

YOUNG LEARNERS' CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT IN *WORDWALL*-BASED VOCABULARY LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of English language in teaching young learners because it helps the improving of other language skills. However, vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms may become less effective when classroom activities are repetitive and less engaging. Therefore, teachers need innovative learning media that can increase students' participation and motivation during classroom activities. One of the digital learning platforms that can be utilized in vocabulary instruction is *Wordwall*. This study aims to explore young learners' classroom engagement in *Wordwall*-based vocabulary learning activities. This study applied a qualitative research design in investigating young learners in an elementary school EFL classroom. The data of this study were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The findings showed that *Wordwall*-based activities influenced students' active participation, enthusiasm, interaction, and motivation during vocabulary learning activities. Students seem more engaged when learning vocabulary in using interactive games and visual-based activities. The use of *Wordwall* created a more enjoyable classroom that encouraged students in collaborative learning. The study also found several challenges, including classroom uncondusive and technical issues during the activities. The findings of this study suggest that *Wordwall*-based activities can support engaging vocabulary instruction for young learners in EFL classrooms. This study is expected to contribute to the application of technology-assisted vocabulary learning for young learners.

Keywords: Young Learners, Classroom Engagement, Vocabulary, *Wordwall*

Introduction

Vocabulary is regarded as one of the crucial components in English language learning, especially for young learners in EFL classroom. With vocabulary mastery, students can easy to understand the instructions, express the ideas, and develop the other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In Young learners context, children usually learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Therefor vocabulary instruction should be enjoyable and meaningful in learning activities. However, there are many challenging in teaching vocabulary to young learners since students may easily lose concentration during classroom activities. Conventional vocabulary learning activities, such as memorizing word and repeating vocabulary items, may decrease students'

motivation and participation in the classroom.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary learning becomes more important because students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Young learners generally depend on teachers and classroom instruction to learn new vocabulary items. Therefore, teachers need to provide meaningful and engaging learning experiences that help students understand and remember vocabulary effectively. Vocabulary instruction should not only focus on memorization, but also encourage students to use vocabulary in communicative and interactive learning activities. When students are actively involved during the learning process, they may develop stronger interest and confidence in learning English.

In addition, vocabulary mastery is closely related to students' academic achievement and communication ability. Students who have limited vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in understanding texts, following classroom instructions, and expressing their ideas in English. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary is an essential element in language learning because learners need sufficient vocabulary knowledge to support communication and comprehension. Nation also explained that vocabulary knowledge supports learners in understanding spoken and written language effectively. For young learners, learning vocabulary through enjoyable activities may help them remember words more easily and reduce anxiety during classroom learning.

The quick growth of educational technology has motivated teachers to implement digital learning media into English language teaching. Technology-assisted learning offers many opportunities for teachers to make more interactive learning media and engaging classroom activities. Digital learning platforms can support teachers in teaching vocabulary materials through games, quizzes, wordwall, flash card, pictures, and interactive exercises that attract students' participation. Furthermore, young learners are will get familiar with digital devices and game-based activities in their daily routines, and finally making technology integration relevant in classroom learning environments. One of the digital platforms that applied in vocabulary instruction on English classroom is Wordwall. Wordwall offers various interactive templates, such as matching games, random wheels, word game, quizzes, which can support the process vocabulary learning activities in the classroom. The platform enables teachers to design game-based learning experiences that may influence students to participate actively during lessons. By the interactive and visually appealing

activities, Wordwall may support to establish a more enjoyable learning environment for young learners in learning vocabulary.

Technology integration in language learning has become increasingly popular because digital media can create more student-centered learning experiences.

Nowadays, many schools have started integrating technology into classroom instruction to support students' learning experiences. Teachers are expected to become more creative in selecting teaching strategies and learning media that are suitable for students' characteristics and classroom needs. In EFL classrooms, the integration of technology can help teachers present learning materials in more attractive and interactive ways. Young learners usually enjoy activities involving pictures, games, and digital interaction because these activities make learning feel more enjoyable and less stressful.

The use of technology in language learning may also support autonomous learning and increase students' learning motivation. Interactive applications provide immediate feedback that helps students recognize their mistakes and improve their understanding directly during learning activities. Furthermore, digital learning media can create opportunities for students to learn collaboratively and communicate more actively with classmates. Therefore, technology-assisted learning has become one of the important approaches in modern English language teaching. Interactive applications encourage students to become more involved in classroom activities rather than passively listening to teacher explanations. Digital learning media may also help teachers present vocabulary materials more creatively through pictures, sounds, animations, and games. These features are important for young learners because children usually have short attention

spans and prefer visual and interactive learning experiences.

