UTILIZING WORD WALL FOR VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS

Dini Agustiani[1], Kusrin[2], Totoh Tauhidin Abas[3]

Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang, Indonesia
[1] 2010631060011@student.unsika.ac.id, [2] kusrin@unsika.ac.id, [3] totoh.tauhidin@fkip.unsika.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the application of words wall technique in students' vocabulary learning and to find out students' perspectives on words wall technique in vocabulary learning in EFL classroom. This research was conducted in one of the junior high schools in Indonesia. Utilizing qualitative methods, specifically a case study method with 7th grade students, data collection included observation checklist, interviews, and reflective journals. The Words Wall approach, a strategy for teaching English vocabulary, involves teachers providing key phrases or cues to stimulate student thinking. Findings indicated unanimously student positive responses to the Words Wall, highlighting its benefits in making vocabulary learning engagement and effectiveness. The technique encourages frequent practice and retention of new vocabulary, crucial for improving English comprehension as a second language. Effective implementation of Words Wall hinges on consistent selection, display, and integration into daily lessons, fostering not only academic motivation but also intellectual growth among students.

Keywords: Words Wall; Vocabulary; Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

Applying words wall to students' vocabulary learning is appropriate in this era. In this way, students can be motivated by this innovative, creative technique, and not dull learning methods. What we need to know is that vocabulary is essential not only for verbal communication but also for nonverbal communication. Therefore, students need vocabulary to build more complex language units such as phrases, sentences, etc. According to Mandasari et al. (2022), teaching English in secondary schools necessitates proper tactics and techniques to keep students engaged and interested in the material. More engaging vocabulary teaching methods are required to assist students in solving this puzzle.

A word wall is a collection of words written on a classroom wall, bulletin board, or blackboard. Since these statements are printed in a huge font, every student seating location may easily see them. Teachers utilize it as a teaching tool to assist pupils during vocabulary instruction. Instructors engage students in various activities to enhance their vocabulary comprehension and help them engage with the Words Wall. Word walls can be an excellent tool for promoting group learning and aiding in creating a print-rich environment for students. Kieff (2003) argues that word walls promote independent work habits by giving students access to references once their reading and writing assignments are finished. Students can benefit greatly from word wall media as they work to comprehend and become proficient in vocabulary. Studying new vocabulary and spellings of foreign words can aid in their language study. Students are encouraged to engage in vocabulary learning activities and test their memorization and mastery skills using words wall.

According to the qualities of the content, accurate method selection is a quality of students who are both emotionally and physically healthy, in addition to vocabulary learning, which is crucial for students. As a result, choosing the appropriate tactics and procedures requires the expertise and vision of educators (Nurvitasari et al., 2022). The Game-Based Learning (GBL) approach seeks to enhance the interactive and high-quality character of classroom instruction by evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the method in teaching English. Researchers took several previous studies that have reported effective learning outcomes for game-based learning approaches through words wall in vocabulary learning, namely: (Ghazy et al., 2021), (Hidayah et al., 2024), (Tanago & Sarobol, 2017).

According to (Ghazy et al., 2021), using GBL increases students' interest in learning English; the teacher stated that even though he was considered successful in implementing English language learning using GBL and managing his students in learning. (Hidayah et al., 2024) Argue that GBL has a strong appeal and can stimulate students' interest in learning. Apart from increasing interest, there was a significant increase in mastery of English vocabulary. This shows that GBL is effective in helping students understand and remember English vocabulary more efficiently and enjoyably. According to (Tanago & Sarobol, 2017), learning vocabulary through Game-Based Learning is fun and helps create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. Several previous studies regarding game-based learning approaches mainly focused on vocabulary learning. However, these previous studies did not use a learning media platform to implement. Therefore, this research aims to help bridge this gap by investigating the application of words wall for English vocabulary learning, emphasizing a more pedagogical approach in a comprehensive and effective way.

