative interviews—the number of participants of this study (N=40, 20 per group). The experimental group's vocabulary scores significantly improved from a pretest mean of 30.95 to a posttest mean of 51.60. The control group, on the other hand, which employed conventional methods, showed only a slight improvement, from 39.00 to 40.15. An independent sample t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t(38) = -4.170$, $p < .001$), with a mean difference of -20.650 and a 95% confidence interval of -30.675 to -10.625. According to Levene's test, equal variances were met ($p = .139$), ensuring the validity of the analysis. The qualitative data, analyzed thematically, supported the quantitative findings. Student interviews revealed two main themes: (1) increased multimodal learning awareness, and (2) enhanced motivation driven by the gamification features of the word wall. Students reported higher engagement and enthusiasm during the learning session that incorporated the word wall media. In conclusion, the integration of word wall media significantly improves vocabulary acquisition and supports active, motivated learning. These findings suggest that word walls are a useful and engaging teaching tool for vocabulary in English classroom.

Keywords: Word Wall Media; Vocabulary Acquisition; Gamification Features; Pulau Morotai

Introduction

Mastery of English as an international language has become an essential skill in preparing a globally competitive generation. One important aspect of English literacy is vocabulary mastery. Students will struggle to understand text content, construct sentences, and communicate English effectively without adequate vocabulary knowledge. At the Junior High School level, English learning aims to help students achieve a functional level of proficiency -enabling them to communicate orally and in writing to address everyday situations.

However, many students still face difficulties in using English appropriately, both in spoken and written contexts. Preliminary observations and vocabulary assessments at SMP Negeri 18 Pulau Morotai, located in Morotai Island Regency, have become the focus of this research. Many students still face obstacles and challenges in expanding their English vocabulary, which in turn affects their ability to speak, write, and read in English. Considering the low level of English vocabulary mastery, particularly among students at SMP N 18 Pulau Morotai, the school located in an underdeveloped area, face additional challenges, such as limited exposure to English and a lack of engaging learning media. If these issues remain unaddressed, students will continue to lag behind in achieving in the English language competencies required by the MERDEKA Curriculum and national educations. Therefore, identifying and implementing effective learning strategies- such as the use of word wall media – is essential to supports students' vocabulary development and improve their overall English proficiency.

Mastery of English vocabulary is a key determinant of students' ability to speak, write, and read effectively in English. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for all language skills, enabling learners to comprehend texts, express ideas, and engage in meaningful communication. According to Rohmatin (2023) many people realize that their vocabulary is very limited, making it difficult to express their ideas, thought, and opinions. To make it easier for children to learn a language, it is necessary to understand vocabulary as an essential part of the language learning process. Thus, individuals need to master and continuously improve their language skills. Similarly, Oktaviani and Yanti (2022) report that students who did not master vocabulary were confused in their learning because they had difficulty answering questions from the teacher and giving ideas about the material that they were discussing. These findings underscore the centrality of vocabulary mastery in achieving communicative competence in English.

To address these challenges, numerous techniques have been developed to improve vocabulary learning outcomes. Hartatiningsih (2022) highlight many techniques are commonly used to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. One of them is the use of word wall media. Word wall media is expected to help students understand vocabulary without relying on dictionaries or the word meanings

provided by the teacher. This method applies an interactive learning approach, enabling students to follow and develop through the training program. It also encourages students to think actively and creatively consistently. A word wall is a collection of systematically organized vocabulary displayed in large letters and posted on the classroom wall. It is a learning medium that should be displayed or seen and actively used.

In addition to traditional classroom displays, the digital word wall platform (wordwall.net) extends this concept through interactive and printable activities accessible via web-enabled devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones. (Haq et al., 2021; Agustina *et al*, 2023). This platform enables teachers to guide learning session or allow students to participate independently, promoting collaborative as well as self-directed learning. Swari (2023) further notes that the implementation of word wall media can foster reading interest and enhance vocabulary acquisition through active student involvement.

