IMPLEMENTING WORD WALL AS A MEDIA TO FACILITATE EFL STUDENTS IN LEARNING VOCABULARY

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the implementation of word walls as a media to facilitate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in vocabulary learning. Conducted at a junior high school in Bekasi, this qualitative research utilized a case study design. Data were collected through observations and interviews. The results demonstrated that using word walls to support EFL students in learning vocabulary positively impacts their English language acquisition, particularly in vocabulary, which is often a significant challenge for learners of English. The use of word walls offers several advantages, such as enhancing students' comprehension of English, introducing them to new vocabulary, and promoting active participation in classroom activities. This method of vocabulary instruction was a novel approach for the students. After its implementation, student feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They became more engaged in class, found the material easier to grasp, and experienced vocabulary learning as more enjoyable. The findings suggest that word walls are effective visual aids that improve vocabulary retention and create a more interactive learning atmosphere. Students reinforced their understanding of new words through visual cues, which increased their engagement and participation in classroom discussions.

Keywords: Vocabulary; Word Wall; EFL Students

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with topics related to the acquisition and teaching of English, focusing on issues related to the teaching of vocabulary in secondary schools. Especially when learning a foreign language, one of the most important things to understand what you are learning is vocabulary. Vocabulary is an important factor if you want to communicate in English Schmitt (2020). Students' vocabulary influences their understanding of texts, the expression of their ideas, and even the writing of their ideas. Most of English teachers are using dictionaries to learn new words, which can quickly tire students and slow them down in the vocabulary learning process. Recognizing this problem, English teachers should find new ways to teach students to memorize words, which is a fun activity that motivates students to learn words.

Vocabulary recognition is a crucial component of language learning and poses significant challenges. Due to insufficient vocabulary, students often feel discouraged in English classes, which hampers their ability to learn the language effectively. According to Wei (2021), assessing vocabulary size, particularly knowledge vocabulary size, is essential in determining a second language learner's academic success. Many English teachers fail to use effective media to enhance their students' vocabulary learning outcomes. Instead, they frequently rely on unengaging vocabulary teaching methods, making it difficult for students to grasp the language. Teaching languages to children, particularly high school students, can be challenging.

Therefore, to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, English teachers in Indonesia should employ suitable media.

Among the many ways to teach vocabulary, there is a media called a word wall, which is easy to implement and interactive for students to apply. Word wall can also help students organize their words, remember and spell words, and see patterns and relationships between words. Word walls are an effective and efficient way for students to add new words, gain more confidence in their skills and ultimately explore their English skills. In addition, the word wall media provides students with an environment rich in diverse and interesting words, which improves vocabulary memory and fluency management skills (Triariani, 2020). Kaharuddin, (2020) also stated that using word walls is an effective way to learn English, especially vocabulary. A lot of research has been done on word wall technology and most of the results are positive. Triariani, (2021) investigated the effect of vocabulary on students' writing skills and found that using vocabulary improved students' learning because they acquired new words to help them write. Ramadhan and Zaharani (2021) explored the impact of word wall media on students' vocabulary comprehension and motivation. Their findings indicated that the word wall method significantly enhanced students' ability to recall words and boosted their motivation to learn vocabulary.

Numerous prior studies have examined the use of word walls as an educational tool. For example, Southerland, D. L. (2011) explored their effectiveness in the study "Effectiveness of Using Interactive Word Walls to Teach Vocabulary to Middle School Students," concluding that interactive word walls enhance social interaction and teaching methods during intervention. Similarly, Curtis, A. J. (2018), in the study "The Effects of Interactive Word Walls on English Language Learners," analyzed the academic progress of 10th-grade biology students, particularly English learners, and found it was positively impacted by the use of interactive word walls. These findings suggest that word walls can help improve academic vocabulary and that traditional and low-achieving EFL learners can greatly benefit from using word walls. In high schools, it is good to use interactive word walls. Another study conducted by Kish, T. (2018), in a study titled "Effects of Word Walls on Diverse Student Groups," found that word walls had an impact on students within and above grade level, below grade level, and with visible disabilities. Students above grade level use fewer words and do better with simple exercises and instructions.

This research primarily investigates the use of word walls as a medium to assist EFL students in learning vocabulary and their responses to this method. Unlike previous studies that have broadly explored students' processes, knowledge, perceptions, and enthusiasm in learning vocabulary with word walls, this study specifically aims to assess the implementation of word walls and students' reactions to this approach. The research involved 8th grade junior high school students and utilized descriptive text, distinguishing it from earlier research. The central focus of this study is the application of word walls to support EFL students in vocabulary acquisition and their feedback on this learning tool.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach and case study method to provide a clear depiction of the research findings. As Creswell (2012) suggests, qualitative research is a suitable tool for addressing a research problem in a real-life context that requires exploration. Robert K. Yin (2014), a leading authority on case study methodology, defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Additionally, the research method involves a close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a

topic and its contextual setting, aiding in the comprehension of complex issues or topics. This method is employed to analyze individual experiences and perspectives, providing the researcher with insights into the implementation of word walls as a medium for vocabulary learning. The study is conducted in a classroom setting, with the researcher documenting all occurrences in their natural environment.