METHOD

In this study, the research design is qualitative, with a case study that aims to understand the application of the word wall approach to learning English vocabulary and learners' perspectives on the application of word walls in learning English vocabulary. According to Cresswell and Cresswell (2018), case study research is a qualitative methodology in which researchers investigate an actual, modern finite system or multiple finite systems through comprehensive and careful data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and various reports), and report case descriptions and case themes. The researcher used a case study. By using a case study, research can be conducted in greater depth and a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied, resulting in more accurate findings. The participants for this study were one class. The researcher recruited the six people from a direct approach with the students. After that, the researcher looked for which students understood or did not understand. Three students understood, and three were halfway to understanding the learning. Then, the researcher provided a consent form to be signed to prove the student was willing to participate in this study. In addition, researcher conducted research using the implementation protocol, acting as participant observers and data collectors. The main instruments of this research were observation checklists, interviews, and reflective journals. An observation checklist adapted from Husna (2022), there are some interview questions adapted from Sumanik et al. (2021) and Sodiq et al. (2021), and reflective journals adapted from (Widodo, 2015).

In conducting observations, the researcher used voice recordings and field notes to determine the words wall technique applied to secondary school students learning English vocabulary. Observations were conducted three times in one class. While observation is a way to see all activities occurring naturally in groups and individuals directly, researchers need other instruments to answer question two. The researcher used a voice recorder to find out the word wall technique applied in learning English vocabulary in secondary school students and to find

out students' perspectives on applying the word wall technique in learning English vocabulary. Interviews were conducted with six students. The six students had six interview questions to answer. The summary or writing of field notes describing the condition of the learning process between teachers and students during the research was conducted to evaluate observation data. Field notes are processed into a description of the results of observations of the situation in the classroom, starting from pre-teaching, teaching, and post-teaching activities in the evaluation of interviews by transcribing the results of interviews. The interview results were transcribed or converted into written form to help learners find answers to the application of the Words Wall approach in learning English vocabulary. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic data analysis can be divided into six stages: Familiarizing yourself with the data, Generating codes, Searching for themes, Reviewing potential themes, Defining and naming themes, and Making reports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This chapter presents the research findings and discusses them, explaining them further. The author focuses on using word walls in the classroom to help students learn vocabulary. Interviews, observation checklists, and reflective journals were used to collect data.

1. **Implementation of the words wall approach in English vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.**

    In conducting research, the author collaborated with 6 grade 7 students. The author took data at one of the Karawang junior high schools. The author acts as a teacher, giving assignments and learning materials to students for discussion. Teachers supervise students as they learn during procedures. The author begins by describing a wall of words used in teaching. Next, the teacher gives precise instructions about what the student should do. After that, students do the assignments given by the teacher. Teachers act as facilitators in language learning, but students need guidance to do their work. Instead, everyone in the class showed interest and contributed to the conversation. The following are the results of the reflective journal carried out by the author:

    "I Learn vocabulary, description text, and language elements (simple present tense, adverb, adjective, noun). I felt happy because I learned by using words wall, and I could work afterward by making wall decorations such as cardboard decorated with various writings." **(P1).**

    "Afterward, I learned description text, vocabulary, and simple present tense. I felt thrilled to learn vocabulary through the words wall because it was fascinating with Mrs. Dini's lesson presentation and easy to understand." **(P2).**

    "I was learning description text, simple present tense, noun, verb, adverb, and adjective. I understand English vocabulary learning since using words wall." **(P3).**

    "I learned Description, description structure, noun, verb, adverb, and adjective. It was hard but fun." **(P4).**

    "I learned vocabulary and adjectives that I was unfamiliar with and did not know their meaning, but afterward, I knew the meaning of the vocabulary. It was also fun

learning with Mrs. Dini. It was fun because we were in a group and could work together with our classmates." **(P5).**

"I learned description, simple present tense, noun, verb, adverb, and adjective. It was fun, and I better understood English vocabulary learning by using this word wall" **(P6).**

Based on the findings of reflective journals of six students, it was concluded that the word wall was well received, and learning through group discussions encouraged students to be enthusiastic about learning English vocabulary because it kept them involved and prevented them from feeling bored during the learning process. Additionally, students report that using a word wall to study makes it easier to understand information. As a result, the words wall might arouse their curiosity to learn English. In addition, Words Wall helps enhance vocabulary mastering by sparking students' interest in studying English because it is user-friendly and enjoyable.