Despite these positive findings, a research gap remains. Previous studies have predominantly explored the general effectiveness of word wall media in vocabulary learning or its application in urban and resource-rich educational setting. However, limited attention has been given to its implementation in underdeveloped areas, where exposure to English and access to learning resources are often constrained. Moreover, few studies have empirically examined the impact of word wall media on students' vocabulary acquisition within the specific context of Indonesian Junior High Schools in remote regions. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the effect of word wall media on students' English vocabulary mastery at SMP Negeri 18 Pulau Morotai.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of word wall media in improving students' mastery of English vocabulary and to identify the specific benefits of its use for students' language development at the Junior High School level.

Method

Research design

This study employed mixed-method research, as it combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects. According to Rashid (2022) mixed-method research is an investigative approach that collects both quantitative and qualitative data, integrates the two data types, and employs various designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks.

Specifically, this study adopted a quasi-experimental design involving two groups: one experimental and one control group (Arib *et al*, 2024). The quantitative component involved a pretest and post-test, used to measure students' vocabulary

achievement before and after the intervention. Suharsimi (2006) a test is a set of questions or exercises plus additional resources meant to assess an individual's or a group's knowledge, skills, abilities, or talents.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data is collected through a qualitative descriptive approach using interviews then analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The integration of these two strands provided both measurable outcomes and contextual insight into the learning experience.

Participant and Sampling

This research has been carried out at SMP Negeri 18, Morotai Island regency. The sample was 40, divided equally into two groups of 20: the experimental group and control group. A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. Two existing intact classes at the school were chosen based on their comparable average English achievement scores and teacher recommendations.

Instruments

Two main instruments were used in this study:

1. Vocabulary Test: the quantitative data were obtained through pre-test and post-test, 40 fill-in-the-blank, matching items, and countable and uncountable questions.
2. Interview Guide: The qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured guide designed to explore students' experiences and attitudes toward learning vocabulary using digital tools (word wall media)

Data Collection Technique

Data collection occurred in three stages:

1. Pre-Test: The experimental and control groups took a vocabulary pre-test to assess their initial proficiency levels.
2. Treatment: Over a period of seven meetings, only the experimental group received the instruction enhanced by Word Wall activities, while the control group followed the traditional method. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes.
3. Post-Test and Interview Stage: After the treatment, both groups completed the same vocabulary test as a post-test. All of the students from the experimental group participated in interviews to provide qualitative feedback.

Detailed Treatment Description

The treatment spanned seven meetings, and the activities included: Matching games (word-to-definition), find the word (quizzes), find the Match

(matching words with contextual clues and synonyms), and Anagram (rearranging letters to form target words). While the control group received material through a conventional teaching method using the same textbook and materials as the experimental. No digital tools or interactive games were incorporated into the control group's lesson. Following the seven meetings, both groups completed the post-test under identical conditions. Subsequently, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students from the experimental group to explore their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of the word wall in vocabulary learning.

Data Analysis Technique

This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative analyses to address the research questions, aligning with its mixed-method approach. Quantitative data from pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 22. Qualitative data derived from the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The final stage analysis involved the integration of both data strands. Quantitative results provided measurable evidence of learning gains, while qualitative insight explained students' experiences and attitudes toward the word-wall-based instruction. This triangulation strengthened the overall interpretation of findings and allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the treatment's effectiveness.

Results

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of using word wall media by comparing the scores of the experimental and control groups. Scores from Pre-test and Post-Test were analyzed quantitatively through the Descriptive Statistics Test and the Independent t-Test. The data from the interview were analyzed qualitatively through thematic analysis to find the patterns in participants' answers.

