

# Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners with Wordwall Application: An Experimental Study

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## Abstract

*The pandemic period changed the education system in Indonesia. Online learning has been implemented since 2020, and face-to-face learning will gradually begin in 2021. As online learning is implemented, various learning media have been used by teachers to help students understand the material content during online learning. However, the lack of student motivation during online learning becomes the main problem. Especially for young students who find it difficult to concentrate while studying. Teachers need learning media that are more creative and attract students' attention and motivation to learn. Vocabulary is one of the basic components of English that have to be mastered by students. Therefore, this research specifically aimed to improve the English vocabulary of young learner students at SDN 1 Mambang by using Wordwall. The material given includes three vocabulary components: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. This research study is a one-shot case study that will use one participant to be given treatment. This study aimed to see the improvement or achievement of young learner students' vocabulary by using a word wall. This research is a quantitative study. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test will be presented quantitatively. This study shows that the mean score of the student in the pre-test was 53.33, categorized as satisfactory, and the student's scores in the post-test increased by 73.33, categorized as good. After receiving treatment, the total percentage of students' vocabulary achievement development was 37.50%. This shows that word wall can increase students' vocabulary achievement and motivation to learn English.*

**Keywords:** *English Vocabulary, Online Learning, Wordwall, Young Learner*

## Introduction

Since English has become a mandatory subject in the curriculum of 2013 in Indonesia, English has become a foreign language that Indonesian learners must master. The basic skills of

English that students have to master are reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Besides those essential skills, there is also a language component used to support the development of the skills. The English language component contains five elements: pronunciation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the basic language components that have to be mastered by students. Vocabulary is essential to be learned by the students who want to master a language (Syafrizal, 2018). According to Sanjaya et al., (2022), vocabulary is the main component of language proficiency that act as a support tool to master skills in English (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). Improving students' vocabulary will provide numerous benefits, particularly in terms of language mastery development (Ana, 2018). By understanding vocabulary well, students will be able to write a concept, read the information clearly, and know the meaning of the vocabulary they are listening to. They can also express their opinions, ideas, and desires well. This means vocabulary has an essential function in communication (Uspsa, 2020).

Considering vocabulary is essential in learning English, it has to be taught to students at an early age or young learners. Students are called young learners or those who have 5 to 12 years of age (Jannah, 2019). Vocabulary is essential to be taught since children of young learner because, in this stage, they experience a "golden age" period where they can quickly receive new things or information and at this time have critical brain intelligence that make them easy to realize and learn new situations or conditions around them, including the existence of language (Sukarno, 2008). Related to this, English teachers of young learners have an essential role in maximizing students' competencies and helping them to provide strategies, facilities, or learning media that can maximize students' abilities in learning English. In addition, this must be considered to provide meaningful learning activities which can improve students' abilities to enrich their vocabulary.

Although young learners can receive and learn new information quickly, there are still some problems faced by the teacher while teaching young learners. Young learners still have difficulties in understanding abstract thing, because they have limited vocabulary (Lelawati et al., 2018). The teacher teaches vocabulary by repeating words and only uses the same strategy all the time during the class (Supraba, 2019). As a result, the students are bored and not interested in following the learning process. Moreover, according to students writing, some of elementary school students need extensive time to memorize vocabulary that given by the teacher (Syakir, 2020). This problem probably appears when the students difficult to concentrate during the learning process. Supported by Jannah (2019), the young learner has characteristics that can receive new information quickly but lacks concentration span and easily gets bored during the learning process.

However, the English teacher of young learners can avoid the boredom of their students by using exciting and fun methods during the learning process (Putri et al., 2022) . If the teacher can provide interactive, fun, and exciting learning activities, it would make young learner has a high motivation to follow the learning process. The teacher can use games in the classroom to create fun activities and assist young learners in effectively learning vocabulary (Bakhsh, 2016). When implementing games, it is beneficial if the teacher considers the number of students, cognitive level, context, timing, and learning topics that match up to the material and learning goals (Wulanjani, 2016). To create attractive and effective learning, especially in teaching vocabulary

for young learner the teacher also can design learning activities by using some learning media. The teacher of young learners has to create the situation in the classroom to be more interesting by using various media such as flashcards, pictures, and objects that can make students feel outside the world, (Sukarno, 2008).