Site and Participant
The research involved eighth-grade students from a junior high school in Bekasi. Six students were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a representative sample. This method involves choosing participants with a specific goal in mind; the researcher identifies the necessary information and seeks individuals who can and are willing to provide insights based on their knowledge or experience (Lu, 2013). The selected students represented three different ability levels: low, medium, and high vocabulary skills. Initially, the students took a vocabulary learning test to classify their abilities, followed by a detailed assessment to identify their specific vocabulary learning challenges. Additionally, data was collected on the use of word walls by teachers to support EFL students in learning vocabulary. After implementing word walls as a teaching tool, the researcher evaluated their effectiveness in improving vocabulary learning.

Instruments
The researcher employed observation and interviews as research tools. These instruments consisted of carefully designed inquiries aimed at gathering data from participants. The observations were used to reinforce the study, focusing on the use of word walls in learning English vocabulary and identifying challenges faced by learners. Observational data aimed to understand students' perspectives on difficulties such as limited vocabulary, comprehension of key concepts, and grammatical errors. Interviews were conducted to explore the effectiveness of word walls and strategies employed to overcome these challenges. The interview guidelines facilitated the collection of primary data through structured questions. A semi-structured approach ensured thorough data collection, with interview data subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis
Research procedure theories that comprise orientation, investigation, and teaching procedures are frequently linked to qualitative research methods. Merriam (2009) examined a variety of qualitative research methodologies, including how researchers should understand orientation, undertake exploration, and convey findings in educational settings. In his book "Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice." Patton (2014) also discusses a number of qualitative methodologies, such as ways for leading research (direction), investigating phenomena (exploration), and converting findings into insights relevant for learning and practice (teaching).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A. Implementing a Word Wall as a Media to Help EFL Students Learn Vocabulary
In this study, teachers were asked about how they used word walls to improve their English vocabulary. The teacher replies revealed positive results. The teacher remarked that word walls make teaching and learning more dynamic and enjoyable.

Teacher: *"My experience using word wall is very positive, it makes the teaching and learning process more interactive and fun. Students seem more interested and enthusiastic when learning new vocabulary."*

As previously stated, teachers believe that employing word walls is very beneficial, making the teaching and learning process more dynamic and enjoyable. Furthermore, she stated that children appeared more attentive and excited when learning new terminology.

B. Student's Responses in Learning Vocabulary by Using Word Wall as a Media

In this section, researcher explained the main findings of research on student's responses in learning vocabulary by using word wall as a media. The participants in this research were eighth-grade students from a junior high school in Bekasi. Six students were selected using a purposive sampling method to provide a representative sample. These six students were chosen to represent three different ability levels (high ability, medium ability, and low ability). Initially, the students took a vocabulary learning test to classify their vocabulary abilities.

1. Students' feelings about using the word wall

In this study, students were asked about their experience using word walls to enhance their English vocabulary. Most of them expressed enthusiasm, excitement, happiness, enjoyment, and interest when their teachers incorporated word walls into the vocabulary learning process. This sentiment is supported by several students' responses during interviews.

Respondent 1: *"I am very enthusiastic about learning vocabulary using word wall. "This media makes the learning process more interesting so I am always enthusiastic every time I learn vocabulary with the word wall."*

As stated above, Respondent 1 feels happy because it feels like playing a guessing game while learning vocabulary using word walls. Furthermore, he believes that this media can help students acquire a lot of new vocabulary and understand the meanings of English words.

Respondent 4: *"Yes, because using the word wall to learn vocabulary makes it easier to understand the material."*

As evidenced by the quote above, Respondent 4 claimed that he found it simple to learn language. They also reported satisfaction that the word wall media had expanded their vocabulary and inspired them to learn English.

Based on the interview above, students appeared enthusiastic and happy. They described their experience as akin to playing a guessing game while learning. They also expressed that this medium helps them identify adjectives, nouns, and verbs in descriptive texts, and they enjoy seeing their writings displayed on the blackboard. The students further indicated their happiness with using this medium in vocabulary learning, finding it beneficial in understanding new words without feeling bored, thanks to the colourful word wall. Therefore, the word wall enhances their enjoyment and facilitates quick memorization of new vocabulary. Additionally, the word wall media boosts students' interest and motivation in learning English.