Descriptive Statistic Test (Quantitative)

Table 1. Descriptive Test

Group	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-Test Experimental	6	62	30.95	13.547
Post-test Experimental	8	75	51.60	17.521
Pre Test Control	8	64	39.00	14.386
Post Test Control	20	65	40.15	12.675
Total N	20			

The objective of descriptive statistics provides a clear indication of changes

in students' outcomes before and after the treatment. In the experimental group, the result indicates a substantial improvement in performance following the treatment. The mean pre-test score was 30.95 (SD=13.547), which increased to 51.60 (SD=17.251) in the post-test. This increase of over 20 points suggests that the treatment had a significant positive impact on student learning outcomes. Additionally, the increase in standard deviation implies that while most students improved, the extent of improvement varied among participants. Conversely, the control group displayed relatively stable performance. The mean score rose slightly from 39.00 (SD=14.386) in the pre-test to 40.15 (SD=12.675) in the post-test.

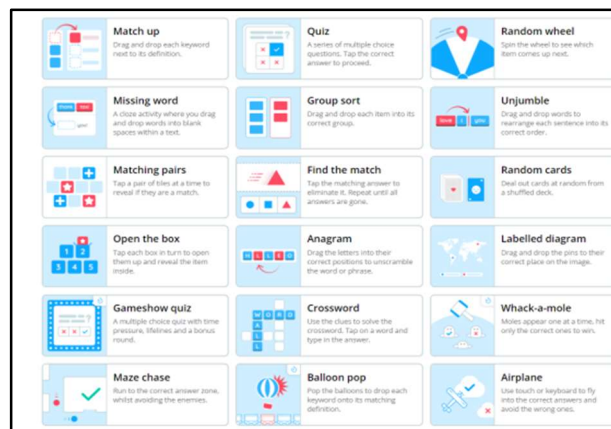


Figure 1. Word wall template

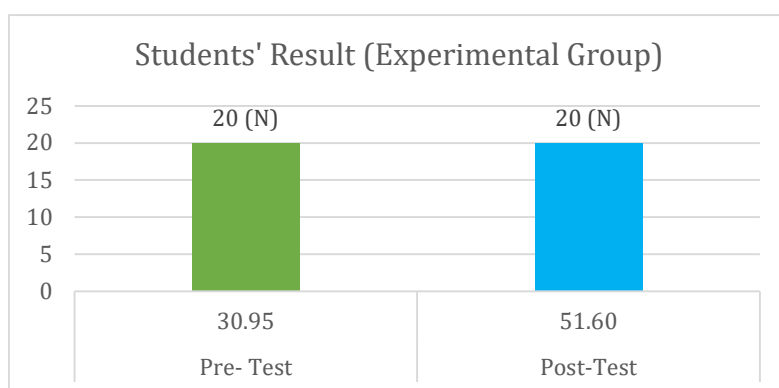
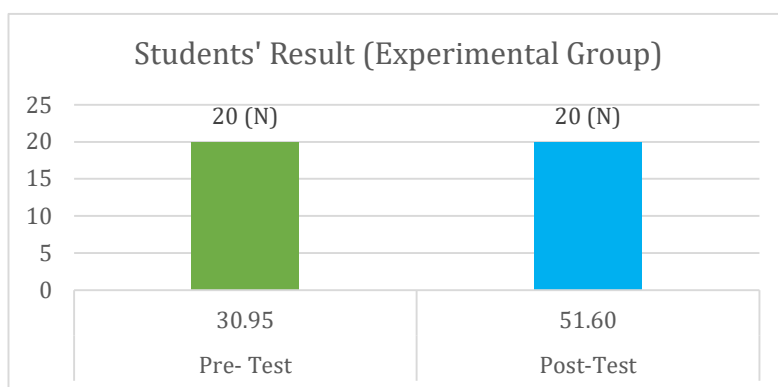
Independent t-Test (Quantitative)

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant. Prior to this, Levene's test for Equality of variances was performed.