Unfortunately, since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia in 2020, which required students to study from home and conduct online learning, it greatly affected the teacher's learning strategy and media. According to Atmojo and Nugroho (2020), in a pandemic situation, teachers have difficulties engaging students' participation in the learning process because they are low motivated and tend to be passive. This is also because the teacher still lacks the technical knowledge to create interactive learning activities that can enhance students' motivation to learn. In addition, the teacher have difficulties in delivering lesson and adjusting the teaching plan, (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2021). Hence, appropriate learning method, media, and strategy is needed to be implemented in pandemic situation.

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher requires strategies, methods, and material to be able develop material in accordance with students' needs (Lelawati et al., 2018). Furthermore, appropriate instructional media must be used to increase students' motivation during the learning process (Aini, 2013). If an English teacher of young learners does not use appropriate media in teaching, students may be uninterested and decrease motivation to learn (Permana, 2020). The teacher must find learning media that contains fun and interesting learning activities that can increase young learners' motivation even in online learning situations. One effective learning media that the young learner teacher can use to improve students' motivation in learning vocabulary is Wordwall. Wordwall is a web application with many features that provide bulletin boards with various themes and activities, including the game as support tools to learn vocabulary, (Uspa, 2020). Wordwall provides many templates or bulletin words with various game activities such as match up, quiz, missing words, find the match, word search, anagram, maze chase, etc. According to Nadhiroh (2010), Wordwall is an attractive, easy-to-use, and superficial learning media that can help teachers teach vocabulary.

A previous study has already used Wordwall as learning media in teaching English. Sipayung (2018) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the effect of the word wall strategy on students' vocabulary achievement at SMP Pemantangsiantar. The study data shows a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The result explains that using a word wall strategy can improve students' vocabulary achievement. Novalia et al., (2019) also conducted a quantitative study to analyze the influence of word wall media on helping students' vocabulary achievement in SMP Negeri 5 Tampung Hilir. They found the post-test score of students is higher than the score in the pre-test. The result of the research found that word walls can increase students' vocabulary achievement and improve students' motivation in learning vocabulary. Although many studies analyze the use of word walls as supporting media in teaching vocabulary, there are no studies that show the implementation or use of word wall media to improve the vocabulary of young learners in elementary school, especially in Tabanan. Therefore, this research aimed to find out the influence of word walls on vocabulary improvement and achievement of a 5th-grade student at SDN 1 Mambang. The researcher will use word wall as media in teaching vocabulary. The result

of the study will be in the form of numbers or quantitatively to find out the significant improvement of students' vocabulary at SDN 1 Mambang.

## Method

In obtaining the data, this research used a Quantitative method that cooperates with experimental design. This research will also use an experimental design in the form of a one-shot case study where the author will give treatment and post-tested only to one group and then the results will be analyzed (Gay et al., 2012). The authors involved 1 participant (APS) in this study as a subject. This research used random sampling methods in determining the sample of the research. The sample of this research is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at SDN 1 Mambang in the academic year 2021/2022. This study consists of an independent variable and a dependent variable. The word wall application was the independent variable, and a 5th-grade student at SDN 1 Mambang was the dependent variable. In this mini-research, the researcher wanted to know how the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable on vocabulary achievement. The vocabulary indicators that will be given and tested include three components: noun, verb, and adjective.