2. Students feel engaged in learning activity

In these questions, students were asked how engaged they felt when learning English vocabulary utilizing word wall media to expand their vocabulary. The majority of them stated that they were eager, more active, comprehended more easily, were highly excited, and joyful. They loved and were fascinated when the teacher utilized word wall media to teach vocabulary. This remark is supported and proven by various students' responses during interviews.

Respondent 3: *"Yes, learning vocabulary material using the word wall is very easy to understand because it is easy to see."*

According to the responses above, learning vocabulary through word wall media can be simple to understand throughout learning exercises. Furthermore, employing word walls as a media

for vocabulary learning encourages students to participate actively in the learning process and facilitates the acquisition of new vocabulary.

Respondent 2: *"Yes, I do. Because it will be easier to understand the material using a word wall."*

As previously indicated, Respondent 2 found it simpler to understand the information utilizing this word wall media. She also noted that word wall media might help you get confidence in the learning process.

Based on interviews with students about their sentiments after engaging in vocabulary acquisition with word wall media, it was discovered that employing word walls has a beneficial impact on enhancing student involvement in EFL classes. Students actively participate and show great enthusiasm in learning vocabulary through word walls because the methods used are easy and enjoyable, motivating students to learn. Students also appear more interested in learning; the pictures and words displayed support their imagination, making it easier to guess and remember vocabulary. Additionally, word wall media helps them understand vocabulary lessons better.

3. Students perceive that word walls assist them in learning

Students responded positively to these questions about the effectiveness of word wall media in vocabulary development. They believe that employing word wall media helps kids learn vocabulary by making learning more exciting and increasing their vocabulary size.

Respondent 1: *"Yes, learning vocabulary is easier using a word wall. Word wall provides word visualizations that help me remember and understand vocabulary well. Apart from that, the learning process becomes more interesting and less boring."*

Respondent 1 elaborated on the previous answer, stating that this media has greatly aided him in learning vocabulary, making it easier for him to understand and recall English language through word visualization. As a result, he no longer feels bored in class.

Respondents 5: *"There is. Pretty much"*

Respondent 1: *"Yes, there are several vocabulary words that I chose to put on the worksheet and I already know their meaning based on my memory. For example, words that I often use in daily conversation or that I have previously learned through books."*

As mentioned earlier, word wall media can introduce new vocabulary. There are several words that students remember because they learn from books. By using word wall media, they can discover words that encompass adjectives, nouns, and verbs. In addition, participants have expressed their interest in learning vocabulary, which enhances student motivation and enthusiasm for learning English.

Respondent 6: *"Yes, because it makes it easier to find the vocabulary from the very first letter."*

Respondent 3: *"Yes, because learning vocabulary using a word wall is easier, clearer, nicer to look at and neater."*

Based on the responses above, it was mentioned that learning vocabulary through a word wall is easier, clearer, neater, and more visually appealing. It also facilitates easier vocabulary retrieval as the alphabetically arranged letters on each word wall chart assist them in locating specific words.

According to interviews with pupils, word walls help them learn language. Using word wall media provides pupils with valuable results that improve their vocabulary development. It helps pupils detect words during memory and makes learning new vocabulary in an EFL lesson easier and more enjoyable. Word wall media is particularly effective in teaching vocabulary, increasing students' interest in studying English. When pupils are engaged in a particular subject, they are more likely to understand it thoroughly. Students have stated that using word wall media boosts their motivation and interest in learning a diverse range of new vocabulary.

Discussion

A. Implementing Word Wall as a Media to Help EFL Students Learn Vocabulary

Based on their observations and interviews, the researchers determined that teachers employed word wall media by writing words in huge letters on colored paper and attaching them to the wall. This made it easier for children to identify, memorize, and expand their vocabulary. Additionally, it boosted motivation. This was seen in the students' interest and participation in learning vocabulary through word wall media. Students were very enthused about the given learning resources, as seen by their comments during vocabulary teaching and learning exercises. However, this differs from the study conducted by Marhamah and Mulyadi (2020) titled "Use of Word Wall Image Media and Linguistic Intelligence to Improve Learning Results of English Vocabulary". The researchers found that word wall graphics improved English vocabulary learning results and increased linguistic intelligence.

A word wall, as defined by Cronsberry (2004), is a collection of words exhibited on a wall, bulletin board, chalkboard, or other classroom surface. Students eagerly learn English vocabulary using word wall media, competing with other groups to progress in matching words with the teacher-prepared word wall chart. Students can move the correct words, which involves them in active, creative, and participatory word wall activities. This media makes students feel very happy because they can learn and understand more quickly with word wall media. After that, the teacher returns and asks for vocabulary in descriptive texts that match the adjectives, nouns, and verbs on the word wall chart. This is done to strengthen students' memory. However, it varies from prior research conducted by Dhaifi and Ulfa (2020) in their study named "Optimizing Online Learning Resources to Improve Students' Autonomous Learning and Vocabulary Mastery through Word Wall Activities". According to the findings of this study, reading short stories on the internet that are relevant to students' interests can help them understand vocabulary. Students with a high level of learning freedom are also more likely to be interested in exploring mastery of understanding through online short tales.