Game-based learning is also considered effective for improving students' engagement and motivation in learning English. Through educational games, students may feel more relaxed and confident when participating in classroom activities. Competition, rewards, and interactive challenges can motivate students to participate more actively during lessons. According to Gee (2003), digital games can support meaningful learning experiences because learners become actively involved in problem-solving and interactive tasks. Educational games may also increase students' motivation and participation because learners experience enjoyable and interactive learning situations. Therefore, the implementation of game-based platforms such as Wordwall may provide positive contributions to vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms.

Several previous studies have investigated the implementation of technology-digital media and game-based learning in English language teaching. Pradini and Adnyayanti (2022) found that Wordwall supported vocabulary learning among young learners through interactive classroom activities. Similarly with Anindya et al. (2024) said that Wordwall created enjoyable learning experiences and increased students' motivation in vocabulary instruction. In addition, Sari and Nurhayati (2023) reported that interactive digital media helped students become more confident and active during English learning activities. The previous research generally said that digital learning platforms could improve students' motivation, participation, and vocabulary learning achievement. However, while only limited studies investigated how young learners engage during Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities, particularly in EFL classroom contexts studies which just

mainly concentrated on students' achievement and quantitative outcomes.

Classroom engagement is crucial because it indicates about students' perception, participation, and involvement during learning activities.

Student engagement has become one of the important indicators of successful learning because engaged students are usually more motivated, attentive, and willing to participate during classroom instruction. In language learning contexts, engagement may influence students' confidence and willingness to communicate using the target language. Students who feel engaged in learning activities are more likely to participate actively, complete classroom tasks, and interact positively with teachers and classmates.

Moreover, engagement may help students build positive attitudes toward English learning. Young learners who experience enjoyable classroom activities may develop stronger interest in learning English in the future. Therefore, teachers need to create supportive learning environments that encourage students to participate actively and confidently during classroom learning activities. Student engagement generally includes behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement can be seen from students' participation and classroom involvement, while emotional engagement is related to students' interest, enjoyment, and motivation during learning activities. Cognitive engagement refers to students' attention, effort, and willingness to understand the learning materials. Exploring students' engagement may help teachers to evaluate how interactive digital-based media support students' learning experiences.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate young learners' classroom engagement in using wordwall-based vocabulary learning. Thus, the research question of this study is "how do young learners

engage in wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities in the classroom?” This study is expected to provide contributions for English teachers, especially in understanding how interactive digital learning media may support vocabulary instruction and students’ classroom engagement in EFL contexts.

Methodology

This study applied a qualitative research design method to explore young learners’ classroom engagement in Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities. A qualitative research approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on understanding students’ participation such as responses, behaviors, and learning experiences during classroom instruction. Creswell (2014) said that qualitative research is suitable for exploring about students’ perception experiences and understanding social phenomena in natural settings. Qualitative research also allows researchers to describe classroom situations and participants’ experiences in detail.

Qualitative research also allows researchers to explore classroom situations deeply and describe participants’ experiences in detail. Through this approach, the researcher could observe how students interacted during Wordwall-based activities and how they responded emotionally and socially during the learning process. The study focused not only on the learning outcomes but also on students’ engagement and classroom experiences during vocabulary instruction.

The study was conducted in an elementary school EFL classroom involving young learners as the participants of the research. The participants were selected purposively because they were involved in vocabulary learning activities using Wordwall during classroom instruction. The teacher at the same school who implemented Wordwall

activities in the classroom also participated in the study in giving additional information to support the data regarding the learning process.

The participants consisted of elementary school students who learned English vocabulary through Wordwall-based activities. Young learners were selected because they are considered active learners who generally respond positively to interactive and game-based learning activities. The classroom teacher also played an important role in facilitating the learning process, managing classroom interaction, and guiding students during the implementation of digital learning activities.

The data were collected by several ways such as classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted during vocabulary learning activities to see the students’ participation, interaction, enthusiasm, and responses while using Wordwall. During the observation process, the researcher used field notes to record important events during the lesson and students’ behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several students and the other teacher to get more information about students’ learning experiences and classroom engagement during the learning activities. The last is documentation including classroom photographs during the learning process and screenshots of Wordwall activities, was also used to support the research data.

The classroom observations focused on students’ classroom behavior, participation, and interaction during Wordwall-based vocabulary activities. The researcher observed how students responded to instructions, interacted with classmates, and participated during games and quizzes. Observation was conducted several times to obtain more comprehensive data regarding students’ engagement during the learning activities.

Semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for the participants to express their opinions and experiences freely. The researcher asked several questions related to students' feelings, motivation, and opinions about learning vocabulary through Wordwall. The teacher was also interviewed to provide additional perspectives regarding students' responses and the effectiveness of Wordwall implementation in classroom learning.

The researcher analyzed the collected data using thematic analysis. First, the researcher organized and reviewed the observation data, the transcripts of the interview, and the documentation. Next, the researcher coded and categorized the data into several themes which related to classroom engagement, such as interaction, active participation, and motivation. The last, the researcher interpreted the findings to describe how young learners engaged in using Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities.

Thematic analysis helped the researcher identify repeated patterns and important themes from the collected data. After coding the data, the researcher compared similarities and differences among students' responses, classroom observations, and interview results. The themes were then interpreted to explain students' classroom engagement during the implementation of Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the collected data, the researcher applied triangulation by comparing the collected information from classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) said that triangulation helps the researcher to strengthen the credibility and validity of qualitative research findings. The use of different sources of data may help researchers obtain more comprehensive and trustworthy findings.

Besides triangulation, the researcher also reviewed the collected data repeatedly to ensure consistency during the analysis process. The use of multiple data collection techniques allowed the researcher to gain more complete understanding regarding students' classroom engagement and learning experiences. Therefore, the findings of this study were expected to provide credible and meaningful descriptions about the implementation of Wordwall-based vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.

Finding and Discussion

The findings of this study showed that Wordwall supported young learners' classroom engagement positively during vocabulary learning activities. Based on classroom observations, interviews, and documentation, students showed active participation, interaction, enthusiasm, and motivation while attending in Wordwall-based activities.

The implementation of Wordwall created a more interactive classroom atmosphere compared to traditional vocabulary learning activities. Students became more enthusiastic when the teacher used digital games and quizzes during the lesson. The visual appearance, competition elements, and interactive features encouraged students to pay more attention and become more involved in classroom activities. Most students appeared excited when participating in the games and responded positively to the learning activities.

One of the main findings of this study was students' active participation during the vocabulary learning activities. Based on the classroom observations, most students showed strong involvement in doing Wordwall tasks such as answering quizzes, matching words, and identifying pictures. Students responded to the teacher's instructions actively and participated enthusiastically in wordwall game-based activities. Compared to

conventional vocabulary learning, students seem more interested and focused when learning activities used interactive games. Several students try to finish the test quickly, answered questions voluntary in front of the class, and students also competed with classmates. These findings indicate that game-based digital media may influence students to become more actively involved in classroom learning. This result is consistent with the findings of Pradini and Adnyayanti (2022), who reported that Wordwall-supported activities increased students' participation and interest in vocabulary learning.

The findings from the interviews also showed that students preferred learning vocabulary through games rather than memorizing vocabulary lists from textbooks. Several students stated that the activities were more enjoyable and easier to understand because they could directly interact with pictures and vocabulary items. Students also felt more motivated because they could see their scores and compete with classmates during the activities. These situations indicate that digital learning platforms may help increase students' willingness to participate during classroom learning.

The findings also showed students' enthusiasm and enjoyment during vocabulary learning activities in classroom. During the observations, students showed positive responses such as excitement, curiosity, and enjoyment while participate the classroom games. Many students showed positive emotional such as smiled, laughed, and expressed excitement when completing the activities. The interview results also showed that students enjoyed in learning vocabulary through games because the activities were more attractive than just memorizing vocabulary lists. These findings support by Cameron's (2001) who said that young learners learn more effectively through enjoyable and interactive classroom experiences.

Cameron also emphasized that children usually respond positively to activities involving games, visuals, and interaction during language learning. The visual appearance and interactive features of Wordwall media appeared to attract students' attention and make a more engaging learning atmosphere.

In addition, students seemed more confident during the learning process because the activities were presented in enjoyable ways. Some students who were usually passive during classroom instruction became more willing to answer questions and participate in games. The use of pictures, sounds, and colorful visual displays helped students understand vocabulary more easily and reduced boredom during learning activities. These findings suggest that interactive digital learning media may support positive emotional engagement among young learners.