Table 2. Comparison of the Means by Independent t-Test

Test Type	F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error difference
Equal variances assumed	2.288	0.139	-4.170	38	0.000	-20.650	4.952
Equal variances not assumed			-4.170	35.736	0.000	-20.650	4.952

The result of Levene's test indicates that the assumption of equal of variances was used for interpretation. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with a value of -4.1970, degrees of freedom (df) = 38, and two-tailed significance (p) value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). the mean difference between the experimental and control group was -20.65, indicating that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -30.675 to -10.625, which does not include zero, further confirming the statistical of the result. These findings suggest that the treatment (using a word wall) applied to the experimental group had a substantial, statistically significant positive effect on students' performance compared to the control group.



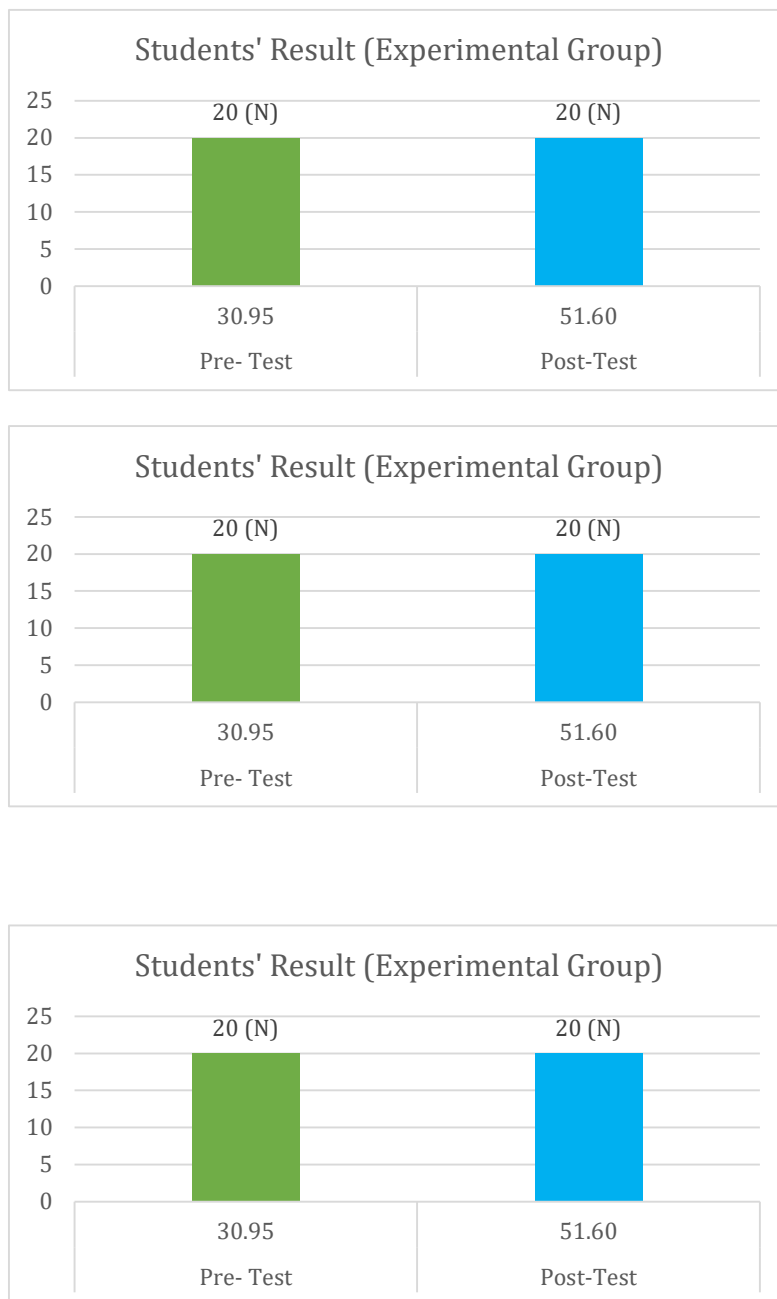


Figure 2. Students' Result

The chart shows the average student score in the experimental group (using word wall). There is a noticeable increase from the pre-test (mean=30.95) to the post-test (51.60), indicating a positive impact of using word wall media.