The teacher reflects well on the learning process and can create a convenient and enjoyable learning environment. In this context, joyful learning can motivate students to continuously seek knowledge and keep learning, which can increase their interest in actively engaging. As a result, the learning objectives are achieved to the maximum extent. Ramadhan and Zaharani (2021) indicated that word wall media is a useful strategy for reducing student boredom and improving vocabulary comprehension. According to Brabham and Villaume (2002), the word wall is alphabetically sorted and displayed such that all students in the room can easily access it.

B. Student's Responses in Learning Vocabulary by Using Word Wall as a Media

Class VIII SMP students had a positive attitude about the use of word wall media implemented by English professors. Most students stated that learning vocabulary through word wall media makes it easier for them to remember and comprehend terminology. Students feel very enthusiastic about the learning media provided. They also feel very happy and supported by the media used because it helps them quickly memorize and understand vocabulary, as shown by the results of interviews with students. Dejager (2007) defines a word wall as a display of words on a classroom wall or bulletin board that serves as a visual reminder of the information covered. According to Southerland (2011), a word wall is a tool or medium that may be used as a beneficial method or technique in the teaching and learning process, particularly to help pupils memorize and improve their vocabulary. However, this differs from the research conducted by Pertiawi, Yanto, and Abas (2022) in their research entitled "Students' Knowledge of Word Walls and the Effectiveness of Teaching Tool in Increasing Vocabulary Knowledge".

According to interviewees, employing the word wall for vocabulary acquisition enhances students' vocabulary skills and even motivates them to learn more. Students also said that they would use these learning approaches outside of class to further improve their vocabulary.

Word wall media makes it simple and quick for kids to recall language. According to Southerland (2011), a word wall is a tool that can be the most effective media in the teaching process, particularly for assisting students in mastering vocabulary while memorizing vast amounts of it. Furthermore, pupils appreciate using word wall media to study vocabulary. They are not bored during lessons since the word wall media, with its bright writing, is shown on the wall. According to Ramadhan and Zaharani (2021), word wall media is the best way to keep students engaged and help them understand language. They were interested in learning vocabulary. Zaen, Miftakh, F, and Purnamasari, 1. (2022) claimed in their study "Students' Processes and Views of Using Word Wall Media to Increase Students' Vocabulary in EFL Classes". The research results suggest that word wall media is the appropriate media to develop students' vocabulary, assist students in determining the names of items in class based on their vocabulary, and make it easier for students to remember vocabulary. Students had no trouble learning vocabulary through word wall media, and they were highly excited because they felt pleased, liked, and were not bored because the words were on the wall with colorful lettering associated with them.

Students actively participate and show great passion for learning vocabulary by using word walls. The easy and fun learning methods motivate and engage students, making them more interested in learning. The words displayed on the word wall stimulate their imagination, making it easier to guess and remember the vocabulary. This approach enhances student motivation and interest in learning English. The word wall's placement on the wall, as well as the usage of colored paper with capital letters, keep kids focused. According to Urbayati (2017), a word wall is a well-organized collection of words that is conspicuously presented in the classroom. Previous research by Junizar and Sudiyono (2020) opposes this by describing the difficulties of employing discovery learning and the Word Wall Method to boost vocabulary in seventh-grade students. Some teachers struggle when using discovery learning to improve vocabulary development. Based on the research aims, the author used a word wall approach with junior high school pupils. This strategy expands students' vocabulary and boosts their motivation to learn, particularly in English courses. The author's research findings back up the effectiveness of the Word Wall approach as a teaching aid for improving learning quality and increasing students' vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to look into how word walls can be used to help EFL students learn vocabulary. The usage of word walls in vocabulary learning has been shown to influence students' English acquisition, particularly in vocabulary, which is a common issue for English learners. Word walls can help students better understand English, discover new vocabulary, and become more involved in class activities. The implementation of word walls in vocabulary learning is something new for them. After learning, student responses showed positive results. Students began to show interest by becoming more active in class, the material became easier to understand, and learning vocabulary became more enjoyable.

The study's findings have two implications. First, teachers may want to explore using a word wall to help students learn vocabulary. Teachers can use word walls to pique students' interest in learning English, and students will become more engaged in class throughout the learning process. Second, this study provides information or input to teachers so that they can apply it to the learning process in class based on the content being studied.

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