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Exploring the Effect of WordWall-Based Gamification Strategies in Increasing English Vocabulary
[Mengeksplorasi Pengaruh Strategi Gamifikasi Berbasis WordWall dalam Meningkatkan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris]

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Abstract. This study aims the effect of a Wordwall-based gamification strategy in improving English vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. This study used a quantitative approach using a one-group pretest-posttest experimental design. Participants included 22 seventh-grade students selected based on academic readiness and engagement. Data were collected through vocabulary tests administered before and after the intervention. Statistical analysis, including paired sample t-tests. The results of this study revealed that learning with gamification strategies using Wordwall media was able to significantly improve students' English vocabulary (Sig. (2-tailed) 0.00 < 0.05). The findings in this study showed an increase in students' English vocabulary mastery after being given intervention. It was concluded that the use of Wordwall was effective in improving students' vocabulary.
Keywords - Gamification, Wordwall, Learning Media

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh strategi gamifikasi berbasis Wordwall dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa sekolah menengah pertama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan menggunakan desain eksperimen pretest-posttest satu kelompok. Partisipan terdiri dari 22 siswa kelas tujuh yang dipilih berdasarkan kesiapan dan keterlibatan akademik. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kosakata yang diberikan sebelum dan sesudah intervensi. Analisis statistik, termasuk uji-t sampel berpasangan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran dengan strategi gamifikasi menggunakan media Wordwall mampu meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa secara signifikan (Sig. (2-tailed) 0.00 < 0,05). **Hasil** penelitian ini **menunjukkan** adanya peningkatan **penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa** setelah diberikan intervensi. Disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan Wordwall efektif dalam meningkatkan kosakata siswa.
Kata Kunci - Gamifikasi, Wordwall, Media Pembelajaran

1. I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. Recently, rapid progress in educational technology has led to a rise in the popularity and effectiveness of mobile applications for language learning . The rise of contemporary technological tools and their use in schools has put pressure on the efficiency of conventional teaching methods, approaches, and systems to address evolving educational requirements . The use of digital technology which is currently increasingly advanced and developing means that teachers need to design learning media that are fun and needed by students . The real condition that occurs is that teacher performance is decreasing over time so that innovation in learning models/strategies is rarely carried out and this causes their duties as educators to not be optimal so that in carrying out their duties this has an impact on low learning outcomes . Enhancing educational standards calls for fresh approaches that align with current advancements. Teachers need to be imaginative in using various teaching resources to keep students engaged and prevent them from losing interest, particularly in learning English.

1. The curriculum in Indonesia requires English to be one of the mandatory languages to learn because English is an international language Improving educational quality requires new methods that match modern progress. Educators should be creative in utilizing different teaching materials to maintain student interest and avoid disengagement, especially in studying English . Vocabulary stands as a crucial component of any language that needs to be fully understood. Insufficient mastery of vocabulary significantly impacts language abilities, not just in English but in any language, since the four essential skills required for learning depend heavily on a firm grasp of vocabulary . English learning, especially vocabulary mastery, is often a challenge for students. One issue that arises is the varying levels of students' vocabulary skills, which includes mistakes in spelling, pronunciation, and selecting appropriate words for both writing and speaking. The problems experienced by students are not only difficulties in understanding learning materials, but also lack of active participation and difficulty concentrating during the learning process. One of the causes is the limited use of technology-based supporting media that makes learning less interesting and interactive. In connection to the necessity of vocabulary education, enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition is crucial. This is because vocabulary learning should not be limited to the classroom; students need to apply their skills outside of it, and they must create strategies for their own vocabulary growth . This can be overcome by implementing innovative learning media.

The use of learning media must be adjusted to the characteristics and learning styles of students with the aim of helping students understand the learning process . **The characteristics of students in** learning tend to be through **a fun approach such as playing** . Games are one of the strategies applied in the learning process, because basically the learning process requires a fun situation . The use of games is a learning medium so that students can learn more creatively. Engaging in educational activities through play is an effective approach to boost students' participation in a pleasurable manner and can enhance their thinking, interpersonal, emotional, and imaginative skills .