2. **Students' perspectives on vocabulary learning with the word wall technique in English vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.**
   2.1 **Students' understanding after using words wall technique in English vocabulary learning.**
   Based on the observation data, learning English vocabulary using a word wall can influence students to acquire these lessons. The students felt that learning English vocabulary using the word wall was more accessible, fun, and engaging. It helps them understand what they are learning. This is consistent with the interview data as follows:

"It is easy because apart from working together, the way to do it is also easy and understandable." **(P1).**

"Yes, It is quite easy to understand, especially for beginners learning English." **(P2).**

"Yes. Because words wall are easy to understand and fun." **(P3).**

"I understand the words wall easily, and this words wall is also easy to use and fun." **(P4).**

"Word wall learning is motivating, interesting, easy to use, and understandable. And I want to use a word wall in the next lesson" **(P5).**

"Yes. It is easy because the word wall is quite large, and we can add decorations that make it more attractive." **(P6).**

Based on the interview above, word walls that teach students comprehension are very interesting for learning English vocabulary because they do not make students easily bored and sleepy while learning. Besides that, choosing the proper technique is very important to make students feel interested, enjoy the class, and be happy. One of the suitable techniques is Words Wall. Students feel free with the material. The teacher gives because it is easy to accept and understand. Based on the student's interview data, this is true when the word wall helps improve students' vocabulary learning ability. It

also helps them understand other learning materials. Therefore, they stay focused on the teaching and learning process.

Based on the student interview results, the author found that some students can use the word wall to learn new vocabulary. Students benefit from word walls as they can be used as an additional resource medium, even as a teaching and learning aid. From the above arguments, it is clear that word walls have historically helped students learn English vocabulary. Word walls can be used as an alternative medium for teaching English and enhancing students' vocabulary learning.

2.2 Effectiveness in learning English vocabulary through Words wall

Based on the interview data, some participants revealed that the word wall is a fun learning method; students can discuss comfortably and communicate with peers and educators to improve vocabulary acquisition. In addition, this method can improve vocabulary acquisition because it is fun when students actively participate in discussion activities, and it motivates them to want to learn English continuously. This result is supported by the interview data as follows:

"Yes. I am motivated to learn because using this word wall makes learning more exciting and enjoyable. I want the word wall to be used for future learning so that I can easily and understandably learn new vocabulary later." **(P1).**

"Yes. Not only written, but for chatting with friends, it looks cool, and when studying, it is easier and more understandable. Hopefully, we can use the word wall again in the next lesson because, with the word wall, we can easily understand English vocabulary learning." **(P2).**

"Yes. I am motivated to learn vocabulary through this word wall. In the next lesson. Hopefully, the word wall can be used and is useful again." **(P3).**

"Yes. I am motivated after using a word wall in learning English vocabulary. And I want to use a word wall in the next lesson." **(P4).**

"Yes. I am motivated after using a word wall in learning English vocabulary. And I want to use a word wall in the next lesson." **(P5).**

"Yes, Because word walls have much meaning and motivate me. And I want to use word walls in future lessons because they are easy and fun." **(P6).**

Based on the perspectives of the six students above, word wall use in vocabulary learning has received a positive response. This can be seen from the results of interviews with two students who revealed that The use of word walls also has disadvantages, namely that it requires much money because you have to buy materials to make word walls, and it takes quite a long time. Based on the results of interviews with students, they revealed that:

"It is rare for someone to understand the words wall in class, which makes me feel like it is a new atmosphere to carry out this learning. Moreover, the

materials used to do it require much money and take quite a long time to work." **(P3).**

"There is much vocabulary that I do not understand. Because it was done in groups, several friends did not work on or discuss learning this vocabulary. Moreover, sticking foreign words onto the cardboard is not very conducive." **(P4).**

The statements from the interviews with two students show that the disadvantage of using word walls in vocabulary learning is that it takes a long time to apply the media because students have to paste the vocabulary on the media. Some students still need help to work on the word walls because the author makes groups in the assignment of English vocabulary using word walls. Even so, this also requires a relatively expensive cost.