Thematic Analysis from Interview (Qualitative)

Multimodality Awareness

Throughout the interview with students as participants within the context of current research, it has been found that multimodality is one of the most common patterns. Students admitted that their experience with word wall media during the six class meetings has been excellent due to the application's heavily multimodal nature. In other words, using word wall media allows combining multiple modes of pictures and sounds to enhance comprehension.

When asked about the overall experience during the seven class meetings regarding learning vocabulary using Word wall media, BYH said, "Senang karena ada gambar," which translates into English as "I'm happy because there are pictures." It indicates participants' excitement and awareness of what makes them feel that way during the learning process.

Another research participant was also asked a similar question. EM responded that "Senang pakai gambar hewan dan buah" translates into English as "Happy for using pictures about animals and fruits." This particular answer is more elaborate since it highlights the pictures and provides more information about the images in the form of animals and fruits, as discussed during the class lessons.

When asked what the favourite part was during the seven class meetings, JM said "Bisa lihat gambar", translated into English as "Can see the pictures". It means that even if the question was changed, the answer remained the same, sticking to the topic and patterns of multimodality. It also shows that immediate answers to questions related to their opinion and questions about their likes from the exposure to the vocabulary learning process with Wordwall lead to the same conclusion on multimodality.

When asked the same question about what they liked the most, more different respondents confirmed the topic of multimodality. AVH said, "Bisa lihat gambar, warna, video percakapan," which is translated into English as "Can see the pictures, colors, and conversation video." This answer can be seen as more elaborate because while previous participants only mentioned pictures, this one adds videos as well.

Motivated by Gamification

The interview also discussed gamification. Students felt excited not only because pictures and games were involved. In other words, the involvement of games during the class meetings enhanced students' motivation to learn and engage throughout the learning process. It is important to note that motivation is integral to assessing the success of students' learning journeys.

When asked to recall her memory and retell her experience, BYH said, "Saya

senang belajar karena bisa bermain games bisa tahu nama hewan," which can be translated into English as, "I'm happy to learn because I can play games to get to know animals in English." She was not only invested in learning about animals in English but also motivated to learn about the topic because games were involved during the class meeting.

BYH answered the question about the experience with pictures as spontaneous responses within the previous section, talking about multimodality awareness. Another participant, SS, somehow revealed different responses when asked the same question. She said, "Seru jawab pertanyaan tentang hewan karena ada gambar," which translates to English as "Excited to answer the questions about animals because there are pictures". It means two central topics are being raised, the pictures and the feelings of excitement of simple games, which require students to answer teachers' questions about the animals' vocabulary.

When asked to recall her memory and retell her experience, BYH said, "Saya senang belajar karena bisa bermain games bisa tahu nama hewan," which can be translated into English as "I'm happy to learn because I can play games and get to know animals in English." These answers suggest that BYH has shifted from multimodality to gamification.

When asked what their favourite part was during the six class meetings, several participants shared similar responses and answers, focusing particularly on games. WS said, "Bermain game tebak kata dan tebak gambar," which can be translated into English as "Playing a guessing game of words and pictures."

HB said, "Main game," translated into English as "Playing game."

KOS said, "Bisa bermain tebak-tebakan," translated into English as "Can play a guessing game."

RH said, "Menebak nama hewan," which translates into English as "Guessing the names of animals."

YG said, "Saya senang karena ada permainan tebak-tebak nama hewan," which translates to English as "I'm Happy because there is a guessing game of animal names."