In collecting the data, the researcher went through three processes: pre-test, treatment, and post-test, as stated above. The researcher gave the student an initial test to know their prior vocabulary knowledge in the pre-test. In this pre-test, the researcher gave the students a test through a google form containing 30 multiple choice questions with details of 10 noun questions, 10 verb questions, and 10 adjectives questions. In the treatment stage, the researcher explained vocabulary, especially related to nouns, verbs, and adjectives. During the learning activities, the researchers also built interactions with students and asked some questions related to the material. Then the researcher gave vocabulary using the word wall application. The students did the exercises using the word wall that contains several activities such as match up, find the match, anagram, word search, and maze chase. In the post-test, the researcher gave students 30 multiple choice questions through google form with details of 10 noun questions, 10 verb questions, and 10 adjectives questions. The post-test is given to know the student's vocabulary achievement after treatment and measure whether the use of word wall application can improve students' vocabulary achievement.

Description:

P = Percentage of students' improvement

X1 =The mean score of the pre-test

X2 = The mean score of the post-test

4. To classification the student score achievement use as follow:

*Table 1. Classification of Student's Score Achievement*

No.	Score	Category
1	80-100	Very good
2	70-79	Good

3	60-69	Enough
4	50-59	Satisfactory
5	0-45	Bad

## Findings & Discussions

To get the study results, the researcher has carried out three stages of experimental design, which include a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was carried out on December 13th, 2021. At this stage, the researcher gave a vocabulary test through an internal google form with 30 multiple-choice questions. This is done to find out the prior knowledge of the student. After the pre-test, the researcher gave treatment for three days from December 13th to December 15th, 2021. The researcher taught the student about the meaning, function, and list of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. During the learning process, the student also learns how to pronounce vocabulary correctly. The researcher then taught vocabulary using the word wall media. The student is asked to do the activities on the word wall to practice their skills and improve their memory of the words they have learned. There are several activities or games in the word wall used during the treatment: match up, find the match, anagram, word search, and maze chase. After giving treatment for three days, the student was asked to do a post-test by answering 30 multiple choice questions.

After being given the post-test, the researcher found an improvement in the post-test score compared to the pre-test. There is a significant difference in students' vocabulary achievement after being given the treatment. The pre-test, post-test, and total percentage of students' vocabulary achievement were presented in the following table.

### a. The score of student's Pre-test and Post-test Category of Noun

*Table 2. Score Pre-test and Post-test Category of Noun*

Category	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Noun	70.00	90.00

The data showed in category noun, student's score in pre-test was 70.00 categorized as good and student's score in post-test was 90.00 categorized as very good. That means the student's score in the post-test was better or higher than the pre-test.

### b. The score of student's Pre-test and Post-test Category of Verb

*Table 3. Score Pre-test and Post-test Category of Verb*

Category	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Verb	70.00	80.00

The data showed in category verb, student's score in pre-test was 70.00 categorized as good and student's score in post-test was 80.00 categorized as very good. That means the student's score in the post-test was better or higher than the pre-test.

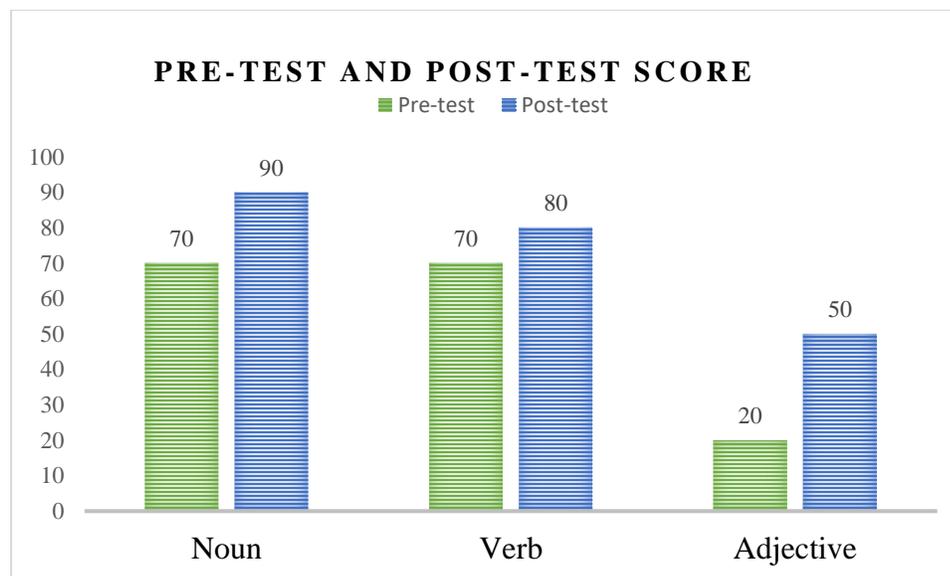
**c. The score of student's Pre-test and Post-test Category of Adjective**