- The choice of media is influenced by the teaching method, and conversely the media chosen will influence the appropriate method . One approach that can be utilized to assist this is gamification. Gamification refers to a learning technique inspired by games that incorporates game design features in a situation that isn't a game to gain knowledge and abilities . **Gamification involves incorporating game elements into non-game contexts to** increase engagement and motivation, while games are structured activities with specific rules and goals. In the ever-evolving educational landscape, innovative approaches are continually sought to enhance the learning experience and student engagement . In more detail defines gamification as an idea that incorporates game elements, appealing designs, and game-like thought processes to captivate individuals, inspire actions, foster education, and address challenges. Gamification offers extra encouragement to make sure that students (learners) are involved in comprehensive learning experiences . Regarding education, gamification refers to the incorporation of game features into the design of learning across various areas and subjects, focusing on engaging, teamwork, and self-directed methods . Teachers start the learning process by selecting or designing games that are appropriate to the learning material, such as quizzes, puzzles, flashcards, crosswords, spin the wheel, complete the sentence, or other interactive activities. In this study, the teacher applied a speaking cards, labelled diagram, and complete the sentence design to match some pictures with vocabulary. During the learning process, students are invited to actively participate by completing the challenges in the game, either individually or in groups. The game is designed to increase engagement and reinforce understanding of the material. After the game is over, the teacher provides feedback and reminds students about the results of the game with the concepts that have been learned. With this gamification strategy, learning becomes more interesting and effective.

Based on the pre-observation conducted by the researcher at the junior high school, the VII grade English teacher teaches in 3 classes, two specialization classes called VII - ICO class which gets additional subjects, especially English and VII - DA'I get additional Arabic language subjects, and one regular class called VII - A class only gets general subjects, no additional subjects. Researchers will conduct research in class VII - A because students experience a lack of grades, especially in English subjects. In addition, students of class VII-A have never experienced this Gamification approach in their educational materials, focusing only on books and the role of teacher communication. Teachers have been relying on Quizizz and Flashcard game tools, but only in specialization classes that do get more subjects, so that students often get teaching with technology-based media.

Based on the background above, the researcher was inspired to find out the use of one of the gamification strategies in learning as an effort to provide solutions to teacher problems in teaching and learning. The selection of educational games used is a website that is rarely seen but has many benefits in making learning meaningful. This learning website can be recommended for student learning so that it is not monotonous and more enjoyable.

Students can learn vocabulary based on more topics in class called Wordwall. One effective tool for improving students' vocabulary mastery is Wordwall . The use of Wordwall is suitable for students in teaching vocabulary and provides solutions for teachers' teaching and learning activities . Wordwall is an educational entertainment website that provides various games . Wordwall has many templates, types, and models. Games that can be made according to needs, some types of templates include puzzles, quizzes, riddles, and many more . By implementing Wordwall, students can memorize vocabulary without feeling too serious in learning. Through habits such as looking at Wordwall, they indirectly remember the vocabulary .

There are several previous studies related on the topic being investigated, employing gamification methods using Wordwall as learning media. Research by aims to improve the vocabulary skills of seventh-grade students studying English related to descriptive writing by using educational games from Wordwall at MTsN. Research by aims to evaluate the effectiveness of game-based wordwall resources in enhancing the indonesian vocabulary skills of fourth-grade learners in primary schools. Research by examines the effectiveness of media in improving the comprehension of science vocabulary among third-grade students at SLB. Previous studies focused on specific categories of vocabulary, such as descriptive text, scientific terms, or even Indonesian words. In contrast. The focus in this study is on general vocabulary mastery in English Junior High School. The purpose of this study is to identify the progress made before and after the introduction of gamification method in Wordwall online learning platform to improve vocabulary skills in English for Junior School students.

B. Research Question

How effect the use of Wordwall-based gamification strategies improve English vocabulary mastery among junior high school students?

2. II. Method

1. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with **a pre-experimental** one group pretest-posttest design. This quantitative approach is applied to identify the formulation of the problem based on the relationship between the variables that have been determined. In accordance with the objectives of the study, the pre-experimental design was chosen to explore the causal relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables that affect the final results.

By using the one group pretest posttest type, **said that one group pretest-posttest design is a research activity** that gives an **initial test (pretest) before being given treatment, after being given treatment, then gives a final test (posttest). The** use of this design is adjusted **to** the objectives to **be achieved, namely** focusing on one group, implementing interventions, and measuring the results before and after in the absence of a control group. After seeing this definition, **it can be concluded that the results of the treatment can be known more accurately because it can compare with the situation** before treatment.

Table 1. Data Collection Design

Learning media Web WorldWall → X →

notes:

O1: Pretest

X: Treatment with the Wordwall method

O2: Posttest

In this design, the test was conducted twice, namely before and after the experimental treatment. The pretest is given to the experimental class (O1). After the pretest will be given treatment in the form of learning using the Wordwall method (X), at the final stage will be given a posttest (O2).

2. Research Variables

In this study, the Wordwall-based gamification strategy is the independent variable and the increase in English vocabulary is the dependent variable. The explanation is that the Wordwall learning application is a media that can help students in attracting attention in learning. Meanwhile, to improve English vocabulary, an assessment will be given in the form of a test regarding the main idea of the material.