Discussion

Based on the previous research findings, word wall application affects general vocabulary development and English language learning in particular. According to Eustace (2017), teachers can use word walls to improve students' vocabulary acquisition. Word walls are a valuable tool for teaching vocabulary to students interestingly and effectively. Word walls are an alternative type of instruction that the author offers to students to help them learn, remember, and understand words. It helps them form sentences more quickly. In addition, discussion groups encourage students to actively learn so that learning is not dull, which makes classroom activities more fun (Pertiwi et al., 2022).

Words walls are a few words that are posted on classroom walls, bulletin boards, or blackboards (Cronsberry, 2004). Moreover, a visually appealing word wall has many colors and a lot of text so that it can be seen from a distance, it is a great approach for students to acquire and remember vocabulary quickly. As a result, students can easily see the words written on the word wall from a distance due to its large size. One of the tools that help students expand their vocabulary is the Word Wall, which also facilitates their ability to communicate in English with others. Therefore, word walls are valuable tools to make learning more exciting and fun.

Students become more interested in the classroom when the word wall is used as a tool for learning. They believe they value learning media more because it makes the classroom environment more exciting and fun. Students find acquiring and retaining information more accessible when presented on the word wall. In addition, the students feel happy with it without feeling forced to use descriptive text to learn English vocabulary. Moreover, the students believe that utilizing word walls to learn has increased their vocabulary. Students love the learning material researchers apply, making learning easily understood and enjoyable. Students were more motivated to study English when word walls were used as a teaching tool because they made learning in the classroom enjoyable and exciting.

For students, using word walls to teach vocabulary in descriptive texts creates an exciting learning environment, and they can feel more engaged. Since the media used is visually appealing and colorful, facilitating vocabulary memorization, students have reported that using word walls to teach vocabulary can keep them engaged and active during class (Syam, 2015). In addition, they also said that students can read the words on the wall at any time because the vocabulary is extensive and pasted on the wall, making it easier for them to learn the language anywhere in the classroom. The disadvantages of this media are that it takes quite a long time to paste the words on the word wall, and the cost is quite expensive. According to Shofiyani &

Sholihah (2021), using word walls has disadvantages, such as requiring a lot of time, equipment, colors, creativity, and time-consuming word wall making.

There are a few disadvantages as well that must be taken into consideration. First, when too many words are presented at once on a poorly managed word wall, it might need to be clarified for students. This may cause students to lose focus and find it challenging to choose the most pertinent or crucial terms to study. Second, the word wall's ability to help students understand vocabulary may be diminished if the words it contains have nothing to do with the subject or context of the lesson. Because of this, teachers must create and choose words relevant to the curriculum and ensure the word wall is utilized as a teaching tool that either enhances or even impacts students' learning.

Through Words Wall, students can expand their vocabulary by reading and hearing new words. However, they can also learn to read, write, speak, and listen to their teacher. Positive reactions were received from the students when the Words Wall approach was used. They enjoyed the English vocabulary lesson by feeling happy and excited. Through the textbook description materials the teacher taught, they could acquire new vocabulary and discover new terms. In addition, they also received instruction in memorizing words, spelling, and pronouncing them. Overall, the responses were mixed, some positive and some negative. However, more students responded positively than negatively to using Words Wall in English vocabulary learning.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of a word wall has been observed as a successful tool for enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge and active participation in learning. This study highlights that word walls facilitate frequent practice and retention of new vocabulary crucial for improving English language comprehension among second language learners. Students responded positively to word walls, indicating enhanced academic motivation and intellectual engagement. However, the effectiveness of word walls depends on teachers' consistent selection, display, and utilization in daily learning contexts. Word walls are valuable in EFL classrooms, promoting active vocabulary acquisition and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere.

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