*Table 4. Score Pre-test and Post-test Category of Adjective*

Category	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Adjective	20.00	50.00

The data showed in category adjective, student's score in pre-test was 20.00 categorized as bad and student's score in post-test was 50.00 categorized as satisfactory. That means the student's score in the post-test was better or higher than the pre-test. The improvement of student's vocabulary in categories noun, verb, and adjective can be illustrated in Diagram 1.

*Diagram 1. Students' Improvement*



**d. The percentage vocabulary improvement from pre-test to post-test**

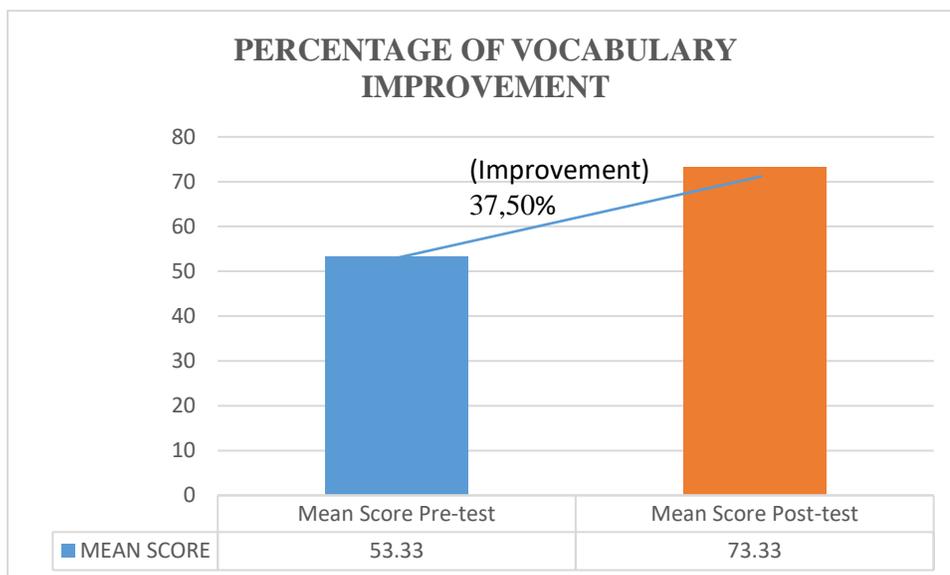
*Table 5. Student's Vocabulary Improvement*

Category	Pre-test	Post-test	Percentage of Improvement (%)
Noun	70.00	90.00	
Verb	70.00	80.00	
Adjective	20.00	50.00	

<b>Means Score</b>	<b>53.33</b>	<b>73.33</b>	<b>37.50%</b>
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The table showed there was a significant improvement to mean score in pre-test between the mean score in post-test. The table improvement showed mean score in post-test was higher than the mean score in the pre-test, were in mean score in pre-test was 53.33 categorized as satisfactory and in the mean score, post-test was 73.33 categorized as good. The total percentage of students' vocabulary improvement from means scores from pre-test to post-test was 37.50%. The percentage of student's vocabulary improvement is illustrated in Diagram 2.