3. Research Participants

The participants of this study were seventh grade students. There are a total of 3 VII classes in the school, namely the specialization class VII-ICO, VII-DA'I, and the regular class VII-A, with a total of about 37 students. The sample of this study was the regular class VII-A consisting of 22 students who were selected based on the teacher's recommendation, because this class experienced a lack of grades, especially English grades, so that in accordance with the research objectives, English lessons, especially vocabulary, were still low due to the lack of use of learning media to improve student learning outcomes.

4. Data Collection Technique

In this study, the procedure to assess the effect of using wordwall as a learning media in improving students' vocabulary was conducted by giving a test. Specifically, pre-test and post-test assessments were used. The pre-test was given at the initial session, while the post-test was conducted at the final session.

Table 2. Data Collection Procedure

Pre-test Pre-test is the first step conducted as a teaching for the experimental class before they receive the treatment. In the first meeting, a test consisting of 20 questions on vocabulary was given.

Treatment - using Wordwall method Students were given treatment. This treatment was carried out for 2 meetings. Students were introduced to Wordwall Web where they learned vocabulary through games. Introduction: Teacher explains the lesson objectives Teacher introduces Wordwall and how to play the game. Main Activities: Vocabulary Introduction Teacher presents vocabulary words Interactive Wordwall Activities Game 1 : Speaking Cards - The teacher shows the pictures one by one (there are 20 pictures) and mentions the vocabulary words. - Students follow the teacher. Game 2 : Labelled Diagram - Students match pictures with the correct words. Game 3 : Find the match - Students complete sentences with the correct words.

Post-test At this point, students are given a test consisting of 20 questions. Same as the initial test, but with changes in the number of questions and answer choices, randomized.

5. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis **in this** study involves descriptive **and inferential statistical techniques.** Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize **the pre-test and post-test scores.** The normality test to determine whether the collected results follow a normal distribution or not. Inferential statistics, specifically the paired sample t-test, will be used to **compare the pre-test and post-test scores. The paired sample t-test** calculates **the difference in the mean** of **the pre-test and post-test scores.**

This test helps **determine whether there is** a significant **difference** between the two scores. According to , the use of inferential statistics is very important in evaluating the effectiveness of new learning methods, such as gamification, to ensure reliable and valid results. If the t-count value is greater than the t-table, then Wordwall gamification can be declared effective in improving student learning outcomes.

1. Findings and discussion

1. Findings

The use of Wordwall as a new learning media in the classroom that previously only focused on books and the role of teacher communication, caused a transformation that affected student learning outcomes. In this study, the score data of 22 students were analyzed to assess English vocabulary mastery through pretest-posttest results. The test was conducted for 2 days which were carried out sequentially as follows; starting from April 14, 2025 and April 16, 2025. After the data was collected and processed, which included the results of the pretest and posttest, it was then analyzed using SPSS 19.0 for Windows. The following table shows the results of all participants in this study:

Table 3. Descriptive **Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	**Pretest**	52.27	22	16.015	3.414
	Posttest	85.23	22	10.632	2.267

Based on the results shown in table 3 above, presenting the results of descriptive statistics describing the pretest and posttest scores of 22 students, it is clear that before the intervention or before being given treatment, the average score of students was (M = 52.27). After being given treatment using the Wordwall application in the learning process, the average score of students increased to (M = 85.23). This shows that after using Wordwall as a gamification-based learning media in the classroom, students' vocabulary mastery increased.

The data must then be tested for normality after the pre-test and post-test results related to students' vocabulary mastery are collected. The normality test aims to determine whether the collected results follow a normal distribution or not. This study uses the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. The decision criteria for this test state that data is considered **normally distributed if the significance value** is higher than 0.05 (> 0.05), and abnormally **distributed if** the value **is less than 0.05** (< 0.05). **The results of** the Shapiro Wilk test are presented in the following table.

Table 4. **Tests of Normality Kolmogorov-Smirnova Shapiro-Wilk Statistic df Sig. Statistic df Sig.** Pretest .147 22 **. 200*** .940 22 .194 **Posttest** .099 22 **. 200*** .938 22 .183

*. This **is a lower bound of the true significance. a. Lilliefors Significance Correction**

The results of the normality test are shown in the table 4 above. The significant value for the pre-test is 0.194 and for the post-test is 0.183. This shows that the measured significance value is higher than 0.05 (> 0.05), so it can be concluded **that the pre-test and post-test** values of the experimental class are normally distributed.

Table 5. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	**Pretest - Posttest**	-32.955	14.692	3.132	-39.469	-26.440	-10.521	21	.000

The analysis presented in table 5 shows significant findings regarding the **comparison between the pre-test and post-test** results regarding students' vocabulary mastery when using conventional media compared to Wordwall. Statistical significance is indicated by the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05 (0.00 < 0.05). This result implies that **there is a significant difference** in students' vocabulary **mastery before and after** being exposed to the teaching method.