Another finding was the increase of students' interaction and collaboration during classroom activities. Students communicated with their classmates frequently to discuss the answers and solve vocabulary challenges together. Some students helped their team to understand the new vocabulary items. The interactive atmosphere of Wordwall activities created opportunities for collaborative learning and also classroom communication. This finding is similar to the theory of Vygotsky's (1978), the study focuses on the importance of social interaction in young learners's learning and cognitive development. Vygotsky explained that interaction and collaboration with peers can support students' learning processes and cognitive growth. Implementing collaborative activities, students may feel more confident, comfortable, and engaged during the learning process.

The collaborative learning atmosphere also encouraged peer learning among students. Students who understood the vocabulary materials more quickly often

helped their classmates complete the activities. This interaction supported students' communication skills and promoted positive relationships among classmates. Through collaborative classroom activities, students became more active not only in learning vocabulary but also in interacting socially with others.

Another important finding was students' motivation during Wordwall-based vocabulary instruction. The game elements, such as points, leaderboards, and competition, appeared to motivate students to participate actively during the lesson. Students paid more attention to the teacher's instructions because they wanted to complete the activities successfully. Motivation is an important factor in language learning because motivated students generally show better participation and stronger learning interest.

Despite on positive findings, the researcher also identified several challenges during the implementation of Wordwall-based activities in classroom. The first is some students occasionally became over excited during competitive games, causing the classroom were not condusive. Other problem is when other team leads the points of competition, other students may feel sad. In addition, a few students needed additional guidance and help when operating digital devices or understanding the instructions. Technical problems also challenge such as internet connection who affected the classroom activities. These findings show that successful implementation of digital learning media requires effective classroom management and sufficient technological support.

The teacher also needed to manage the classroom carefully to maintain students' focus during the games. Although competition increased motivation, excessive excitement sometimes made the classroom noisy and difficult to control. Therefore, teachers need to balance

competitive and collaborative learning activities to ensure that all students feel comfortable and involved during the learning process.

Technical preparation was another important factor during the implementation of digital learning media. Problems such as unstable internet connection, limited devices, and difficulties operating technology could influence the effectiveness of classroom activities. Therefore, teachers should prepare alternative plans and provide clear instructions before implementing digital learning activities in the classroom.

The findings suggest that the use of Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities may indicate young learners' classroom engagement through active participation, enjoyment, interaction, and collaborative learning experiences.

Another important point discussed in this study is the relationship between digital learning media and students' learning atmosphere in the classroom. During the implementation of Wordwall-based activities, the classroom atmosphere became more lively and interactive compared to conventional learning situations. Students paid more attention to the teacher's instructions and showed stronger enthusiasm when participating in classroom games and quizzes. The competitive and interactive elements of Wordwall appeared to create positive classroom energy that encouraged students to become more involved during the lesson. These findings indicate that digital learning media may influence not only students' academic participation but also the emotional atmosphere of classroom learning.

The findings also reveal that visual and interactive learning materials are important for young learners in vocabulary instruction. Most students responded positively to pictures, colorful displays, and interactive quizzes provided through Wordwall activities. Young

learners generally prefer learning activities that involve visual support because pictures and games help them understand vocabulary meanings more easily. Interactive activities also helped students remember vocabulary items better because students learned through repetition and direct participation during the games. Therefore, the use of visually attractive digital media may become an effective strategy to support vocabulary learning among elementary school students.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that students' engagement increased when learning activities provided opportunities for direct participation and classroom interaction. Instead of listening passively to explanations from the teacher, students became active participants during vocabulary instruction. They answered quizzes, discussed answers with classmates, and responded enthusiastically during games. This active learning process may support students' confidence and communication skills because students were encouraged to participate and express their ideas during classroom activities.

The findings of this study are also related to the concept of learner-centered instruction. In traditional learning activities, teachers often become the center of the learning process, while students only receive information passively. However, during Wordwall-based learning activities, students became more active in exploring vocabulary materials through games and interaction. The teacher acted more as a facilitator who guided students during the learning process. This learner-centered environment may help students become more independent and motivated learners. In addition, the implementation of Wordwall-based vocabulary activities may support students with different learning styles. Visual learners benefited from pictures and colorful displays, while kinesthetic learners became more engaged

through interactive games and classroom competition. Auditory learners also benefited from teacher explanations and classroom discussions during the activities. Therefore, interactive digital learning media may help teachers provide more inclusive learning experiences for students with different learning preferences.

Another significant discussion from this study is related to students' confidence during English learning activities. Some students who usually felt shy during conventional classroom instruction became more willing to participate during digital game-based activities. The enjoyable classroom atmosphere appeared to reduce students' anxiety and fear of making mistakes. Students became more comfortable answering questions and participating in front of classmates because the activities felt more relaxed and enjoyable. This condition is important in EFL learning contexts because confidence and motivation strongly influence students' willingness to communicate in English.