*Diagram 2. Percentage of Student's Vocabulary Improvement*



In the learning process, word wall becomes one of the effective media to increase young learners' motivation in learning vocabulary with fun activities. Wordwall is very suitable to be used as a supporting medium when teaching young learners because they have characteristics that get bored quickly and lack concentration span while studying (Jannah, 2019). Especially during a pandemic that requires students to study at home. Most of them are not supervised by their parents while studying, which requires them to study independently and do online learning activities at their school. Usually, the teacher only gives students assignments via WhatsApp groups. As a result, there is a lack of interaction between students and teachers, so students will lose motivation to learn. To avoid this, English teachers of young learners can use the word wall to create a creative learning activity because it has many features and templates. Some of the features in word walls, such as Wordsearch and anagram, engage them to increase their critical thinking and accuracy. The games or activities on the word wall are also equipped with unique characters, audio music, and templates in full colour which can create fun vibes in the learning process. Audio music such as, songs, rhymes, chants, has important role in early language development (Dzanic et al., 2016). The effect of song or rhymes can on the Wordwall application make young learner students enjoy

to do the task and it can attract their attention to be more focus in learning vocabulary. Therefore, word walls can be used as learning media to teach vocabulary, making students more interested in learning new words. This is also supported by research results from previous studies about implementing word walls as media in teaching English. Arafah and Ahmad (2020), implemented word wall as a teaching technique for secondary students using the classroom action research method. The study results show that students' vocabulary knowledge increased after implementing word walls in the learning process. The second study was conducted by Novalia et al., (2019) who found that word walls greatly improve students' vocabulary achievement and motivation to English.

Based on the previous study, word wall has been used as an effective language teaching medium to increase students' motivation in learning English and improve students' vocabulary achievement. Related to this, the data obtained by the researcher in the section above shows that the use of word walls can also improve the vocabulary achievement of a student at SDN 1 Mambang. The data showed the student's mean score in the pre-test was 53.33, categorized as satisfactory after given treatment where the researcher used word wall media in the learning process, the mean score of students in the post-test increased to 73.33, which was categorized as good. This shows a good improvement in students' vocabulary achievement where the mean score of students in the post-test is higher than the mean score in the pre-test. The mean score of pre-tests to post-test shows the percentage improvement of the student vocabulary reaches 37.50%. Therefore, a word wall can help the student to improve his vocabulary achievement.

After giving the post-test, the researcher also conducted interviews with the student related to the use of word walls in the learning process. The student said that he could easily remember the given vocabulary by using the word wall. The student also looked happy and enthusiastic during the treatment, and even he wanted to repeat the game repeatedly. This indicates that in addition to increasing students' vocabulary achievement, word walls also improve students' motivation and build fun vibes in the learning process. Wordwall is a flexible learning media or can be used during online or offline learning. However, there are several things that teachers should consider when using word walls in the learning process. The teacher has to choose learning activities that have interesting features, increase students' critical thinking, and are related to the material being taught. In addition, the teacher must ensure that students have supporting tools or media such as handphones or laptops. Then the teacher must pay attention to the internet connection where it must be stable so that the link can be accessed properly.

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Based on the research data obtained by researchers, the implementation of the word wall as a creative learning activity for 5th-grade elementary school students at SDN 1 Mambang got positive results. The pre-test and post-test results on students' vocabulary achievement have been obtained, and data shows that word walls can improve students' vocabulary. In this study, the mean score of students' vocabulary comprehension in the post-test was higher than the mean score on the pre-test, where the mean score of the student in the pre-test was 53.33, categorized

as satisfactory, and the mean score of students in the post-test increased to 73.33 categorized as good. The total percentage improvement of students' vocabulary is 37.50%. Wordwall is effective learning media that can use by the teacher to create fun and interesting learning activity in learning English. Wordwall helps students learn vocabulary with fun activities and enhance their motivation to learn English. Furthermore, the researcher presents suggestions related to the application of wordwall as a teaching medium. The teacher or instructor must pay attention to the supporting components for utilizing a Wordwall such as a suitable smartphone or laptop and a good internet connection. If the media and the supporting internet connection are good, the learning process will also take place optimally.

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