Specifically, it shows an increase in students' vocabulary mastery after the use of Wordwall compared to conventional learning. This finding underscores the efficacy of Wordwall as an effective tool to improve vocabulary learning outcomes among students. The statistical significance of these results highlights the importance of utilizing innovative digital resources, such as Wordwall, in educational settings to optimize learning outcomes.

The findings of this study as a whole indicate that the use of Wordwall in class VII-A can improve students' vocabulary mastery. **This can be seen from the** data showing that **the average score of students** before receiving intervention was (52.27). The score increased to (85.23) after using Wordwall during the learning process. This shows **that the use of Wordwall** can help **students improve their vocabulary mastery.**

2. Discussion

This study aims to determine the effect of using wordwall as a learning media based on gamification strategy in improving vocabulary mastery of junior high school students in grade VII in East Java, Indonesia. This study focused on a specific class that was deliberately selected based on input from subject teachers because the students showed a lack of improvement in learning outcomes when compared to other students in all grades VII, as a result of class observations. Before the treatment was carried out, a practice was carried out that required the use of wordwall during the learning process in the classroom. The most important aspect of the results of this study is the clear difference in the average scores of students' pre-test and post-test results. This difference supports the claim that the use of wordwall resulted in a significant increase in the area of student vocabulary mastery. Referring to the questions asked in this study, the researcher **found that there was a significant** increase in students' vocabulary mastery after using wordwall and they obtained higher scores compared to only using methods that only focused on books and teacher communication.

The data analysis process involved several important steps, namely the normality test to ensure data distribution, descriptive statistics **to provide an overview of the data, and paired sample t-test** to determine significant differences before and after treatment. **Based on the results of** descriptive

statistical analysis of the pretest and posttest scores of 22 students, it was **found that there was a** significant increase in English vocabulary mastery after the learning intervention using Wordwall media, with an average score increasing from (M = 52.27) in the pretest to (M = 85.23) in the posttest. The normality test showed **a significance value for the** pretest of 0.194 and for **the** posttest of 0.183. This shows that the measured **significance value is greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed,** so **that a paired sample t-test** analysis can be carried out which shows **a significant difference in the** average as indicated by the Sig. value. (2-tailed) of 0.00 is lower than the conventional alpha value of 0.05 which states that **there is a significant difference between** the pretest **and posttest** scores. Thus, the learning intervention has proven effective in improving student grades.

The findings of this study support previous research, which illustrates a clear relationship between vocabulary improvement and the enjoyment experienced by students when engaging with wordwall, a gamification-based learning platform that differs from conventional learning methods. The main appeal of wordwall lies in the integration of various game-like features, which serve to enrich the learning experience. This innovative learning approach transforms the learning process into an engaging and interactive one, effectively reducing the boredom that often accompanies conventional educational methods. As a result, this approach not only retains students' interest but also fosters an environment conducive to effective learning and improves student learning outcomes. The importance of integrating technology in education, especially through platforms such as wordwall, goes beyond mere entertainment. These platforms tap into students' motivational drives, by leveraging engaging game elements to facilitate deeper learning and vocabulary retention. These digital platforms provide a diverse educational experience, combining the appeal of games with the rigor of academic learning, thereby enhancing student engagement and motivation. This strategic blend of motivational enrichment and technological support plays a significant role in the narrative of student vocabulary improvement. This underlines the potential of technology in education, showing that when students are more motivated and enjoy the learning process, they tend to achieve better results which ultimately contributes to improved learning outcomes, particularly in the area of vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

1. **The results of the study showed that the use of** Wordwall was effective in improving students' vocabulary, with a higher average post-test score compared to the average pre-test score. By using Wordwall, students can actively participate in the learning process and acquire good vocabulary. This can be seen directly in the treatment results. In addition, the use of Wordwall as a teaching and learning medium related to vocabulary can be used as a more effective way of teaching. Inviting students to learn using digital technology other than books. This is certainly in accordance with developments in this digital era.

2. With the gamification method, providing students with a better learning environment can encourage shy students to learn, as well as improve long-term memory and continuous focus on language knowledge and skills. In this way, students' motivation, interest levels, and attitudes towards learning are greatly increased and their involvement in learning increases, leading to significant progress in learning outcomes. These results are certainly in line with the objectives of this study, namely that researchers want to improve and enrich students' abilities in mastering vocabulary related to the material they are studying. The findings in this study open up further opportunities to explore and develop a group of approaches embedded in gamification.

3.

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