Moreover, the findings suggest that integrating technology into vocabulary instruction may help teachers respond to the characteristics of modern young learners. Nowadays, children are familiar with technology and digital devices in their daily activities. Therefore, implementing digital learning media in classrooms may help teachers create learning environments that are more relevant to students' interests and experiences. By integrating technology meaningfully, teachers may increase students' learning motivation and participation during English lessons.

Although several challenges were identified during the implementation process, the positive findings of this study indicate that Wordwall has strong potential to support vocabulary learning and classroom engagement among young learners. With proper classroom management, technological preparation,

and teacher guidance, Wordwall-based learning activities may become effective strategies for creating interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms. The use of interactive digital media can help teachers create more engaging vocabulary instruction for young learners in EFL classrooms.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Wordwall may support positive classroom learning experiences among young learners.

The findings of this study also indicate that digital learning media can support student-centered learning environments in EFL classrooms. Instead of becoming passive learners, students actively participated in games, discussions, and collaborative activities during the learning process. The implementation of Wordwall encouraged students to communicate, solve problems, and respond actively during classroom instruction. These learning experiences may help students become more confident and independent learners.

Another important aspect identified in this study was the role of teachers during the implementation of Wordwall-based learning activities. Teachers acted not only as instructors but also as facilitators who guided students during classroom interaction and digital activities. The teacher's ability to manage classroom activities, provide motivation, and explain instructions clearly influenced students' engagement during the learning process. Therefore, successful implementation of digital learning media depends not only on technology but also on teachers' classroom management and instructional strategies.

The findings also support the idea that young learners prefer interactive and visually attractive learning activities compared to traditional learning methods. Through colorful displays, pictures, quizzes, and game-based interaction, students felt more interested in learning

vocabulary materials. Interactive learning media may reduce students' boredom and create more enjoyable classroom atmospheres that support active learning participation.

In addition, collaborative classroom activities during Wordwall implementation appeared to strengthen students' social interaction and teamwork skills. Students worked together, discussed answers, and supported classmates during vocabulary games and quizzes. These collaborative experiences may help students develop positive attitudes toward learning English and improve classroom relationships among peers. The platform not only supports vocabulary learning but also encourages students to become more active, motivated, and collaborative during English classroom activities. Therefore, integrating interactive digital media into vocabulary instruction may become an effective strategy for improving classroom engagement in EFL contexts.

Conclusions

This study explored young learners' classroom engagement in Wordwall-based vocabulary learning activities in an EFL classroom. The findings indicate that the implementation of Wordwall supported students' engagement positively with active participation, enthusiasm, interaction, and motivation during vocabulary learning activities. When vocabulary instruction was delivered through interactive and innovative game-based activities, students feel more interested and involved. Wordwall helped to design a more enjoyable and collaborative classroom atmosphere, as interactive features such as matching games, and visual activities, quizzes which encouraged students to communicate and cooperate with their classmates during the learning process. These findings suggest that interactive digital media can support more engaging

vocabulary instruction for young learners in EFL classrooms.

The study also highlights that classroom engagement is not only related to students' participation but also connected to emotional and social aspects of learning. Students showed enjoyment, confidence, and collaborative interaction during the implementation of Wordwall-based activities. These positive learning experiences may contribute to improving students' interest in learning English vocabulary and creating more meaningful classroom environments.

However, several challenges were also found, including classroom uncondusive, technical issues, and differences in students' ability to operate digital tools in understanding the instruction. Therefore, teachers need effective classroom management and good technological preparation to ensure the successful of implementation digital learning media in classroom. Teachers should also provide clear instructions and appropriate guidance for students who experience difficulties during digital learning activities.

This study may provide practical implications for English teachers, especially in implementing interactive digital learning media for young learners. Teachers are encouraged to design creative and enjoyable classroom activities that support students' active participation and collaborative learning. In addition, schools should provide sufficient technological facilities to support the implementation of digital learning media effectively.

In the end, this study concludes that Wordwall can be an effective digital platform for supporting teachers in designing an attractive media and helps young learners' engagement in vocabulary learning activities and highlights the importance of integrating interactive technology into English

language teaching to design more meaningful and motivating learning experiences for young learners.

For future research, researchers are suggested to investigate the implementation of Wordwall in different educational levels or language skills, such as speaking, reading, or grammar learning. Future studies may also examine students' perceptions and teachers' experiences in implementing interactive digital learning media in EFL classrooms.

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