Discussion

The Improvement of students' vocabulary by using word wall media

Based on the descriptive test, the experimental group, which received the treatment using a word wall media, showed a notable increase in their mean score from 30.95 in the pre-test to 51.60 in the post-test. Contrary, the control group, which was taught using conventional methods, only showed a slight improvement from 39.00 to 40.15. These findings suggest the word wall platform contributed significantly to students' vocabulary mastery. Further statistical analysis using an independent sample t-test confirmed these differences. The t-test result ($t(38) =$

4.170, $p < .001$) indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with the mean difference being -20.650 and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -30.675 to -10.625. Levene's test for Equality of variances was insignificant ($p = .139$), indicating that the assumptions of equal variances were met and that the t -test results are valid.

In conclusion, integrating a word wall media as a visual and interactive learning tool significantly increased students' vocabulary acquisition. The improvement in the experimental group's performance provides strong evidence that a word wall media is an effective medium to support vocabulary learning in the EFL Classroom. Word-wall activities improved students' vocabulary achievement, aligning with multiple recent studies that report positive learning gains and increased engagement when word-wall is integrated into vocabulary instruction. For example, Hartatiningsih's (2022) classroom action research reported notable gains in students' mastery of targeted pronouns after word wall media implementation. Rohmatin's study similarly concluded that word-wall game activities increased Junior secondary students' mastery of vocabulary ability in descriptive-text topics. The quasi-experimental and pre-experimental studies (e.g., Dwiningrum et al., 2024) have also reported statistically significant gains and large effect sizes for word-wall treatments. Meanwhile, a qualitative finding (students reporting higher motivation, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness) mirror what Swari (2023) and several more recent studies have documented: word wall media not only supports measurable vocabulary gains but also increases students' interest in reading and general engagement with the material

Students' enhanced learning process engagement with word wall media

Referring to thematic analysis based on the interviews with the students as the research participants, integrating word wall media during the class meetings has been successful. Students' improved engagement in the learning process can be observed through their responses when answering the interview questions. Two major patterns are 1) Multimodality awareness and 2) Motivation from gamification during the interviews.

Students admittedly experienced joyful learning caused by using word wall media that supports pictures, sounds, and videos, making it multimodal. These are some things they did not usually encounter during their regular classes. The students were aware that they enjoyed the classes and acknowledged and elaborated on why they felt the classes were more enjoyable. Most of the students keep mentioning that they liked pictures and colors.

Moreover, students were also more motivated to learn the vocabulary lessons because games were included. It is the influence of gamification, when a

regular learning process is enhanced and more interactive because the lessons are intentionally and purposefully integrated with games. It is possible because word wall media is not only multimodal but also playful.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This study's result demonstrates that word wall media significantly improves students' English vocabulary compared to the traditional method. The statistical evidence supports a notable improvement in student performance within the experimental group. In comparison, qualitative data shows increased motivation and engagement due to the visual, interactive, and gamified elements. These results indicate that integrating word wall media into lessons supports vocabulary learning and creates a more engaging, student-focused learning environment. Thus, educators encourage adopting this media as a part of their teaching practice to improve vocabulary acquisition and student participation.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the expanding discourse on multimodal and constructivist frameworks in second language acquisition. It substantiates the premise that visual and interactive tools facilitate deeper cognitive processing and more robust lexical retention. The finding also extends theories of motivation and engagement by illustrating how gamified and collaborative learning experiences can promote sustained attention and active participation, thereby enhancing linguistic outcomes. In doing so, the study bridges cognitive and affective dimensions of vocabulary learning, highlighting the pedagogical potential of multimodal instructional design.

The practical implications of these findings are equally noteworthy. Educators are encouraged to integrate word wall media into their instructional repertoire as evidence-based strategy for vocabulary development. The flexibility of both physical and digital formats allows for adaptation across varying classroom contexts and learning preferences. Despite its valuable contributions, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The research was conducted within a specific educational setting and involved a limited participant cohort, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. And future research, is therefore warranted to examine the applicability of word wall media across diverse educational contexts, age group, and proficiency level.

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